

ABOUT THE JAZZ FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

I. Our Mission

The Jazz Foundation of America (JFA) has been a leader in supporting veteran jazz, blues and roots musicians for the past 29 years. **Using a creative and holistic approach, the Jazz Foundation provides financial and emotional support to musicians who have made significant contributions to jazz, blues, and roots music.** These musicians are often elderly, suffering from chronic health problems and facing a pervasive lack of work. Some face even more dire circumstances, such as being one missed paycheck away from homelessness. JFA employs two full-time licensed social workers and two musicians' advocates to provide a myriad of services including paying bills directly (such as rents, mortgages, and utilities), distributing food vouchers, replacing damaged instruments, and providing pro-bono medical care through its partnership with Englewood Hospital and Medical Center (which donates \$300,000 services with through a network of 80 physicians annually). In addition, JFA hosts free jazz and blues concerts through its Gig Fund and Jazz and Blues in the Schools programs which provide much needed work for musicians while enriching the community.

During the 2017 fiscal year, JFA provided **a total of 9,000 assists** nationwide, **helping 1,200 individual musicians** and their families. JFA provided **\$3 million in program services** and coordinated an additional **\$600,000 in donated medical and legal services** for our artistic community.

II. Our Programs

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Musicians who have made a living playing blues, jazz and roots music know they can call our office at any time or walk through our doors for help in solving an emergency. We average 30 individual musician emergency cases a day. We prevent homelessness with housing assistance, keep artists healthy with pro bono medical care and provide financial support that keeps the lights on and food on the table. We work in partnership with agencies spanning medicine, the arts, social services, and education, including Englewood Hospital and Medical Center, Gouverneur Medical Center, MusiCares, Actors Fund, and public schools serving low-income students.

CREATING WORK OPPORTUNITIES

All any musician ever wants is that next gig. We create dignified paid work opportunities so artists can perform free concerts at schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and other community venues. Each year we produce almost 1,000 concerts in 17 states and reach more than 80,000 listeners from children in public schools to seniors in elder care facilities. Altogether, our performance programs generated nearly 6,000 performance opportunities for underemployed musicians over the past year.



DISASTER RELIEF

Whenever disaster strikes, our team is on the ground as soon as possible and finds out first-hand what needs to be replaced and repaired. Our social workers go home to home and offer emotional support and provide basic necessities like food, emergency supplies, and clothes for children.

After Katrina in 2005, the Jazz Foundation discreetly brought over 1,000 musicians back by rehousing families, creating paying gigs, and donating top-shelf instruments. In the aftermath of 2012's Superstorm Sandy, the JFA was active in the rebuilding of hundreds of musicians' lives, and in the restoring of a vibrant blues music community in Baton Rouge after it too suffered devastating floods in 2016. This spring, the JFA team went to San Juan, PR to meet with musicians devastated by Hurricane Maria and assess their needs. We are currently running a \$500,000 campaign to raise funds to help musicians in Puerto Rico.

III. Artist Stories



☐ **A 54-year-old guitarist** was a major studio musician and sideman in the '80s and '90s. At the age of 44 he was diagnosed with cancer and has undergone multiple rounds of chemotherapy. He was recently given 15 months to live. Knowing that time was a concern we could think of no better way to help than to give him a trip with his son while he was well enough to travel, to make a lasting memory they could share forever.

Two of our patrons made it happen. One gave them his frequent flyer miles, and the other got them a pad in London. We sent them packing, and they had the trip of a lifetime. It cost us nothing, but it gave a father and son a moment that neither will ever forget.

He has not been unable to gig much, because once people in the business find out that you have cancer and are battling time, they don't think to hire you. The small disability payment he has been living on leaves him barely enough to feed himself, let alone his son. **The Haven Foundation paid his rent for a full year, and JFA has since been able to supplement his rent, food, and other living expenses for him and his son.** He said the hardest part of all this, aside from the constant worry of dying and not being there for his child, is never knowing when his time is up. He can't plan or get work while being in the hospital all day long on chemo. His treatment leaves him with too much time in his own head. As a solution, we created a small part-time job visiting older musicians who are in nursing homes and have no opportunity to "talk shop". He said the conversations they have and the laughter has done even more for him than the seniors. He said that "Being of service has given me some purpose and gotten me out of my own head." We know it is not going to fix the big issues but it makes the rough road, a little kinder.

☐ **A 40-year-old trumpeter**, lives with wife and three children under the age of 5. They relocated to Texas after their New Orleans home was destroyed by the floods when the levees broke during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Now, their home just flooded in Hurricane Harvey (their third flood in three years), and they were denied assistance by FEMA because the water damage was not visible, even though the damp floors and smell of mold were obvious to anyone who stepped inside the house. His instrument had been stored in a car in an area he thought would be safe from flooding, but when the Army Corps of Engineers opened the reservoirs, the horn and the car were destroyed. Just before the floods, this musician underwent major colon surgery and he was



unable to play or earn income during his recovery period. He had to sell the van he used for a home painting business to cover his \$8,500 insurance payment for the operation. His wife also has multiple medical issues for which she is currently in treatment. **In order to assist with the overwhelming situation facing them we were able to get him a new horn, one that he loved, thanks to your support. We were also able to hire a water damage expert to make the house safe again for them and their children.** It was a serious challenge for our musician to prep the house for the remediation, as he could not lift anything or carry furniture to clear the house for the bio-washing and drying process to kill the toxic bacteria. We arranged for a team to gut the home and remove all debris from the premises before decontaminating the space. Because of YOU it is safe for the children to breathe and play inside of their home.

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