

# Pittsburgh Shoe Shiner Donates \$200K in Tips to Children's Hospital Fund

By **Alexa Valiente** February 21, 2013

Every Tuesday and Thursday before the sun rises, Albert Lexie, 70, arrives at the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh to begin his rounds.

But Lexie is not a doctor. For more than 30 years, the Monessen, Pa., native has spruced up the shoes of many loyal customers at Pittsburgh Children's.

He's a shoe shiner, who doesn't keep his tips.

Every tip Lexie has ever received since he began shining shoes in 1981 has gone to the Children's Hospital Free Care Fund, according to ABC News affiliate [WTAE in Pittsburgh](#). The fund goes toward the care of sick children whose parents cannot afford to pay for medical care.

"Shoe shines cost \$5," Lexie told ABCNews.com, "Say if they give me \$6, I give a dollar to the Children's Hospital."

Over the years, his hard-earned tips have amounted to more than \$200,000 for the free-care fund.

"I can raise more," Lexie said.

Lexie started shining shoes in high school, when he saw other kids making shoe shining boxes. "So what I did was help to build one and put mine together."

He said his passion for the fund began when he watched a TV anchorwoman he admired covering a Free Care Fund telethon.

"After watching the telethon and Jerry Lewis," Dr. Joseph Carcillo, who is one of Lexie's customers, told ABC News, "He wanted to have Albert's kids, like 'Jerry's Kids.'"

Since then, more than one-third of Lexie's income has gone to the fund, according to Carcillo.



Image Credit: Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

Quite the entrepreneur, Lexie is always looking for ways to raise even more. "He has contests," Carcillo explained. "If you gave the best tips, you get a bag of candy."

Lexie recalled one of his biggest tips. "Around Christmas, I had a doctor give me \$50."

Despite the national attention and guest spots on "Oprah," Lexie still remains humble, eating and breathing for the children, said Carcillo.

"He thinks only of others. He's a role model to us all," Carcillo said. "He shows us that devotion to others, the joy of children and the joy of giving is greater than the day-to-day things that we think are important."

In the three decades he's worked at the hospital, Lexie has become a part of the institution. "Everyone knows Albert," Carcillo said.

When he's not pushing his purple shoe-shining cart the hospital gave him as a gift, Lexie said he enjoyed going to concerts and watching "The Price Is Right."

Although Lexie is grateful for his hospital patrons, "I wouldn't mind shining the governor's shoes or the president's shoes," he said.

When asked if he had any hopes for the future, Lexie said, "I just hope the kids get well and do better and do different things."

"Then my life has ended well. I just love the kids."

