

# “Hello, Michigan!”



## *Stories Straight from the Heart ~ ROB THE DRUMMER!*

**“The Michigan Model** is a story of longevity, dedication and friendship through grass-roots beginnings in the 1960’s at the renowned William H. Hall High School in West Hartford, CT. Sports, Music and The Arts were the dynamic connectors that bonded me to an individual who would become a lifelong friend, Dr. Roger Newton. We both went on to pursue diversified careers with creative life aspirations, adventures, and ingenuity, striving to accomplish important work for children, adults and the nation. I am honored by his friendship. Roger was in charge of the scientific Team that created LIPITOR, the most well-known and prescribed anti-cholesterol drug in history. I became a motivational speaker, jazz/rock drummer, and percussion instructor, creating the children’s character ROB THE DRUMMER, providing a powerful and unique Anti-Drug, Anti-Bullying, Self Esteem Concert that has traveled throughout the USA and Europe, Russia, and beyond. When Big Bird introduced me on Sesame Street with a rousing ...

*Hey Kids, here comes ROB THE DRUMMER ... the rest of my career is history!*

Roger was the Founder of Esperion Therapeutics Inc., a Vice President of the Ann Arbor Division of PFIZER Global Research & development, and an Ann Arbor, Michigan resident. His philanthropic prowess led him to address specific needs of children across the state. Role Models were needed to help address drug abuse, bullying and low self-esteem issues that were critical in the schools. A joining of forces with my motivational concepts and concert, were soon to become a perfect fit; a dynamic presentation having the

resources and opportunity for getting the message directly into schools...straight to the kids! Inspire – Ignite – and Excite the Students! That was the mission: **to bring positive life choices, goal orientation, concepts of practice, and develop higher self-esteem for students. It was a youth pro-health, preventative vision in the making!** The first ROB THE DRUMMER Michigan Tour was then set to begin with a concert tour of 10 Schools in 2001.”

### **Rob’s Media Explosion!**

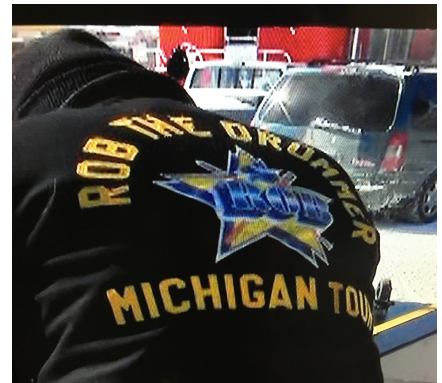
*“Can't tell you how amazing it was to hear that introduction from BIG BIRD many years ago! There I was on Sesame Street ... and in an instant I knew this was my life's work - continuing in the field of “Edu-tainment” that could make a real difference ~ it was what I do best! I was going to get to use ALL I had learned from my Psychology, Philosophy, Music Triple Independent major in College ... and the greatest thing of all - was that it led me to the State of Michigan ...where it was Really needed!*”

### **Behind the Scenes Excerpts ~ Footprints Across Michigan!**

*I brought my ROB THE DRUMMER Concert as far North as Sault Saint Marie, to the central area of Mackinac Island... and Flint, Detroit, Ann Arbor, Kalamazoo; to over 150 Towns all over the state! The impact during and after the show ~ the things kids ask, react to and say each day ~ is an adventure and the fulfillment of the Super Hero dream I once had...that every child wants to become!”*

#### **“Snow - Rain - ICE or Hail ...The show must go on!”**

“I love Michigan! Each town is different - Michigan is so different and very special, like the week I spent in St. Ignace named after a rebellious Monk in the 16th Century. We had great experiences with our Fearless Leader of the State Troopers, Aileen Bitnar, based in Sioux St. Marie.



#### **And sometimes the weather does NOT cooperate!**

... ICE....FRIGID TEMPS! When the cargo plane that was sent from a nearby Island to ferry us across to Mackinac Island (where the movie “SOMEWHERE IN TIME” was filmed!), we found it to be radically too small to get our people and equipment across. I was advised that there was NO WAY to get a larger plane and that we would have to cancel the show...but, I had given my word to these kids, administrators and teachers ~ I took this Very seriously and was not going to be denied of fulfilling my promise!



Through the officials at the small airport where we had arrived with trucks, equipment and crew, we contacted service people from the Grand Hotel on the island and arranged for them to come over on the ice





with snowmobiles and trailers to move the equipment over the ice in 25 DEGREE BELOW ZERO temperatures!! Thus - ALL of our people in coordination with the State Troopers and the Island Coordinators were going to make this RTD show happen - no matter what! The equipment went over with my crew, totally bundled up in layers and layers of goose down clothing while they flew me to the show in a very cool AIRPLANE and then loaded up my gear on a HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE - Now that's dedication from my crew and the Troopers who helped me!"

### What a trip that was!

“So we began Week 2 today. Had 2 Shows - First show....this little girl comes in with a Hat with cloth Candles all over it.....a Birthday Hat!! I don't see her right away....but what I didn't know is that State Trooper Yvonne Brantley, who was assigned to this school, had already spoken to her when she came in. The girl had asked what all this was all about?...What were they were coming into the Gym for?...and Yvonne said to her "Well.....this is for your Birthday! We did this all for You!" The girl was knocked out trying to think of how they knew about her Birthday!....and would have gone to all this trouble!!! Later in the Show...at the time of questions, I spy this girl...with her festive hat...and tell her I think the Hat was terrific! She says... "Well, it's because it's my Birthday!" So I then proceed to have the entire school in attendance sing "Happy Birthday" to her!! This cements in her head the fact that we came here for HER!! The look....of Wonder....of Surprise....of Dis-Belief...of Happiness....of Innocence...was priceless! After the Show, I thought I wanted to give her a present, so I signed a pair of ROB THE DRUMMER Sticks to her...went and found her in the school...and gave them to her. She will be talking about this Forever. I was Honored to be the Catalyst for her Special Day.”



*“I am 16 years of age and have wanted to become a musician for a while. You recently did a show for us at West Grand High School. I just wanted to thank you for your appearance at our school. I had no motivation to pursue any of my dreams or wishes until you came along. You have inspired me inspired me, and in the four days since you did your show, I have unlocked talents I never even dreamed of having. Thank you so much Rob. You have changed my life.”*

**“On another amazing day in this area of Michigan that is “way up” in the UP (Upper Peninsula), about 600 Kids in the morning Show....were Screamin'.....and I got hugged by about 30 Kids at once!! “FOX News is here...and it looks like it will have a fine coverage of the Feeling...and the unique nature, of the Program. Have to tell you...if any or all are interested...and hope not to bore some...but 2 days ago, after the Show...in the bedlam as they leave, a little Girl runs up to me and says..**

**."I wish you were my Daddy!"**

**Youch ...That got me!!"**



**“At the end of one of the Shows, as will happen, I answered the question from a little, Little person ...maybe 10....and he had trouble speaking and getting the question out...but I could tell he was saying how much he loved the Drums.....and I said "Do you hope to play them someday?" ...and he said "YES!" .....so I brought him right up...sat him down at my Drum set...and he clobbered everything...as tiny as he was!!!**

### **The place Erupted!**



.....and I gave him a set of sticks after he finished. One of the Teachers came up to me later and said that of ALL the kids I might have picked out, THIS Fellow was the Right one! There had been great trouble in his family....and he was now living with a distant relative...and he had been having trouble adjusting....and we had now made him a STAR!! Yay! It is so incredibly rewarding to be used as a "channel" for “The Force”...on purpose...by an act of your own Will....something that You alone conceived...and that seems to really work for so many....app. 40,000 on this trip...to give them a boost...a moment where they are rooted to the moment...and get to see someone that Loves what they do...and that does it well. A wonderful window for all of us.”

*"Just as Dr. King was a drum major for freedom, YOU are a drum major for hope."*

*GILDA MYLES - NEW DIRECTIONS, MI*

**“The statistics across Michigan are staggering.** I went into a school system with 30% Truancy rates in ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!...they just don't come to school. Data that is being compiled shows that the rate of Father's incarcerated in this specific school in the City of Saginaw is 80%!!! My God, how do you even Start to build any kind of life from these roots? Leads you to ask "Why did they Ever have these children in the first place?" One case-worker I spoke with after the Show said she has a case of a 17-year old....with 4 KIDS born naturally. I was told by the authorities that that is technically rape in this State....as the legal age



is 16 for sexual relations....otherwise you are manipulating a juvenile. One nice thing that can be taken from today is that they all feel I am accessing these Kids like they have not seen them approached before...and we're getting through to SO many. The Videos I utilize of Me animated....and the interaction....are so useful in keeping everyone's focus. When you are dealing with populations like this that need it so badly....you have to invite them to HAVE a Dream....and then you can help them Keep It alive! They trust No One....because they have been beaten down....in many different ways. I may be the first male they have seen....who Loves what he Does and does it very well. This is nothing less than GOD's (Inspirational) Work...and I'm Honored to be the Vessel of Delivery. Perhaps, just perhaps, we may diffuse an isolated mass-killer like the one at Sandy Hook, CT....or Aurora, Colorado.....or Columbine....or Virginia Tech.....BEFORE they Snap. It's worth the Try, don't you think?!"



FACEBOOK FAN REPLY: *".... isn't this a message for the rest of us?"*

"People don't plan to have kids anymore, they just "have them" as a consequence of unprotected sex. There is a long list of reasons why females have children that they can't afford to feed, with men that they hardly even know, to be "accepted" by them, and hope the man will give them "security" when the kid is born. There's also the welfare incentive, more kids and more government benefits. Finally, the most common reason is that these people were raised with little to no education, and by a single parent that never understood the importance of family, and the child basically raised themselves, with no love, spiritual guidance, or education. Results, when the relationship doesn't work out, for whatever reason, these people think, "well, I was raised by my mother alone, and I'm fine, and so will my kid be fine, he doesn't need a father." This is so common, and it is a cycle at least 3 generations old, that's why we need to teach people at a young age to break the cycle, and give them the tools that their parents are incapable of giving them to make good decisions. Learning to play a musical instrument can really help, since it requires a child to learn about themselves, and how to overcome obstacles that they will find in the true musical instruments that don't forgive a person who is learning to play them other than through practice and discipline. Kids today can basically fix and overcome anything with a touch of a button. It is interesting to note that the children of these high technology corporate execs have set up private schooling for kids that resembles how we went to school, no computers of any kind, and just a good old fashioned paper and pencil. If they're the execs of high tech, and they refuse to let their kids learn through the "simple, have it done for you" method.... isn't this a message for the rest of us?"

***"I'm not the greatest kid in the world. I am involved with drugs, alcohol, I smoke cigarettes, and I'm trying to get off all of 'em, and you have your whole program so maybe you could help me with that. I'm more likely to listen to a drummer that I respect than my parents. You really don't know how much talking to you means to me. I've always wanted to talk to someone who's made it in that business and knows people in the field.***

***Well thank you again for your time, and changing my life forever!"***

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**“In Dundee/Monroe County.** Yesterday...an Elementary School where an Autistic child had the chance to sit down and express himself on the Drums with such delight that I gave him one of my Blue Bloogle Tubes... so that he could continue the feeling at Home!! When someone like that "lights up", it's So exhilarating for us....Me...the Crew members....the State Troopers...and, ultimately, Dr. Roger and Coco Newton, our sponsors. Today, we had a child asking me a question at the end of the Show...in front of everyone...as this is where you can really see you've gotten through...**by the content and character of their queries**....So he asks "that Big thing you hit the Gong with....when you went in a circle....what do you call that?" I said a "Gong Beater". I then said "You liked that, Aye?!" He said YES...it was just Great.



(It's how I start the Show....asking them NOT to think...to try to be internally and externally silent...and I use the Gong to Bring them into that Silence!) So I then wonderfully shock him by bringing him up, handing him the Beater....and tell him to go ahead and express himself! He takes it easy...just like I did in the beginning....and it's a Very powerful gong...scary almost if I was in His shoes!...So I go over in a minute...and we both Really Smack It...Together! We're doing what Every kid in the audience wanted to do....SMACK that thing!! When he did it....the place Erupted!!

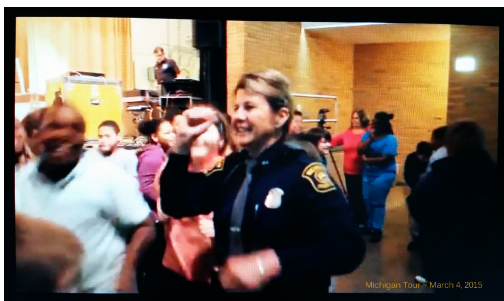
**Just Sheer Joy....went through Everyone...Teachers included. You had to be there..to a degree....but that Kid will Never forget this day...nor will anyone who witnessed the Special moments! We're doin' good!!**



*"You really made the day for a couple of my little guys who are going through a rough time right now. My gutsy little guy who wanted to twirl the pipes is just full of personality. His dad is just out of jail but most likely heading back for a long haul due to drugs so I hope your message got through to the little guy.*

*The other bigger kid that you commented on his dancing right in front of your drums is also having a tough time. His dad died this past year and his mom is rarely there for him. Both of these kids as well as my entire class had one of the best times of their lives. Just wanted you know how sometimes one or two sentences to a child can completely make a difference. Thanks again for a fabulous time ... and per your "anti-drug" speech, I'll try and cut down on the coffee!"*  
*Donna Sink - Teacher*

**Trooper  
Kristy Angelo**





## *Special stories ~ right place ~ right time!*

*“As the Sound Technician for the show - I see it all. A student comes up to play the rhythm stick - has not been able to communicate a word to the teacher for 3 months ~ gets so excited and turns around and actually takes a BOW! Then, after the show while signing autographs, the student is standing by ~ watching ~ and then blurts out - “I WANT AN AUTOGRAPH, TOO!” Hasn’t spoken for three months - but this experience has been a breakthrough. Interestingly, the mother was there and burst into joyous tears - the teacher was shocked! This was a deciding moment and has remained in our hearts forever!*

*Steve DesJardins ~ Sound Coordinator*

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*“My name is \_\_\_\_\_, i'm 17 years old and a senior in high school, i love the show that u did at my school, u saved my life today, i was suffering from depression and people picking on me friends turn out to be fake, i was going to go kill my self. But u stop that from happening with your message. i was wounder if u could come to my school - to help other the way u help me or if not thats fine i guess could u e-mail me back to know that u got this message. and thank you a lot for helping me.”*

*Through the Police and Safety Network that arranged for the booking of all the Schools there, we got the Detectives involved who contacted him immediately (in case he would change his mind that evening!) and then we dealt with it ourselves. When we were not able to fund quickly enough, I contacted a good friend of Dr. Roger Newton's and David Roth, in Connecticut....who backed up another week.....and we invited this troubled teen to join my Crew as a member for Monday Shows.....had him work with us.....get to know us.....breathe, where no one rejected him.....and we got this email back that evening.....*

*"i just want to say that was a time of a life time. when i got home i didn't know what to tell her. just that it was undescrivable. i feel like i created more new friends that are awesome. hope to see u soon....."thanks for the gift. i didn't look at it till i got home. when i saw it i started to cry. i don't know what to say, cause saying thank you just doesnt cover it. just being with u and ur buds was way over wellming to me. i'm really thankfull that i ment u. i felt like i made some really great new friends and i hope to see u soon.”*

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*“\_\_\_\_\_ has had serious problems w/physical/verbal aggression and taking a serious attitude toward earning. Since your presentation, all I have to do is remind him of what Rob the Drummer taught him and he surely wouldn't want to disappoint you. He turns his attitude around immediately! He has had the best week at school I have seen since 1st grade. I want you to know that you may have made such a strong impact on this young man that it may be a life-changing event for him. I have learned from my years of experience w/ these fragile little people, that unless they find something strong to relate to outside of their incredibly chaotic home lives that their future can be very dim.*

*Once again, THANK-YOU  
SO MUCH!!*

*Judy Tysse*



*“I sign autographs with hundreds of kids...love the interaction!”*



**“Today...was 3 Shows in the same site ...** and it will be that way each day this week, reportedly. The Michigan State Troopers have done a fine job of setting up my schedule and the local Trooper is staying with us each step of the way as I continually introduce him, and thus make it more comfortable for all the Students to get to know him. They are the Magic Men and Women where "the Buck stops." I explain to each crowd that if they have a difficult problem that they need to discuss and want Real help dealing with it, those Officers are there for that very purpose, with the power to really help them..and in many cases, we have seen Kids go up to them after a Show...and begin speaking. Light at the end of a long tunnel for many.

### **It's all Good. Onward and Upward.**

**Wonderful day today ...** Performed for a religious school in the morning...who I KNOW were wondering what I was going to do, who I really was, and all the questions that come up before they get to experience a Show, as the State Troopers don't always "fill them in," but know it's ultimately going to be great! Pure-People-Harmony by the end!! Then on to an exclusive autistic High School called AIM with Directors and Staff that are so "on it" that each Kid feels safe and grounded and free to explore the world...along with their special sensitivities. Our Fearless Leader and Benefactor, Dr. Roger Newton, attended ~ pulled

himself out of an insanely busy schedule to be there ~ and took part in the festivities at the end of the Show. We all came away feeling that when everyone's individual spirit merges with everyone else, and the "group psychology" flows, it's a glorious moment in time. That happened today.



**“Magic lives in Michigan...another day...amidst thunder storms outside that could be felt right through the walls. Again, I was blessed to be a catalyst.”**



I'm very proud of Coco Newton's overview....

*"Rob the Drummer ~ 6 week Michigan Tour 70-80 shows in schools and for inmates all over Michigan. 12 shows in Flint. Ambassador for anti-racism, anti-bullying, anti-drug, pro-arts, pro-sports, pro-humanitarian . He has offset suicides, has catalyzed an autistic kid to speak his first words, and motivated many thousands of Michigan citizens. And escorted by state troopers for every show! LOVE this man and his talented entourage, Steve and Digney."*

Coco Newton

**"Shows in Flint were surreal ....** The Elementary I played for keeps the kids there after school to serve them dinner...and if they badly misbehave, sends them home where they will not have anything to eat. It is basic survival for most with not a lot of time for vision or looking outside of just their day-to-day. One of the faculty put it this way.." ... as to their family life, if you're not Screaming, no one is hearing you!" Many of the teachers approach it the same way...but at the same time this faculty member said...**"By just showing up as a Teacher, "you get a chance to be a Hero every day!"**

*"Dear Rob, I, too, wanted to thank you. I teach the district program for children w/ severe behavioral, emotional, and mental health issues. This is their last opportunity to stay in a district program before we have to move them to a regional or county program. I have been working w/ \_\_\_\_ for four years. I have been doing this for 33years, and he is one of the most challenging, yet interesting children I have worked with, **The same messages you deliver to the kids are core elements of this program, but it is so important for them to hear them from others. It is rare for them to have any positive male role models in their lives and \_\_\_\_ falls into this category. I have NEVER seen him so inspired by anyone or anything as he was by you.** The adults in this building truly embrace my students, and SO many of them came to \_\_\_\_ or me to tell us how cool it was that he was able to be in the limelight in front of his peers. He told me that he was famous now and wants to be called "Big S!" He carried his drumsticks around with him all day. We let all of his 3rd grade classmates watch his DVD of him performing."*

Ismael Ahmed - Director- Office of Governor Jennifer M. Granholm ~ Michigan

*"Rob The Drummer just completed his sixth tour through Michigan and Maxey Training School. When Rob first performed at Maxey, there were nearly 400 students. The performance this past week entertained only 110 students. Maxey is a treatment facility for adolescent males who have committed serious crimes. It does not matter who the student is or what his mental status is, Rob is able to connect with virtually every one through his music and message."*

**"Bringing someone in from the outside...**who sees the World in a completely different way...is extremely helpful and important...a bit of Light at the end of a tunnel they may not have known existed, as they've never seen it. They may not remember everything I said today...but they Will remember the images...the feelings...the sounds...my humor and sense of wonder, perhaps. It will be filed Deeply in their beings...such is a musical approach...with basic primal rhythm at it's core. I'm not sure I could live in this environment for very long...without either becoming completely desensitized and numb or such an eternal optimist that it would suspend the golden rule of existence: "You are what you eat.. i.e. what you surround yourself with, you become". No matter what, it's a constant struggle in physical areas that look like they dropped a Bomb on the place. So many closed up buildings easily leading to



the emotions of depression and animal-like anger and much of it coming from those so young who never asked for an environment like this....at war with themselves....as they try to figure it all out.”



*"When I first walked into the assembly I thought it was just going to be another one of those boring speakers telling us about drugs and things we had already learned about like 100 times before, but the way you taught it was different. You inspired me to try my best and fulfill my dreams. I only wish that my step dad would have been there to see you. I thought your performance was incredible and I hope to stay in touch with you, you're a great guy for teaching us about the meaningful things in life and telling us to work hard and get better at our dreams to accomplish*

*them."*

**“As a final note in my Day ~to~Day Life of ROB THE DRUMMER ...** Here's a great ending and another wonderful day....a great set of Shows....another opportunity for breakthroughs. So....we're doing the question/answer program at the end of the first Show and I recognize this child who's about a 5th grader and I ask him to stand when he asks the question, so we can all hear....and he's trying Really hard to get something out of his mouth ... physically straining to try to come up with the thoughts and words ~ having an incredibly hard time. I could have blown him off and moved on...because there were lots of other Kids that wanted to ask questions, but I didn't....I waited...we All waited...and I joked with him over my wireless headset mic. "Don't worry...there's no social pressure...no one's listening...!!" I followed immediately with "It's OK...take your time...think about what you wanted to say....was it about my equipment?...about Me?" He finally says...summoning the courage and focus "How do you make all those drums play together like that?". I say that I started early...like he would...and practiced...and.....then I said...going with my feelings of the moment as I always do.. "Do you really like the Drums?"...and see he smiles Big-Time...and He says "YES!" So I decide to bring him up on the Drum set in front of everyone, something I don't usually do at this point, but I go with it. I sit him down...in my "cockpit" of Drums....and he goes ballistic!! The whole audience erupts...because they have sensed how hard it was for him to get out what he wanted...and were now viewing his release of that tension! Smiles All around...and Everyone felt it! I gave him a pair of sticks. After the Show, his Teacher comes up to me...and says "you have NO idea what you just did for this child! He's ADHD to the max...and you just made his day....and may have shifted his life. This was So wonderful for him!" She gave me a big hug...and went on her way to spend some time with him in his class. Again ~ the Right thing to do, and so fortunate for me to be there to do it.





“Thank you, Michigan, and thank you to my  
dear friends, Roger and Coco Newton!”

