

Music is the soundtrack of life – help our residents tune in

Cherry Cannon, 88, lives at mecwacare's Jubilee House in Caulfield North. She has faced some challenges in her later years and may face many more, but one constant in Cherry's life has been music.

Cherry believes that music touches her heart and mind, conjuring beautiful memories of childhood, weddings and time with her family. But music also has a profound physical impact on Cherry. Listening to *Laura* by Tony Bennett motivates her to sing and dance, with thoughts of romance. Cherry has learned about the highs and lows of life through music which takes her to places she didn't know existed. Her husband John played the bongos in a band and when she hears a strong beat, it reminds Cherry of watching him play. She also recalls the smell of roses in the night when he performed and compares music to a good fragrance – that lingering satisfaction that doesn't wane despite the years that have passed.

For mecwacare's residents living with dementia, music has never been more important.

Music triggers a part of the brain that the cruel talons of dementia cannot reach. Favourite songs can evoke physical responses and moments of reconnection with family almost instantly. Research into the benefits of music has proven that musical perception, musical emotion and musical memory can survive long after other forms of memory and cognitive function have disappeared.*

Music is not a cure, but it is an activity mecwacare's residents will always be able to enjoy when applied as a form of therapy using the right equipment and programs. Drumming Circles (a social experience) and Music & Memory (an individual experience) are the leading programs that have been making a difference to people living with dementia around the world.

Music therapy offers a chance to rediscover what has been taken. It introduces the person behind the disease.

We want to bring these benefits to mecwacare's residents – but we need your help.

“It lifts the spirit, like pouring ointment on a wound. It calms that moment even though the edges are still hurting.”

– Cherry Cannon



Drumming Circles

Drumming Circles participants express themselves collectively by using percussion instruments and vocals to create a song together. This program focuses on the importance of repetition and self-expression to build a sense of community.

Benefits: Releases stress, improves social skills, provides a space for creative expression, improves concentration, generates feelings of independence, uses both brain hemispheres, stimulates senses and reduces anxiety.

Music & Memory

Music & Memory uses personalised playlists on portable devices, such as an iPod, to target deep memories and ignite passion, which can help a person living with dementia feel like themselves again. A single song can enhance conversation skills, socialisation and fond memories of loved ones.

Benefits: Deepened relationship with family and staff, behaviour management, reconnection with the past, improved cognitive ability and a positive impact on mood.



mecwacare's Music Therapist Daniel Seah has seen first-hand the benefits of music for people living with dementia. Daniel knows music therapy is not a cure; it's a method of comfortably walking people through their past with dignity. He tells the story of a woman living with later-stage dementia, who went from being confused and displaying aggressive behaviour to rediscovering her identity through music. By using songs from her country of origin, Daniel helped her remember key moments of her life in a calming manner that alleviated stress. Music can transport a person to times when they felt pride and accomplishment, reconnecting them to emotions that had been locked away.

Music may be the only key to the deepest memories that dementia keeps hidden.

A wedding surrounded by family and friends.

The birth of a child.

Walking hand in hand with a husband or wife.

A holiday on the beach.

At a time when isolation is encouraged to keep the elderly safe, our memories are more crucial than ever.

Dementia intrudes on a person's brain in three stages. There is no control over the speed in which it occurs. In early-stage dementia, a person may repeat themselves or lose interest in activities they once loved. As the disease progresses to moderate-stage dementia, they can forget a partner or child's name and become lost in familiar surroundings, which can cause frustration and even aggression. When advanced dementia takes hold, the physical and mental changes become more prominent – loss of speech and understanding, difficulty moving and little to no recognition of family and friends. Most functions are affected as dementia takes its toll, but hearing and emotional response are the last to leave. Music brings a person living with dementia back into the world, replaying their soundtrack of life to ignite feelings that were lost.**

Dementia is the single greatest cause of disability in older Australians.

mecwacare's mission is to provide the benefits of music to all our residents, not just people living with dementia. Life changes as we age, but music is always available to bring a smile or spark a memory, but we need the right equipment and training to do this.

Help us continue supporting those who need us most.

All funds raised will go directly towards individualised and social music programs proven to improve behaviour, reignite memories and reconnect with others on the good days and not-so-bright days.

There is no cure for dementia, but there is an opportunity to bring cherished memories to the surface through the power of music.

We want to make sure residents such as Cherry have access to the soundtrack of their lives for the rest of their lives.

In Cherry's words, sharing music with someone is special. This is a chance to share music with everyone in our care.

Our goal is to raise \$25,000 to put 10 music sets (headphones and devices) and 10 drums in each of mecwacare's 13 residential facilities and provide our lifestyle staff with the training they need to successfully conduct these music programs.

Together, we can make that happen.

*Dr Oliver Sacks, leading neurologist with outstanding contributions in support of music therapy – <https://practicalneurology.com/articles/2017-june/music-and-dementia-an-overview> **Dementia Australia – <https://www.dementia.org.au/about-dementia/what-is-dementia/progression-of-dementia>

Your gift will change the lives of our residents. Thank you for your support.

Payment Details:

Title: Mr / Miss / Mrs / Ms / Other: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____ (optional)

☐ I would like to know how my donation is making a difference

☐ I would like to receive information about remembering mecwacare in my Will.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

I would like to make a donation to purchase:

☐ \$15 One pair of headphones ☐ \$65 One drum

☐ \$75 One music device ☐ \$100 One training course

☐ \$_____ Other amount **OR**

I would like to make a regular monthly donation of \$_____ via credit card on the 15th of every month.

Payment by:

☐ Cheque ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ AMEX AMEX ID _ / _ / _

Cardholder no. _____ / _____ / _____

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