

Musical Medicine

By Matt Bendell

Using his musical talents, a medical student helps promote healing and wellness at Nemours Children's Hospital.

What could drama, art, music and medicine possibly have in common? Well, according to **Michael Metzner**, they really are not that different at all. In fact, he has been able to meld facets of each of them into his daily activities in a very well-balanced way.

Originally from South Florida, Metzner came to **Lake Nona** to attend the University Of Central Florida's College Of Medicine last year. Following his undergraduate studies, Metzner was torn between the arts and sciences, and many people were encouraging him to choose one over the other.

A creative, out-of-the-box thinker, Metzner has long been interested in music and the influence it can have on people and on the brain. "Michael is a student who, like many of our students, approaches medicine as both a scientific endeavor as well as an interpersonal and very human concern," says **Dr. Juan C. Cendan**, an associate professor of surgery at UCF.

"We know music does something to the brain; it makes us think and feel a certain way," Metzner says. "However, studies are sort of wishy-washy. I like to use imperial evidence." And with that in mind, he set out to make a difference using music as a calming means for children dealing with medical crisis in their lives.

He went on Craigslist to search for pianos that he might use in his quest and received numerous responses. One proved to be just the ticket. A wife of an orthopedic surgeon from Miami had just been willed a piano. Both she and her husband couldn't have imagined a better fit for the unexpected gift and donated it. Likewise,



Michael Metzner uses music to help patients heal.

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a local moving company donated a portion of the cost to bring the piano to Lake Nona, and a local piano tuner volunteered to get the piano in proper playing-condition.

Now that he's got the piano, several times each week, Metzner spends his lunch break playing music in the Nemours lobby. "Children often stop and listen in passing," Metzner says. "And the grandfather of a patient in particular, a composer of more than 20 years, stopped to listen for awhile. Then he

sat down and played some of his own compositions." Metzner says if he can bring some normalcy and serenity to people's lives that are experiencing hard times, that's really his ultimate goal.

In addition to studying 40 plus hours per week for medical school and volunteering to play the piano at Nemours, Metzner has also helped found UCF's Arts in Medicine program (AIM). He also helped organize a cycling team to participate in the Tour de Cure diabetes fundraiser in Lake Nona last month, and he tutors a pre-med student on the main campus of UCF (a two-year commitment). "Through the arts, we celebrate the healthy spirit that lives in us all," says **Deborah German, M.D.**, UCF's vice president for medical affairs and dean of UCF's College of Medicine. "Michael believes in the healing power of the arts, and we are delighted he is sharing that passion with our community." ■

For more information about Michael, and to view his artwork and other endeavors, visit CentralFloridaLifestyle.com.