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Launch of Music & Memory Program at Wilton Meadows Health Care Center Gives Residents Way to Reawaken Connections to Past and Present

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Music is used at the health care facility to foster a positive environment for Alzheimer's disease. Research has indicated that music can help those with cognitive diseases recover lost memories and enjoy a higher quality of life.

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At Wilton Meadows health care center, music is frequently used as an essential factor in creating a positive environment for residents. However, recent research alongside the "Music & Memory" program has revealed that music can do so much more than previously thought.

Alzheimer's Disease, dementia and neurological impairments are terrible conditions that can rob one of memory and identity. The recent researched has shown Wilton Meadows health care staff that music has been proven to help recover memories, stimulate recognition and enhance quality of life.

"We are very proud to be a newly certified Music & Memory facility. This is a phenomenal program that allows us to deliver personalized music to those in our care. Music is a lifeline to those with dementia. Where words often fail, music can thrive," says Danielle Ancona, director of therapeutic recreation and certified dementia practitioner at Wilton Meadows health care center.

Founded in 2006, Music & Memory is a non-profit organization that brings personalized music into the lives of the elderly or infirm using digital music technology. Each resident is provided with an iPod loaded with a person-specific playlist of favorite songs and preferred genres of

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music. Family members are enlisted to help provide such specific music interests. Volunteers then assist with the compilation of playlists and subsequent loading onto the devices.

"The personalized playlists are key. Some residents love classical music; others the big bands. One resident who was a Sunday school teacher responds to religious music. Knowing our residents and their histories is critical in implementing this program effectively," says Ancona.

Listening to favorite music often triggers feelings and memories of the past. Holiday music, songs played at weddings or favorite tunes can break through the isolation of dementia and bring back memories. A resident will respond to their wedding song, though they may not remember their spouse's name or when they married. Residents become more cheerful and less agitated and can sit contentedly for longer periods of time. Residents who previously were remote, disengaged and completely unresponsive can remarkably become animated, tap, sway and sing to favorite rhythms. The dedicated staff at Wilton Meadows health care center have been trained to understand the whole procedure. Additionally, a music therapist on staff provides one-to-one music visits.

Readers who are interested in learning more, or those would like to become a part of this wonderful program at Wilton Meadows, are asked to contact Danielle Ancona at [daniellea\(at\)wiltonmeadows.com](mailto:daniellea(at)wiltonmeadows.com). Donations of gently used iPods are always welcome.

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