

# Clinton Township

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## Clinton Township nonprofit gives vets the gift of music

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CLINTON TOWNSHIP — One Clinton Township nonprofit group knows the healing value of music.

For the past four years, Charity Music Inc. has been connecting donated instruments and sheet music with U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals around the nation.

“(Music) is such a universal language,” said Charity Music CEO Roger Fachini. “Everyone can relate to it, and it brings everyone together.”

Since securing nonprofit status in 2005, Charity Music has provided instruments, sheet music, records and training materials to at-risk and disadvantaged youths, college students, senior citizens and veterans through several programs.

“We’re a support to other nonprofits, so we can help them become successful at what they do,” said Fachini, who served in a Marine Corps marching band as a young Marine.

Had he not been transferred to the Marine marching band, he would have been assigned to active duty during the Vietnam War. Because of this, he credits music with saving his life.

Through Notes of Appreciation, just one of several programs offered through Charity Music, the organization has donated hundreds of instruments and tens of thousands of pages of sheet music to troops both at home and abroad.

Originally, the program operated through the U.S. Department of Defense’s America Supports You program. But the veterans would bring the instruments with them when they returned to the

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Photo by Erin Sanchez  
From left, Charity Music Inc.’s Barry Alan, CEO Roger Fachini and Brian O stand in front of the wall designated for Notes of Appreciation at Charity Music’s location on Hayes Road in Clinton Township. Notes of Appreciation, which connects donations of sheet music and instruments to veterans at U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals around the nation, is just one of several programs conducted by Charity Music.

U.S., and weren't leaving them behind for other personnel as intended, Fachini said. He then reached out to chaplains, but they "had bigger things to deal with" than delivering instruments, he explained.

Then, in 2010, Charity Music decided to step back from the program and re-evaluate how Notes of Appreciation could better help veterans. They called VA hospitals around the country and discovered most had no instruments of their own.

They had found a void in the nonprofit community.

To date, Charity Music has received requests from VA hospitals in every state and is working to meet that demand.

Ultimately, Fachini said, the goal is to secure a guitar and keyboard, along with sheet music and CDs, for each of the 153 VA hospitals in the country. In order to do this, though, the group first has to acquire donations.

Most of the instruments donated to Charity Music are done so by major instrument manufacturers, such as Gibson and Yamaha, though individual donations are also welcomed.

Publishing companies donate songbooks from a wide breadth of musical genres, including Latin, country, jazz, classical and marching band, among others.

Notes of Appreciation is expanding. In 2011, it donated more than \$5,000 worth of sheet music, an amount equivalent to about 1,000 songbooks.

This year, that amount is expected to grow to about \$40,000 worth of material.

"It brings some relief to (the hospital patients) in that they can express themselves through music and maybe are not able to express themselves in any other way," said Kim De Mars, Charity Music's community relations director.

During the past few years, the use of music therapy has increased as a method to treat patients.

The John D. Dingell VA Medical Center in Detroit is among the hospitals in Michigan that have received sheet music through Notes of Appreciation. While the medical center doesn't have a music therapy program — it does, however, have an art therapy program — music is incorporated into the recovery process for both physical injuries and mental traumas, said hospital psychologist Dr. Michelle Buda Abela.

Music can be used to add structure to a patient's day, or it could help them connect with others, ease anxiety, and in extreme cases, manage such symptoms as hallucinations and hearing voices, she said. The type of music used is largely based on the patients' preference.

In some cases, the patients already know how to play the instruments; in others, they want to learn.

The veterans themselves recognize the value of music in recovery also, Abela said. Looking ahead to the near future, some hope start a music appreciation group, and some have talked about starting up a band.

“Oftentimes the veterans have trouble expressing feelings in words,” Abela said. “The creative arts are a way for them to express feelings and as a coping tool to manage moods.”

As the program is volunteer-driven, Fachini said Charity is always welcoming new helpers. Additionally, musical instruments and 45 rpm records can be donated by dropoff at 40736 Hayes Road, just south of 18 Mile Road, in Clinton Township.

A donation pick-up can be arranged by calling (586) 808-7445.

For more information about Notes of Appreciation, visit [www.freedomhill.org](http://www.freedomhill.org).

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