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Singer adds voice to Floyd County fundraiser

Cancer survivor Kevin Sharp will perform to help four children, including Chance Harman and Kassidy Foster.

By [Jared Turner](#)

381-1643

Want to go?

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- What: Kevin Sharp concert, classic car show, charity motorcycle ride
- When: Saturday, the last motorcycle leaves the Floyd Food Lion at 10:30 a.m. Cruise-in at 11 followed by the concert at 1:30
- Where: Floyd County High School
- Cost: \$25 (charity ride, concert and food); \$10 (concert); \$10 (car show and concert).

Kevin Sharp, who splashed onto the country music scene in 1997 with a song that topped Billboard's Country Singles chart, will perform at Floyd County High School on Saturday.

Best known for the No. 1 hit "Nobody Knows," which tells the story of a man who keeps his thoughts about losing a lover locked away inside, Sharp also has experienced real-life emotions that some can't fully comprehend.

He's a cancer survivor.

"You automatically think, 'Why me?' and all those crazy thoughts that go through your mind," said Sharp, who was 18 when he learned he had Ewing's sarcoma, cancerous bone tumors that most often affect children and young adults.

Sharp combines music with motivational talks about his two-year battle with the disease, which went into remission in 1991. Sharp's tour stop in the New River Valley will raise money for

Medical Charities of Floyd County.

Proceeds from the event, which also features a charity motorcycle ride and a classic car show, will be divided among four children from Floyd County battling serious medical conditions.

Two of those children, 4-year-old Chance Harman and 12-year-old Kassidy Foster, are cancer patients. Karlie Nichols has cystic fibrosis. The other child, 8-year-old Austin Marshall, deals with seizures.

"Eventually you realize this life is worth all those ups and downs and you're fortunate for every day you have and you've just got to fight on through," Sharp said.

Doctors told Sharp during his senior year of high school that his chance of survival was slim and that the cancer had spread to his lungs. Not knowing how long he would live, Sharp was introduced to the

Make-A-Wish Foundation, which grants wishes to children facing life-threatening illnesses.

Sharp's wish -- to meet music producer and performer David Foster -- wasn't just granted. He and Foster established a friendship that eventually helped Sharp break into the country music industry.

Today, Sharp is a national spokesperson for Make-A-Wish. His own battle with cancer made him an ideal fit.

"That experience, I actually eventually became very grateful for because it has made me who I am and who I'm actually very proud to be," Sharp said. "You learn a lot of things through an experience like that. It's not just the typical 'I appreciate life more.' It's so far greater than that."

Preparations for Sharp's stop in Floyd began in March. Employees of Food Lion in Floyd will wear commemorative event T-shirts in the hours leading up to the concert. Jeff Dalton, chief investigator with the Floyd County Sheriff's Department, said he and fellow event organizers have received inquiries from people as far as Pennsylvania and the North Carolina coast planning to attend.

"We want people to come hear his story," Dalton said. "I've had so many people that have heard him, talk about how he has influenced the way people look at cancer, the way they feel about giving for cancer victims and cures and things of that nature. I just encourage everybody to hear him whether it be for his music or his motivational talks on cancer."

Kassidy, who has been undergoing treatments for bone cancer at Carilion Roanoke Community Hospital, hopes to attend the concert with her parents so she can meet Sharp. The occasion will mark the singer's first visit to Floyd.

"She [Kassidy] said if she is able to go she is going to go," said her father, Danny Foster. "I think it's going to be pretty cool."

Sharp knows what a difference encouragement can make during illness.

"Any time anybody visited me that had been through it, it just gave you a little bit of extra hope," he said. "I hope, if nothing more, that I can kind of be an inspiration."

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