



**Open The Door**  

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**The Story**





How did a North Carolina bank and a British rock legend team up to create a new version of a classic song . . . and launch a special initiative to help young people going through the fight of their lives?



## The Concert

It all started in April 2015. One of the world's great rock and roll bands – The Who – was coming to Raleigh for a show on their The Who Hits 50! North American tour. Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina, is also home and headquarters of First Citizens Bank, the country's largest family-controlled financial institution.

Sally Webb, CEO of The Special Event Company, a North Carolina-based meeting and event planning firm that had been working with First Citizens since 2007, reached out to two of the bank's executives, Chief Strategy Officer Jeff Ward and Brand Marketing Manager Barbara Thompson: Would they be interested in meeting a friend of hers?

It turns out, the friend was Roger Daltrey . . . lead singer of The Who, rock superstar, actor and one of the founders of Teen Cancer America. Roger and his bandmate, Pete Townshend, had launched TCA in 2012, modeling the organization on the U.K.-based Teenage Cancer Trust, a charity that works with hospitals to create spaces dedicated to the unique needs of teens and young adults fighting cancer.

Webb, a founding board member of Teen Cancer America, had worked with Roger and Pete on TCA's Washington, D.C. press introduction, the Teen Cancer America Road Rebellion campaign and The Who Hits 50! tour. The day before the band's Raleigh concert, she brought the rock star and the bankers together.

Roger gave the First Citizens executives more than an introduction to Teen Cancer America. It was practically a seminar on how teen cancer is different from other forms of the disease – how their developing bodies, for instance, can mask symptoms that would otherwise let doctors know something was wrong – and the urgent need to create spaces for young

adults who'd otherwise find themselves sharing diagnosis, treatment and recovery space with small children or adults old enough to be their grandparents.

He was able to share success stories from the Teenage Cancer Trust and talk about how much Teen Cancer America had accomplished in just a few short years. They had already partnered with hospitals like UCLA Health to design and build TCA facilities and staff them with medical professionals who understand the special physical and psychological challenges teens and young adults with cancer go through.

Perhaps most important, Roger gave the First Citizens executives inspiration: Maybe this bank – which had been doing business in the Carolinas for well of a century – could help bring Teen Cancer America to the Southeast.

“At that meeting,” Jeff Ward explains, “we started kicking around ideas about how we might be able to work together.” With deep roots in the Southeast – and particularly strong relationships with hospitals and medical professionals across the Carolinas – First Citizens was in unique position to help TCA grow in the region.

“Turns out, there was the making of a great relationship,” Ward adds.

So he brought the idea to First Citizens Chairman and CEO Frank Holding: There's a young nonprofit doing important work that falls right into our expertise at banking in the medical sector. It would allow us to engage our associates, our customers and our communities. It could be our first bankwide corporate sponsorship in decades. It needs help in this part of the country. And we can make a real difference.

Holding – and other senior executives – loved the idea.





## The Concept

The next step was figuring out how to spread the word about teen cancer – and Teen Cancer America – on First Citizens' home turf.

“We didn’t want to just write a check and walk away,” explains Barbara Thompson. “We were thinking – and acting – bigger than that.” The way forward was creating a joint marketing effort to promote Teen Cancer America . . . and shine a light on a new and important way First Citizens is helping out in communities where it does business.

Thompson enlisted the bank’s Detroit-based advertising agency, Factory, to look at some ways to make this initiative part of the bank’s Forever First marketing platform. Factory brought back a handful of directions, all but one built around a different song from The Who’s immense catalogue.

It was that last idea that caught everybody’s attention: Rather than use a Who song, what if we convinced Roger Daltrey to record a brand new version of a classic Pete Townsend solo song, the 1980 hit, Let My Love Open The Door? It would be the theme for introducing Teen Cancer America to the people and hospitals of the Southeast . . . helping open doors to new facilities for teens and their families.

“Truth is, we didn’t really think the band would go for this,” says Factory Executive Creative Director and Founder Mark Lantz. “We had other ideas, but we really liked what those lyrics could say about the need for these facilities. We were surprised as anyone when we got a ‘yes’ to the idea of Roger Daltrey covering a Pete Townshend single.”

But the power of that theme – opening doors for teens fighting cancer – caught on.

Sally Webb and fellow TCA board member Rebecca Rothstein enthusiastically supported the direction. As did Teen Cancer America Executive Director Simon Davies. And Robert Rosenberg and Bill Curbishley of Trinifold, The Who's management company. They acted as liaisons between Roger and First Citizens, helping turn the concept into reality.

Spirit Music Group, which owns the publishing rights to the song, also got on board, licensing the composition to First Citizens in support of the initiative.

Between May and October, representatives of Trinifold, Spirit, First Citizens and TCA worked out an agreement that would make First Citizens a major sponsor of Teen Cancer America and put Roger's new version of Let My Love Open The Door at the center of a wide-ranging communication effort starting Thanksgiving week.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a patterned cardigan over a light-colored top and blue jeans, stands in a room with large, multi-paned windows. To her left is a professional video camera on a tripod, with a Sony monitor attached to the top. A red and black plaid jacket is draped over the camera. The text 'The Song and Commercial' is overlaid in white on the image.

## The Song and Commercial

Then Roger got sick. Very sick.

During the hiatus between the two legs of The Who's North American tour – and just days before he was scheduled to record this new track – Roger was diagnosed with viral meningitis.

The Who postponed that second leg of the tour to give Roger plenty of time to recover. But there was still that song to record. As soon as he was able – with doctor's permission – to work again, Roger made a priority of getting into a London studio to lay down his tracks for Let My Love Open The Door.

Meanwhile, the teams from First Citizens and Factory were putting together the pieces of this unprecedented effort from the bank. The centerpiece of which was a new 60-second television commercial featuring Roger's song. To create the spot, they brought in Jeffrey DeChausse – award-winning director and founder of Tiny Elephant, a Los Angeles production company – who has directed all the TV spots in the bank's Forever First campaign.

To dramatize the importance of Teen Cancer America facilities to young people literally going through the fight of their lives, DeChausse and his team had to create a TCA facility from scratch. After all, the real Teen Cancer America units were doing real work every day . . . they couldn't be shut down for a shoot. But consulting with advisors from TCA, Tiny Elephant was able to craft a temporary TCA space that could pass for the real thing.

The TV commercial, Open The Door, provides a simple introduction to the core premise of Teen Cancer America: Without these facilities, teens either go through treatment in spaces designed and staffed for children

or intended for adults much, much older. It follows a young woman on a walk through a hospital – past the kids, past the adults – until she finally discovers the door to a Teen Cancer America facility and the young people and staff ready to welcome her.

“It’s hard sometimes being a teen,” the voiceover says. “It’s harder still when you’re a teen diagnosed with cancer. Too old for the kids. Too young for the adults. That’s why First Citizens Bank is proud to support Teen Cancer America. Creating spaces where teens fighting cancer can feel like they belong. Because they do.”

Accompanying the TV commercial is a full suite of marketing materials, including radio, print, point of sale, collateral and more. First Citizens also launched a dedicated website, [LetMyLoveOpenTheDoor.com](http://LetMyLoveOpenTheDoor.com), to educate visitors about the unique challenges of teen cancer and show them ways they can help Teen Cancer America bring better care to this underserved part of the community.

On February 26, 2016 – the day before The Who kicked off that rescheduled second leg of their North American tour – Roger and Republic Records, supported by Teen Cancer America and First Citizens Bank, released Let My Love Open The Door as a charity single available exclusively in the United States on Apple’s iTunes music service. With Roger, Republic and Apple all donating their proceeds, 93% of every sale goes to Teen Cancer America.







## The Commitment

First Citizens' efforts on behalf of Teen Cancer America continue.

"We're helping raise awareness – and money – for Teen Cancer America at every touchpoint," says Brand Marketing Manager Barbara Thompson. "In all our branches, on our website, at our ATMs, in our social media, in our public relations and, of course, in our advertising."

This past winter, First Citizens held a fundraiser for associates. Jeans For Teens promised employees they could all wear jeans to work for a day *if* they hit their collective fundraising goal. It was a smashing success, with associates passing the goal 11 days early. And this spring, First Citizens hosted the launch of Leadership TCA, a new initiative to engage corporate leaders and high net worth individuals for Teen Cancer America. The bank kicked off Leadership TCA with an invitation-only fundraiser at its Raleigh headquarters, featuring a special appearance by Roger Daltrey.

Most important, First Citizens is reaching out to its communities. The response to the awareness-raising efforts – from families, schools, businesses and hospitals – has been strong. People who a few months before hadn't heard about Teen Cancer America have been getting in touch with First Citizens and its bankers to find out how they can help.

As Frank Holding, First Citizens Chairman and CEO, has said, "We're excited to introduce Teen Cancer America to the communities we serve. Together, we can help open the door to better care and brighter futures."

"Open the door." It's a simple theme . . . but a powerful idea. And an important initiative. One that wouldn't have been possible without the work of hundreds of people across the country.

And it all started with a simple conversation between a rock star and some bankers.

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