



Yankees HOPE Week - The Tipping Point – By The Trush Family

There are times in one's life where an opportunity or situation presents itself and one needs to make a decision and choose a path. Do I take this on or do I pass? Do I fear the responsibility and risks associated with it and am I ready for a challenge? Those decisions can be large or small, can be clear or ill defined - but one thing is for certain - the outcome of that decision can be life changing or can just pass you by or as it was for our family – a tipping point.

For us, the tipping point occurred 5 years ago when we heard from Jason Zillo and the Yankee organization that Daniel and our music foundation were going to be honored during HOPE Week. When we received the call, we were thrilled on so many levels. We never expected it, and even when our good friend, Artie Elefant, who called the Yankees repeatedly, insisted that it was going to happen, we had our doubts. After all, Daniel's Music Foundation was a grass-roots organization that provided music programs for individuals with developmental and physical disabilities only 3 days per week and this was the New York Yankees. But the unlikely happened and it became the tipping point in our organization's history.

That day, July 25, 2011 was in itself a day we will all never forget – that includes our members, our staff and the 1,000+ people that packed the Brooks Atkinson Theater. The Yankees made our members feel like they were all Broadway stars and the surprises kept coming throughout the day. Five New York Yankees performed with our members on stage along with a litany of Broadway stars. But it didn't end at the theater – the Yankees donated \$10,000 and 10 keyboards to the foundation, our members sang the National Anthem at the start of the game, Daniel threw out the first pitch, took the line-up card out to the umpires and was on the victory line after the Yankees won. But within this dreamlike day, a number of things were taking shape. Our organization was being defined and making decisions – it had become a day that would become a point of reference. We learned about a standard of excellence from the Yankees. When we would speak to Jason Zillo about why he, his staff and the Yankees went all out for each of the honorees, he said, “we could do less and it would still be good, but it wouldn't be great and that's the Yankee way.” We refer to that line often when we are faced with our own decisions at our foundation. We learned to think bigger and to work even harder for what is important and to take on the opportunities that present themselves. That day, while sitting in the Brooks Atkinson Theater, our family looked around and saw the joy on everyone's faces and committed ourselves to taking the next steps in Daniel's Music Foundation's journey – we would go from a program to an organization and help more deserving individuals. We set our sights on opening our own music center one day and were relentless in looking for the right space - we would literally drive up and down NYC's streets looking for that one perfect place for our members. Two years later in 2013 we found it on 101st St. and Lexington Avenue. The center is a dream come true and we now serve over 300 members per year in our Core Program and have another 10,000 individuals with disabilities come and enjoy our other programs including field trips, dance and birthday parties, private lessons and an assortment of other musical activities. Today, we have 20 dedicated staff, numerous volunteers and a wonderful community that we could have never envisioned back in 2011. And as for the Yankees, they continue to count us as part of their family, through their continued generous support and an annual reunion of all HOPE Week honorees. July 25, 2011 was a moment in time, but the results from that day continue on through the growth of our foundation and the increased number of members that we serve. After all – it was the tipping point.....