



*Bringing the healing power of music to children battling cancer*



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*November 12, 2007.* Rochester, MN. Rochester will soon be home to a new music therapy program for children through a collaborative effort involving the Mayo Clinic, the St. John Block Party and the non profit Rock Against Cancer. Plans are being finalized for a *School of Rock* that will be located at Mayo Eugenio Litta Children's Hospital and offered to pediatric patients and their families.

The Mayo "School of Rock" will become just one of a few such programs in the country, joining a prestigious list that includes Duke, UCLA and five others. Rock Against Cancer - which is funded in part by the Hot Topic Foundation - opened its first School of Rock in February, 2006.

Lisa L. White, Ph.D. the Founder of Rock Against Cancer commented on this highly successful program:

"Young cancer patients are isolated from friends and enduring chemotherapy and painful procedures on a daily basis. Music therapy, provided by the School of Rock has been clinically proven to aid in the recovery of the 'whole child' by helping them cope with anxiety, pain and isolation. How fortunate the people of Rochester and The Mayo Clinic are to have a community partnership with St. John's Block Party. This year the benefits extended to young patients who enjoyed a visit from headlining act, Sister Hazel, who helped 'make music part of the cure' during bedside performances."

Support for the Rochester program evolved this summer when Block Party organizer Kurt Augustine contacted Rock Against Cancer to learn more about the School of Rock program. Together Augustine and Dr. White facilitated a hospital visit by Sister Hazel - the headline band for this year's St. John Block Party. After seeing first hand the value of live music to hospitalized children and hearing of the success of other School of Rock programs The Mayo soon embraced the idea of offering music therapy to pediatric patients.

"We are thrilled that we are now offering music therapy interventions by a Board Certified Music Therapist to our patients because of the generous donation by our friends from the St John Block Party and Rock Against Cancer," says Dr. Philip Fischer, Director of Mayo Eugenio Litta Children's Hospital. Randy McKeeman, Child Life Program Director at Mayo Eugenio Litta Hospital, agrees: "This will enhance the care that we give every patient every day."

Besides music therapists, the School of Rock can provide musical instruments, recording equipment and technical support to pediatric medical centers. Barbara Crowe, the past president of the American Music Therapy Association sums up the benefits of such a program like this, "Music therapy can make the difference between withdrawal and awareness, between isolation and interaction, between chronic pain and comfort - between demoralization and dignity."

The St John Block Party Committee has matched a \$10,000 grant from the Rock Against Cancer organization that will be used to start the local School of Rock.

St. John Pastor Father Gerald Mahon says it was a natural fit:

"One day of music has helped provide a lifetime of therapy. What a wonderful way to share the generosity of those who take part in our block party."