

HopeKids: Students and Staff support a local non-profit (<https://www.ipr.edu/blogs/audio-production/hopekids-students-staff-support-local-non-profit/>)

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Recently, some students in one of Keven Bowe's classes at the Institute of Production and Recording (<https://www.ipr.edu/>) (IPR) teamed up with a non-profit organization called HopeKids (<https://www.hopekids.org/>) to record a song. HopeKids is dedicated to encouraging and supporting families who have children that have endured life threatening or complicating experiences. IPR Alumni Andre Steele and his wife, Katie, had the idea to record the song. They thought that the song would be a good way to bring awareness to the organization. HopeKids is hoping to continue its expansion nationally and the vision is that this song could help motivate the establishment of additional chapters in other states.

Recording and producing the HopeKids song at the IPR studio in downtown Minneapolis

Behind the Scenes: HopeKids, a local non-profit

HopeKids was founded in Phoenix, Arizona in 2001. Today, the organization has 5 chapters in Denver, Dallas, Kansas City, and Minneapolis. Altogether, HopeKids serves over 4,000 families who have a child with a life-threatening medical condition. HopeKids offers an ongoing calendar of events and activities and a powerful, unique support community for the children and all members of the family. Events include theatre shows, concerts, sporting events, as well as date nights for the parents.

Brian Anderson, the executive director of the Minneapolis chapter, expressed the importance of involving the entire family. Too often there are family members, usually siblings, that get overlooked. "I think this is an important approach that this program has," stated Anderson. A father of two children himself, Anderson has been a part of the organization for four years and ensures that the HopeKids chapter here continues to provide an incredible amount of support to families in the area.

The IPR Connection

The idea for the song came from a very personal place. Andre is not only an IPR alumni, but he and his wife have been involved with the HopeKids organization since June of 2017. Their two-year-old son, Keenan, has epilepsy. Although they know where the seizures fire out of, it is unknown as to why. 70% of those with epilepsy never know why it is happening.

So far, there has been limited success with treatments for Keenan. Through all the struggles that the Steeles have faced, their strength continues to shine through. Like other families that continue to endure challenges like this, they continue to push through the hard times. Katie said it best, “You find a way to make the best out of the worst situation because you don’t have a choice, either way.”

The Song

Andre Steele worked with Kevin Bowe (<https://www.ipr.edu/blogs/faculty/kevin-bowe/>), the program chair for the Audio Production and Engineering (<https://www.ipr.edu/programs/audio-production/>) program at IPR, to co-write and produce “We’re the Hope Kids (<https://youtu.be/yLGdVAGP1F4>).” Andre and Kevin worked with some of the kids from HopeKids to record the vocals of the song at the IPR campus. The kids also helped to do some recording on various instruments such as piano, drums, and guitars. Other IPR faculty and students contributed to the instrumental track as well.

One of the students that worked on the project, Jose Rodriguez, commented, “Rock bands are cool. Jazz is cool. Working with HopeKids, well, nothing cooler. Having the chance to see shyness turn into excitement for those kids was priceless. Thank you HopeKids for the wonderful experience!”

Kevin Bowe reflected, “This song not only brought many people together, but it will continue to help families and their children cope with their illnesses and help comfort their families. The whole process was fun and inspirational. And it proves Abe Lincoln’s quote, ‘most people are as happy as they make up their minds to be.’ Working with Andre Steele is a joy in and of itself.”

Kids from HopeKids record their own song in the studio at IPR.

The Producers

Andre Steele graduated with a degree in Audio Production and Engineering from IPR in 2012. He has toured with Alexander O'Neal as a background singer and performed at the B.B. King House of Blues in 2014.

Andre's family has been in the music industry well before he entered as a professional. His father was a background singer for Prince. His uncle, Billy Steele, writes, produces and performs for the Sounds of Blackness, a gospel/inspirational choir that won a Grammy in 1992. The Sounds of Blackness have worked with artists that include Earth, Wind, and Fire, Stevie Wonder, and Elton John.

The Steele family hosts an annual Christmas Carol at the Fitzgerald Theatre. They have worked with artists such as Mavis Staples and Bob Dylan. Music has been such a big influence in Andre's life that it only seemed natural that he and Katie would come up with an idea of a song devoted to helping to promote HopeKids.

Kevin Bowe is currently the program chair for the Audio Production and Engineering program at the Institute of Production and Recording (IPR). He is also a notable guitarist, producer, and songwriter. Kevin has written songs that were on Grammy award-winning albums and has worked with artists such as Lynyrd Skynyrd, Dan Wilson of Semisonic, and the Rembrandts.

Contributed by Alexa Gerard, current student in IPR's Music & Entertainment Business program

See the video and hear the song here:

Find Out More:

HopeKids : <https://www.hopekids.org> (<https://www.hopekids.org>)

“We’re the Hope Kids”: <https://youtu.be/yLGdVAGP1F4> (<https://youtu.be/yLGdVAGP1F4>)

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