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# Rascal Flatts brings smiles, music to Vanderbilt children's hospital

Members of Rascal Flatts kicked off their Monday with a performance for more than 2,000 children and families through their annual visit to Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt.

Gary LeVox, Joe Don Rooney and Jay DeMarcus have visited the hospital regularly for the past 11 years, playing private shows for the hospital’s patients and meeting their families. This year — through the technology provided by the hospital’s new Seacrest Studios — the country trio’s performance was broadcast live to four other children’s hospitals in Atlanta, Boston, Washington, D.C., and Cincinnati. The children were able to watch the performance of songs including “Fast Cars and Freedom” and “Bless the Broken Road” on the televisions in their rooms and could then call in questions for the trio. LeVox, Rooney and DeMarcus fielded questions from the young patients about everything from if they go camping to what they want for Christmas.



To the latter, DeMarcus quipped: “Two new presidential candidates.”

About 100 local patients and their family members filled the studio and the area immediately outside its doors. Children well enough danced and sang along with the group’s hits while others slumped on their parents’ laps. After the performance, Rascal Flatts took time to meet everyone who made it downstairs to see the group sing, then after lunch went to visit the children confined to their hospital rooms.

“We got to be in the eyes and ears of a bunch of children today,” Rooney said.

“What a great idea,” LeVox added. “Hats off to Ryan (Seacrest) and his whole staff and everybody that put the Seacrest Studios all together. It’s a great idea to be able to bless people across all 50 states.”

Flatts’ performance Monday was the first time Seacrest Studios was able to do a multicast and share the concert in its facility, which is inside Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt, with other hospitals.



“I think it’s wonderful to be able to reach more children all over the country,” DeMarcus said. “As you see this (Seacrest Studios) network continue to grow, we’ll be able to reach more and more hospitals with each passing year. For us, we just love being able to touch the kids and hold

them and be by their side ... anything to help ease the pain of being faced with some very, very tough circumstances and in many cases circumstances where the children may not leave this hospital.”

In addition to the concerts and meet-and-greets, the trio also holds annual fundraisers for Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt. The group has raised millions of dollars for the hospital over the years and helped open the Rascal Flatts Pediatric Surgery Center at the hospital in 2010.