

A Publication for the Employees of Baylor Health Care System

BAYLOR PROGRESS

Calling All Angels

Local musician promotes music's healing powers

The scene is at once heartbreaking yet life-affirming: little patients at Our Children's House (OCH) gather around Argentine-American pianist Gustavo Tolosa, PhD, as he leads them in singing "Let's Go Riding Together." One little girl is at first shy and close to tears. But Dr. Tolosa gently encourages her to join in. And as she begins to sing in a high, soft voice, a tiny smile lights up her face.



Dr. Tolosa, founder of Musical Angels, provides free music lessons in piano, guitar and voice to children ages 5 and up while they are at the hospital.

It's the kind of moment that makes even the toughest of souls soften, including the strapping, 6'2" Dr. Tolosa. A professional musician and instructor, he founded the nonprofit "Musical Angels" in 2008 to, in his words, "give hospitalized children the opportunity to actively participate in the joyful and healing process of making music with their own hands and hearts."

He quickly notes there are plenty of joyful moments, too, like when a 3-year-old boy decides it's time to dance and whirls around the room. Along with volunteer Marquel Dionne—"she's the singer, not me," he chuckles—Dr. Tolosa visits OCH once a week to conduct group music classes as well as private keyboard instruction and says he benefits as much, if not more than, his students. "It gives these precious children a chance to step into their own world of creativity and frankly, I gather strength from seeing them respond so happily."

Emily Turner, OCH volunteer coordinator, adds that patients' families also benefit from the program. "Music helps reduce anxiety and fear," she says, "and it's wonderful to see moms and dads share these truly magical moments with their children."

Dr. Tolosa's dream is to broaden the program throughout North Texas

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and beyond, and he's drastically cut back his busy touring schedule to focus on recruiting other musically minded volunteers to help. "My dream is to do this for the rest of my life," he says, "and I welcome anyone who feels the passion for sharing the healing power of music with all these little angels."

More information?

To volunteer and/or find out more about the "Musical Angels" program, please visit: www.MusicalAngels.net. To learn about volunteer opportunities at Our Children's House at Baylor, please contact Emily Turner at **214-820-8799** or e-mail her at Emily.Turner@baylorhealth.edu.

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