

Music & Memory program helping elderly connect to their past in Randolph County

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By Aaron Payne in News | January 04, 2015 at 9:56PM

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ELKINS, W. Va. — The **Elkins Rehabilitation and Care Center** is working to implement a program that aims to help its elderly residents recall memories through music.

Music & Memory trains elder care professionals to put together personalized playlists for those struggling with Alzheimer’s and dementia to reconnect with their past.

“It is something that is good for them that brings back a time of happiness and helps even stimulate memories that then they can actually talk about, like, “I remember that song when,” said Denise Campbell, the ERCC’s administrator. “It does help with the memory.”

The national nonprofit organization was officially recognized in 2010, but began years earlier when its founder and executive director Dan Cohen volunteered at a nursing home in New York, creating personalized playlists for residents. The response was so positive the endeavor received funding from the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation to provide 200 iPods in order to test the program at four facilities.

The success of the program has expanded to 49 states, five countries and was the subject of the documentary **“Alive Inside: A Story of Music and Memory”** in 2012.

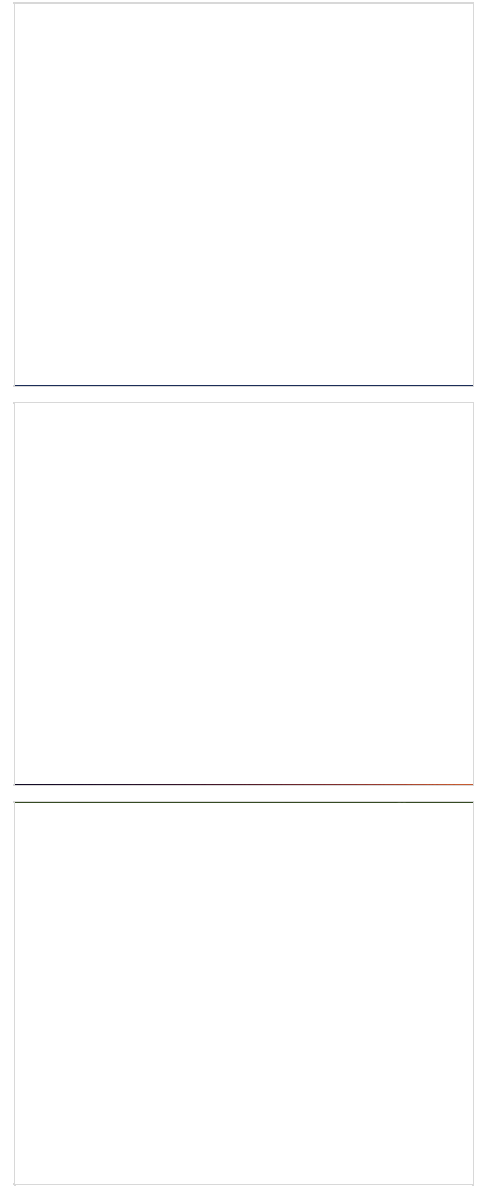
Music & Memory was brought to ERCC’s attention by Linda Zimmer, the expressive arts therapist for the facility and has become the first certified by the organization in the Mountain State.

Campbell says they will start small, beginning with residents of the recently developed dementia unit.

“We have a very strong interest in taking care of residents who have memory [loss], dementia, Alzheimer’s and we are in the midst of getting a unit developed in our facility,” she said. “We thought this program would really connect with our expansion of having a defined dementia unit.”

As resources come in, the program will expand from there.

“First start with that population of those 25 residents, but our total facility has 111,” Campbell said. “Our ultimate goal is that every patient in the facility will have their own iPod with their own music



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that they enjoy.”

To help gather the resources to reach this ultimate goal, Zimmer has helped organize benefits within the community. One such event, “The Melody Lingers On” concert was held Sunday at the Randolph County Community Arts Center, featuring local area musicians.

“We’re trying to encourage anyone who would want to be a sponsor,” Campbell said. “We just really believe that this is something positive and we’re always looking for things to do that are positive for the patients that we take care of.”

Other events are planned and ERCC is accepting donations in the form of gently used iPods and iTunes gift cards at its 1175 Beverly Pike location in Elkins.

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5 Comments

Resident

That place is a joke. Another worthless idea by a double dipping politician, Denise Campbell. This is the only reason it is in MetroNew. This whole county is typical WV good old boy system.

January 5, 2015 at 12:39 pm |

Andrea

Actually this program doesn't cost the taxpayer anything. That is an odd comment to make.

What is stupid about this idea? That a facility is working to try and help its residents enjoy a more fulfilling life during their time there??

January 5, 2015 at 9:45 am |

Rufus

How much is this BS program costing the taxpayer.

January 5, 2015 at 6:59 am |

Nurse

What a stupid idea.

January 4, 2015 at 11:48 pm |

Realist

How is this stupid? Are you so uneducated that you have no awareness to what this is doing for people?

January 5, 2015 at 11:27 am |

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