

# From WIDE OPEN BLUEGRASS Festival to the Bluegrass Trust Fund

## MAKING THE CONNECTION

The Bluegrass Trust Fund is at the very heart of Bluegrass, and it's a big part of what motivated the founders to start IBMA. Musicians who have given us their all throughout their careers have often found themselves unable to cover costs when life handed them serious setbacks.



Phil Leadbetter had just such a setback a few years ago. He wrote in recently, saying:

*I was diagnosed with cancer in 2011. Unable to work, I was not only battling the disease, but also struggling to survive this huge financial hardship that lay ahead. I contacted the IBMA, and very quickly help was on the way. I will always be a huge supporter of the IBMA Trust Fund. I have seen it work, and it helped save me from financial crisis in such a dark time in my life. I am so glad it is there to help others in the future just like it helped me and my family. Forever grateful!*



James King faced a similar struggle – as bills mounted during his illness, taking care of the basics became an insurmountable challenge. Becky Rhodes, James King's girlfriend, wrote to the Trust Fund:

*You have no idea the difference you made in what we didn't know were James' last days. He not only struggled with his health over the past two years but also with the worry of providing for our basic everyday living expenses. The day he received the news of the grant being approved is a day I will never forget. The joy and relief you and IBMA gave him is priceless. I will forever be grateful to you and all involved for your assistance and expediting the application process. I am more than happy to help promote the IBMA Bluegrass Trust Fund any way I can.*

Recently a fundraising campaign was launched to pay for James King's headstone. The people running it asked Becky to pick a charity in case there were any extra funds raised. Without hesitation, she named the Bluegrass Trust Fund.

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The Trust Fund quietly helps many professional bluegrass musicians in need. It has already awarded nearly \$600,000 in assistance. And here's where the Wide Open Bluegrass Festival connection comes in. Every year IBMA helps the Trust Fund by staging Wide Open Bluegrass in Raleigh, NC. Roughly half of the proceeds from all ticket sales goes directly to the Bluegrass Trust Fund.

There are two ways you can help the Bluegrass Trust Fund help out our hard-working musicians. You can buy a ticket to Wide Open Bluegrass in Raleigh for September 30-October 1, with your choice of either or both days. ([Click here](#) for tickets). You'll have a great time in Raleigh, seeing many of the best bands in the business. Another way to help is to donate directly to the fund by [emailing](#), writing or calling Paul Schiminger at IBMA Bluegrass Trust Fund, 4206 Gallatin Pike, Nashville, TN, 37216, USA, 888-438-4262. To learn more about the Bluegrass Trust Fund, [click here](#). Listen to your heart and support the Fund.

**If you have any stories you'd like to share of being helped by the Bluegrass Trust Fund, please email them to [Kelly Kessler at IBMA](#).**

