



With his acoustic guitar and catchy tune, actor and comedian **Jimmy Fallon** raises money for Fisher House one download—and sponge—at a time.

By DINA SANTORELLI

It was either going to be Car Wash for Peace or Bake Sale for Peace.

"I was sitting around with my friend and we're watching the news, and I just said I want to do something for the troops, to show them that we care about them, but it's gotta be funny as well," says actor, impressionist and comedian Jimmy Fallon. "We went with Car Wash for Peace, because it was more of a summery thing."

The song, "Car Wash for Peace," which has a kind of 60s-folk, "Give Peace a Chance" vibe, was first performed by Fallon in February of this year at Joe's Pub in New York City during Pete Townsend of The Who and Rachel Fuller's Attic Jam show.

"I was the host, and I said I have a new song, I hope you like it, it's a political song, it's really serious, so don't laugh at this," Fallon tells *Salute*. "And then I sang 'Car Wash for Peace,' and I rocked. It killed. I was so happy. Everyone was clapping and got so into it. And I sat down and as we're there, Sean Lennon got on stage and said (impersonates Lennon), 'I just want to say, for Jimmy Fallon, I mean, um, if my mom heard it, she'd be like, why not? Let's get the sponges and buckets and let's do this!'"

"I'm so excited," says Fallon, who spent six years on *Saturday Night Live*. "I'm looking at my friend, like, this is our little song, and we're laughing, and then Pete Townsend comes out and he's, like (impersonates Townsend), 'I just want to say, Jimmy's song... I thought it was Car Wash for Pete... Well, I love that song, and we all need a good washing: Or something like that, and it was just kind of awesome.'" Then in April, at the Food Bank of New York City's annual Can-Do awards gala at Pier 60 at Chelsea Piers, Fallon's performance of "Car Wash for Peace" was followed by an appearance by former President Bill Clinton.

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we might have gotten somewhere... I'm never leaving my house ever again without a sponge in my hand. How exciting was that? It was just awesome. That was just the greatest. It was so fun and cool."

Following the success of those appearances, Fallon contacted his record label, Geffen, about recording the song and having the proceeds benefit a charity of his choice. The song is now available exclusively on iTunes, and Fallon is donating his portion of the proceeds—about \$1 for each download—to Fisher House, the Rockville, Md.-based organization that donates "comfort homes," built on the grounds of major military and VA medical centers, that enable family members to be close to a loved one during the hospitalization for an unexpected illness, disease, or injury.

There were performances on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *The View*, Howard Stern's Sirius radio show, as well as small, impromptu events in New York's Central Park and Times Square, which can be viewed on YouTube.com. Fallon created his own MySpace.com page, "which I had never done before in my life," he says, "and it was interesting, and the Myspace page is fun, and so we did it and just expected it to be like, okay, that's fun, and we made a little bit of money for Fisher House, and then people

started having car washes."

Fallon first received an email from Richard Sasso, owner of Mr. Squeaky Car Wash in Pompano Beach, Fla. "When a Mr. Squeaky emails you, it can go either way," he says. "He could be a car wash salesman, or he could tie me up in the basement, but I believed him and answered him, and he said he wanted to have a car wash and donate the proceeds of the whole day's car wash to Fisher House. He asked me to come to his car wash in June and play the song, so I flew to Pompano Beach and played it for all the people getting their car washed. It was awesome. I loved it."

In fact, it has been car washes, rather than downloads, that have raised money for Fisher House thus far. "We have not received any proceeds from the sale of the song on iTunes at this point in time," says Catherine McKenzie, operations officer for Fisher House. "We have had quite a few donations inspired by the song. Several car washes have had car washes for peace and sent us the proceeds."

Indeed, it looks like Fallon has taken the crown from SpongeBob Squarepants as the nation's Sponge King, with a possible a National Car Wash for Peace Day in the works. "I never thought that something so good could come out of a goofy song," says Fallon, who hopes to start selling Car Wash for Peace tee-shirts, visors and whistles, with all the proceeds benefiting Fisher House. "I'm talking to the kids, telling them to have one in their high school. Even if you raise 5 dollars, it's the point of supporting the troops. The message is louder... I just wanted to be proactive and do something positive.

"I don't want people to think that veterans are just in the '50s. They're not," says Fallon, who stars in the upcoming film, *Rockett*, with Sharon Stone and Lucy Liu. "They're kids coming back. They're 17 years old. I mean, 17 years old... God, that's almost half my age. They're coming back with one arm missing, and if you can just imagine what that would be like, it's just crazy. I like what Fisher House is doing, kind of like Ronald McDonald house, where they have the parents come sit with them and live with them as they get through this whole terrible thing. I just think it's really cool what they do."

You're pretty cool yourself, Jimmy Fallon. 🏠