



Dear family and friends:

The Recreation Therapy department at Bethany Riverside recently completed the training to become a MUSIC & MEMORY<sup>SM</sup> certified facility, which means that we are part of a nationwide program that provides music for residents with dementia and other chronic cognitive and physical impairments. At our facility, we have iPods and music available to create personalized music selections for individual residents, at no cost to the resident or their family.

MUSIC & MEMORY<sup>SM</sup> is all about bringing joy into the lives of people who are living with dementia. Extensive neuroscience research has shown how our brains respond positively to music, especially in those with dementia. It has been shown that music is linked with personal emotions, and causes individuals with dementia to respond positively, showing enjoyment and renewed concentration. Music can cause memories that we thought to be lost, to resurface. In fact, the part of the brain that responds to music is the last part of the brain that dementia affects. We can use music to reach that part of the brain and reconnect with our loved ones on a level they find enjoyable and fulfilling. One researcher summed up the program's benefits this way:

- Someone who has been silent or less communicative may begin to talk and be more social.
- Someone who has been sad and depressed may feel happier.
- Someone who has been less mobile may become more physically active.

There are many research articles featuring the phenomenon of music and its effect on memory. For more information, visit [musicandmemory.org](http://musicandmemory.org) to read testimonials, research, and how the MUSIC & MEMORY<sup>SM</sup> program is rapidly spreading across the country. There is a short video on the site, titled "Henry", which is a great example of how much of a difference music makes in one resident's life. There is also a longer documentary called "Alive Inside" which follows the beginnings of the MUSIC & MEMORY<sup>SM</sup> program. It is available on some online movie streaming websites, and is a wonderful representation of the power of music for memory.

Since completing the certification, we have had more than 20 residents involved with the MUSIC & MEMORY<sup>SM</sup> program, and have already seen tremendous benefits. These residents have brighter moods and enjoy interacting with staff more when they are listening to *their* music. The music decreases agitation and helps residents relax and enjoy the simple activity of listening. They become more willing to talk with staff, reminisce, and participate in other activities.

We believe that music is a very important tool for our residents. The best way to create *personalized* music playlists is to ask our residents and their loved ones for their input. We have included a questionnaire that will help us to create the best possible playlist for your loved one. This simple questionnaire will help you narrow

down specific artists, songs, or genres that your loved one enjoyed at one time. We have the ability to download virtually any song, artist, and genre off of iTunes, and this list is just a tiny sample of the music we have available. The more detailed your answers are, the more beneficial the playlist will be. Please take the time to thoughtfully fill out the questionnaire and return it to Bethany Riverside. You may drop your questionnaire off at the front desk, or mail it to:

Bethany Riverside  
Attn: Danielle Wehrs  
2575 S. 7<sup>th</sup> St  
La Crosse, WI 54601

It is our mission to provide the most individualized care as we can for our Residents. With your help, we will create a program that can greatly enhance the overall quality of life for your loved one.

Thank you in advance for participating in our program! Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Danielle Wehrs, CTRS  
Director of Recreation Therapy and Volunteer Services  
(608)406-3926  
DEWehrs@gundersenhealth.org