

Sea-to-Sky Highway motorcycle ride to raise funds for music therapy

by [YOLANDE COLE](#) on SEP 4, 2014 at 8:00 AM



The 13th annual Music Therapy Ride is expected to include between 150 and 200 motorcycles.
RON SOMBILON

MUSIC THERAPIST CAROL Wiedemann spends much of her time at the B.C. Children's Hospital working with patients in the intensive-care unit and the burn program.

PHOTOS



Sometimes, she'll have a young patient play the xylophone to keep them calm during an I.V. insertion. For one four-year-old boy, handing him a drum while she played guitar helped to coax him out of his stroller and overcome his fear.

"Especially with little kids, it's an innate thing that we have to be able to relate to music on some level," Wiedemann said in a phone interview with the *Straight*.

"It's the first sense we have when we're born that's fully developed, is our hearing. So neurologically, we're all really hard-wired to respond to music."

With some patients, she'll bring in a mobile studio called the Bandwagon, and have them record a song.

"Using music therapeutically, it really has the ability sometimes to connect with these kids when they're in these places that are very challenging for them—life and death sometimes," she said.

Working with the Bandwagon to write or record songs can also be a way for teens to process their experience, she added.

"This girl told me 'I really love Katy Perry', and that was my in, because she wasn't really talking to anybody before, but we can start talking about Katy Perry, and we don't have to focus on why she's in the hospital, or the fact that she's going to be having a bone-marrow transplant soon, or you know, a lot of serious things," noted Wiedemann.

"We can talk about Katy Perry, and then I can find out that her favourite song is 'Roar', and we can take that song that she loves and why she loves it...and we can put some of her own words into that song."

Patients who work with the Bandwagon can record their songs and keep the tracks for themselves, or play them for family and friends. In some sad cases, it can also be a meaningful legacy when a child passes away.

The Bandwagon was funded through the annual Music Therapy Ride. A second mobile studio was launched in 2012 and has been rotating to various facilities. This year, organizers hope to launch a third.

"The use of music is pretty amazing," said event organizer Patrick Zulinov. "They play these songs for kids that are their favourite songs, and sometimes it really makes a difference when they're going through some pretty lousy stuff.

"It's the reason I get involved in this," he added. "I don't understand how a lot of different drugs work and a lot of different radiations and therapies, but I know how music works, and I see it in my own life making people's worlds better."

Both Zulinov and Wiedemann noted that music therapy is a field that depends on private donations.

"Our whole program is donor funded, so that's why I got involved in being part of fundraisers like the Music Therapy Ride, because it's so important to let people know that they can have a hand in supporting these great programs," said Wiedemann.

This year's Music Therapy Ride will take place on September 13. Between 150 and 200 motorcyclists are expected to participate in the ride, which will depart from the Hard Rock Casino in Coquitlam and arrive at the Garibaldi Lift Co. in Whistler.

More information is available at musictherapyride.org.

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