



A FREE BIRD

Empower. Create. Uplift.

FOR THE MEDIA

PURPOSE

A Free Bird is all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) organization that uplifts children fighting cancer and other chronic illnesses through the therapeutic arts.

We provide access to arts education and programming to hospitals and pediatric cancer patients in the New York area and beyond.

Through our three core programs, Dream Big, Take Flight, and Fly Free, we strive to inspire children to explore their artistic potential through inspiring performances, one-on-one tutoring, and an encouraging platform for artistic expression.

A Free Bird works primarily with hospitals and pediatric cancer centers in New York and New Jersey. A Free Bird has operated as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization since 2011.

HISTORY

A Free Bird was founded in 2008 when multidisciplinary artist Godni Amir witnessed firsthand art's potential to heal. His voice teacher, Gail, gave up teaching to become the primary caregiver for her husband when he was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. Soon after, she received a cancer diagnosis herself.

Gail's husband tragically passed away. But Gail herself made a full recovery, spurred on by her passion for music and photography.

Since then, Godni has made it his goal to bring the therapeutic power of the arts to those who have the most to live for: children. Today, AFB programs brighten up hospital rooms, provide entry into performances, and inspire children to express themselves during and beyond their time of treatment.

IMPACT

Therapeutic arts have been found to have numerous benefits to physical and mental health:

- In an examination of multiple studies, researchers found that creative arts therapies significantly reduced anxiety, depression, and pain in cancer patients, and improved their overall quality of life. (JAMA Internal Medicine, May 2013)
- Other studies have shown artistic interventions to improve clinical outcomes, reduce hospital stays, reduce pain and improve moods in patients contending with chronic diseases. (American Journal of Public Health, February 2010)

At A Free Bird, we see firsthand every day how impactful creative expression can be during the the hardest time in a child's life. The arts help them process complex emotions, find joy, and express things they can't always say in words.

Our programs have enriched the lives of more than 350 young people, involved hundreds volunteer artist tutors and mentors, and received support from dozens of prominent sponsors.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Dream Big

Dream Big provides free, supervised visits to participants and their parental guardians to performances and events at New York's famous cultural institutions. For the many children undergoing cancer treatment for whom going out into the city isn't an option, we offer inpatient Dream Big programming, bringing the performance to them.

The program aims to provide each child, whether fighting cancer or in remission, with a lasting connection to the arts and the inspiration to pursue their own creative dream.

Take Flight

Our core program, Take Flight, offers pediatric cancer patients ages 6–18 with arts education, materials, and one-on-one access to creative mentors, many of whom are distinguished professionals in the New York City arts community—all free of charge.

Lessons are arranged on a regular basis, depending on the needs of the child, and

can be provided in the hospital or the child's home. Whether a child is interested in visual arts, acting, creative writing, music, or any other art form, A Free Bird has a curriculum geared to their passion. Children work toward accomplishing a goal specific to their chosen field.

Fly Free

Our Fly Free program aims to realize the artistic dreams of children who are in remission from cancer.

Fly Free launches our more mature artists into the New York City creative community as budding professionals. We connect them with established artists in their respective disciplines and provide them with information about grants, contests, publishers, and more.

Alumni of our Fly Free program have gone on to start their own bakeries, release singles, and have their art shown at New York's premier galleries. Most importantly, we believe that the arts not only help children become cancer-free, but remain healthy and happy throughout their entire lives.

PARTNERSHIPS

As an all-volunteer run organization, A Free Bird has no overhead to cover or staff to pay. 100% of donations go directly toward our programming. A Free Bird accepts direct monetary donations, in-kind donations from product sales, donations of services, and offers to volunteer.

To further its mission, A Free Bird has collaborated with dozens of companies and organizations, both large and small, including:

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RECOGNITION

- Recognized by New York City mayor Bill de Blasio three years in a row (2014, 2015, 2016)
- Rite Aid 2017 featured charity
- Featured on Fox 5, NY1, and News 12 Brooklyn
- Featured in Cancer Today magazine
- Campaign endorsements by celebrity artists including Bob Picardo (Star Trek: Voyager), Joe Pantoliano (The Sopranos), Sofia Vassilieva (My Sister's Keeper), and Daisy Hobbs (Aladdin on Broadway)

CONTACT

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