

# NEWS OF SPORTS

## NFL Quarterback Sponsors Shriners Benefit Concert

(NAPSA)—Mention the name Joey Harrington anywhere in the Northwest, especially Oregon, and sports fans have nothing but accolades for the standout starting quarterback of the Detroit Lions.

More than a year after signing a professional contract with the Lions following graduation from the University of Oregon, the “kid with the big smile” paid a visit to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Portland, Ore., where Harrington presented a check in excess of \$30,000 to the hospital from the proceeds of a recent benefit concert that Harrington sponsored in his hometown of Portland.

Called “An Acoustical Night of Music,” the concert featured singer-songwriter Jason Mraz, as well as special guests John Popper and Chan Kinchla of Blues Traveler. The musicians played before a sold-out crowd of several thousand in Portland’s Crystal Ballroom.

Not to be forgotten that evening was Harrington. As a 4-year-old, he found a love of music and today is not only an excellent football player, but also an accomplished pianist. During the concert, Harrington took to the stage to play the piano with the guys. Regarding that experience, Harrington said, “I’m more nervous playing the piano here than I am starting in a game as quarterback.” It didn’t matter during the concert, though, because the folks were there to cheer for their hometown hero.

Several days after the concert, Joey Harrington, accompanied by his parents, John and Valerie Harrington, came to the Portland Shriners Hospital to present an oversized check in the amount of \$30,375 to Tom D’Esmond, the hospital’s administrator, and Bud James, head of Al Kader Shriners in Wilsonville, Ore.

D’Esmond presented Harrington with a beautiful plaque in recognition of his donation to the hospital. After that, Harrington visited and chatted with the patients for several hours, passing out specially made “Joey Harring-



**Detroit Lions quarterback Joey Harrington hands a donation to Tom D’Esmond, hospital administrator and Shiner Bud James.**

ton—The Piano Man” player cards and patiently autographing them for the excited kids. He also signed jerseys and even video game boxes.

When asked about organizing and hosting an event such as the benefit concert, Harrington replied, “It’s fun, even though it was kind of stressful at times. I’d like this to become the signature event for the Harrington Family Foundation and start growing it year by year.”

The donation from Harrington and the foundation will benefit the Portland Shriners Hospital’s sports and recreation therapy program. According to Harrington and his parents, they believe every child has a right to receive a quality education and proper health care in a safe and nurturing community.

For more information on Shriners’ network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607, or visit the Web site at [www.shrinershq.org](http://www.shrinershq.org). Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States, or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.