UNM CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Connected Academy Updates

In October of 2023 Joshua Morales joined the team of teachers at UNM Children's Hospital. Joshua comes with 14 years' experience as a middle and high school teacher where he ran successful Band, Piano, Guitar and Choir programs.

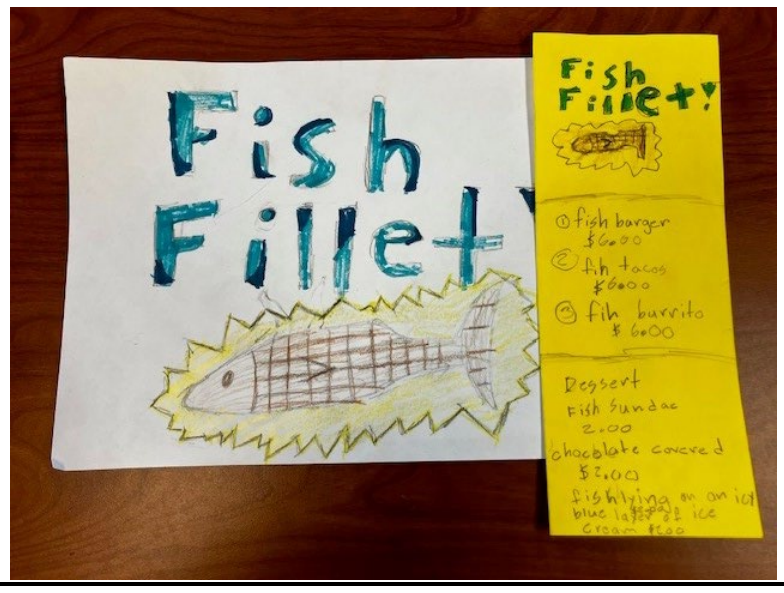
Morales has both a bachelor's and master's degree in music, as well as a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction. He was honored as Albuquerque Magazines 2020 "Over and Above Teacher of the Year" before coming to the hospital full time.

Morales enjoys incorporating music for a more hands-on approach, especially with teens. Reminiscing on his time thus far at UNM, Morales shared a special interaction he had.

"We had a child who had suffered some spinal injuries. He loved music and in particular loved Mariachi music. He had a room decorated with multiple guitars and his parents told me how much he loved to listen to music. I was able to come in daily for the duration of his hospital stay and play music with him.

Since he was not mobile, we would put a guitar up on his bed so his hands could hit the strings and we would spend time just playing through some of his favorite songs. His mother would tell me that our meetings were what he looked forward to everyday during his stay.

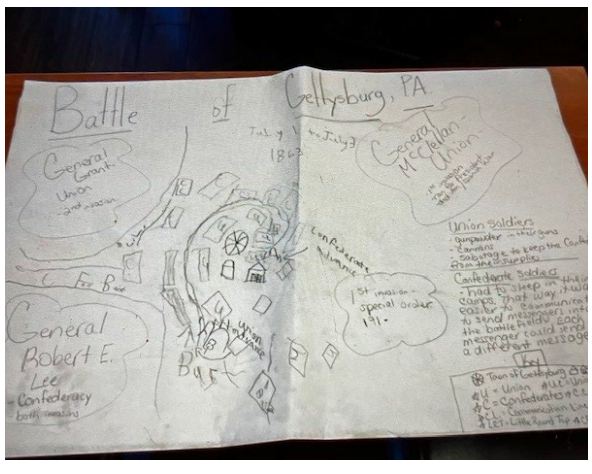
It was an amazing feeling to bring that service to him. Music is such a therapeutic and enriching activity, and it has been a wonderful experience to share that with this student as well our other patients."



In 2023, Connected Academy had over 1,000 encounters with students and patients at UNM Children's Hospital. These encounters range from liaison work between Connected Academy to more complex projects based on the patients age and ability.

The photo above demonstrates one of the projects our teacher Jennifer Jung worked on with a pediatric patient. This patient was being treated at UNM Children's Hospital for a complex illness, but even at 11 he's showing signs of being a future entrepreneur!

The "Fish Fillet" food truck is his first shot at a menu and logo for his potential future business. This patient activity originated from a Junior Achievement activity series which encourages entrepreneurial ideas within children.



Another student recently became fascinated with the battle of Gettysburg. Jennifer worked with him during his stay to draw this map. The visual tool allowed the patient to learn more about the battle and specifically the unique involvement of civilians.