

How sweet is that?

The Alzheimer Society HPE began work on the Music for Me program last summer in Bancroft with the help and support of two passionate and dedicated individuals from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The grant that they were able to secure for the Alzheimer Society HPE kick started the program, along with donations from people from the Bancroft community. At present, we have 21 iPod Shuffles at the Centennial Manor for residents of the secure unit, with another order on the way as the program continues to grow. Playlists for each resident are put together with the help of family members and caregivers who help to provide insight into the music each person used to enjoy. Music is such a personal interest, which is why the Music for Me program strives to create playlists which are made specifically and carefully for each participant.

Lorrie Moshenko is a volunteer for the Alzheimer Society HPE who is continuing the dedication and passion for the Music for Me program by visiting with residents at the Manor and ensuring that they have the chance to listen to their playlists. Below is a little insight into what being a volunteer for Music for Me is all about, directly from Lorrie's experience:

“Our missionary friends have returned home, so I am now continuing their passion in bringing this program to the participants at the Manor. I started volunteering at the beginning of October and try very hard to maintain this wonderful concept of soothing minds and providing some peace through music. No one said this was going to be easy, but the rewards are amazing. On a good day, chats are insightful, touching and sweet. When I have a quieter or consoling day, only music is listened to and sharing words is limited by choice. And for some, there are never any words shared. Only a soft touch to let them know I'm there. However, it appears that this program is all about gliding through life to the lilt of your favourite tunes. I have come to the realization that many people tell time with music. A song or a group or a favourite singer marks out what grade they were in school, special milestones or accomplishments in life, hardships, romance, family memories and even religious comforts. It is like “telling time with music.” So when I have the privilege to place these earphones on someone and then watch them smile, or gently tap their fingers, or start chatting about what that song meant to them or even to soothe their agitated state in that moment, I am truly excited to provide some measure of tranquility and comfort to those I serve. Right now I am able to do volunteer work twice a week and there is hope that others will get involved as the Music for Me Program continues to grow. So many more individuals could benefit from this program.

Dr. Connie Tomaino, world-renowned pioneer and leader in music therapy said this: “Emotional memories are very well preserved in Alzheimer's disease--love, affection, etc., so songs that carry those emotional memories are the best retained. Chaotic brain activity diminishes as a song holds their attention. It pulls everything together so the person is fully whole, centered in the moment, enabling the person to be more themselves.”

And I get to see this every time I provide service to these clients. How sweet is that??

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