

“Reconnect with Hope” at AUBMC

The Cancer Support Fund and Al Bustan Music Festival combine Art and Medicine on the Sing for Hope Piano

Beirut, March 2, 2022: Under the theme “Reconnect with Hope”, the Cancer Support Fund (CSF) at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) in collaboration with Al Bustan Music Festival, held a walk-in concert on March 1st at the Halim and Aida Daniel Academic and Clinical building. The internationally renowned Russian pianist, Boris Berezovsky, led the concert and serenaded cancer patients and guests performing on the Sing for Hope Piano.

Combining art and medicine has always proven to be an additional element of therapy to any patient, especially cancer patients. This musical performance by the famous Russian pianist represents a new kind of support, which is healing through music, making it an integral part of the patient recovery journey. The event was organized to alleviate cancer patients’ suffering and divert their mind from the illness.

Generously gifted by Mr. Salim Abou Samra, the Sing for Hope Piano is exclusively located in Lebanon at the AUBMC, Halim and Aida Daniel Academic and Clinical Building lobby. The baby grand Yamaha piano was painted by Billy The Artist, who donates his time to paint pianos in collaboration with the New York based NGO Sing for Hope, whose mission is to spread music and art to those who need it the most in healthcare facilities and schools. In addition to being a special piece of art, the piano is also signed by music icons like Andrea Bocelli, Placido Domingo, Monica Yunus and Camille Zamora, manifesting its uniqueness even further.

“In the direst times, in the darkest of eras, music has given man belief that hope is yet attainable. This concert, sponsored by Al Bustan Music Festival and with a performance by the matchless Boris Berezovsky, is intended to signal that through the Cancer Support Fund, AUB, and its Medical Center, we will continue to provide inspiration, hope, and care to our cancer patients that are in the greatest need.” said AUB President Fadlo R. Khuri.

“As the vice president of advancement and communications, director of NKBCI, and co-founder of the Cancer Support Fund, I strongly believe that music will allow all patients, and especially cancer patients, to reconnect with their healthy parts, even in the face of their debilitating condition,” said Dr. Ali Taher.

Ms. Hala Dahdah Abou Jaber, president and founder of Cancer Support Fund, said: “Optimism is a key for achievements. Yes, funds are low, but our spirits are high; we used to cover 5% of patient hospital bills, but now we need to cover 95% of those bills. Despite all the challenges, today we celebrate life and hope for and with every one of our patients.”

Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Vice President for Medical Affairs at AUB Raymond Sawaya added: “In these unprecedented times, cancer patients in Lebanon are extremely more affected than the rest of the population. The decrease in their employment and purchasing power, the difficulties with transportation, and most critically, the challenges of finding the needed medications, are some of the major factors responsible for their hardship. Standing by idly is simply not an option.”

From his side, Mr. Salim Abou Samra, CSF donor, stated that hope is an integral part of the fight against cancer, and that music feeds the soul and mind.

“We chose ‘Reconnect’ for our festival’s theme as we wanted to reconnect with our pianist Boris Berezovsky and of course with the Cancer Support Fund. We are very happy to see how much hope we gave to many Lebanese; indeed, music can heal wounds that medicine cannot reach. Music is the language of love,” concluded Ms. Laura El Khazen Lahoud, vice president of Al Bustan Music Festival.

The Cancer Support Fund is a charitable initiative at the AUBMC’s Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute and one of its main pillars is to bring financial and psychological support to underprivileged adult cancer patients and their families. The CSF continues to stand by its patients, offering them the newest treatments available, despite the difficult times that Lebanon is facing. Such efforts bring to life and reaffirm the CSF’s vision of being the national and regional reference for adult cancer patient treatment and support. To date, the fund has helped 600 patients with more than 2000 hospital encounters.

For long, AUBMC has been a leader in the MENA, thriving to improve healthcare services and delivery for the community with respect and dignity to all. Through holding similar events, AUBMC is continuously seeking to advance healthcare and help patients facing social and financial challenges preventing them from accessing their right to quality lifesaving treatment. Through the Cancer Support Fund, AUBMC will continue to contribute to the wellbeing of our societies.

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About AUBMC

Since 1902, AUBMC has been providing the highest standards of care to patients across Lebanon and the region. It is also the teaching hospital for the Faculty of Medicine at AUB (established in 1867), which has trained generations of medical students and physicians, and whose graduates can be found at leading institutions around the world. AUBMC is the only medical institution in the Middle East to have earned the five international accreditations of JCI, Magnet, CAP, ACGME-I and JACIE attesting to its superior standards in patient-centered care, nursing, pathology/laboratory services and graduate medical education.

The Faculty of Medicine has graduated over 4,000 medical students and physicians; the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing provides excellent education for the nursing staff, and the Medical Center meets the healthcare needs of over 360,000 patient visits annually.

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