

MUSIC AND SOCIALIZATION

Social Exchange and Creative Arts

The combination of multigenerational social exchange and creative arts can open up fun and rewarding opportunities for older adults, thereby expanding their roles in society such that they are no longer limited to the sedentary sick role where their main focus is dealing with chronic neurological conditions.



MUSICMENDSMINDS, INC. OBJECTIVES

Our Mission

To share the healing power of music to improve the lives of patients with neurocognitive decline and the lives of their families.



Our Vision

MusicMendsMinds (MMM) fosters the development of musical bands comprised of elder musicians and singers affected by neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and other related forms of dementia. Ideally, these unique bands also include young music students to create a joyful alternative to social isolation by bringing together musicians, singers, students, caregivers, and friends to make music, build connections, and promote aging in place in their home.

SCIENCE BEHIND OUR APPROACH

Music Memories

Music memories seem to be stored and accessed differently than our "declarative" memories.; they have a powerful emotional component. Therefore, even individuals with cognitive and memory deficits, find their musical memories are intact.



Playing an Instrument : Full Brain Workout

Playing an instrument engages sensory, motor, auditory, visual and cognitive centers. Simultaneously, it releases dopamine, which is involved in learning, movement control and mood. By engaging multiple brain circuits, with a focus on skill improvement and collaboration with other musicians, we believe that the circuitry in the brain can be maintained, rescued or rewired.



Socialization and Intergenerational Support

Socializing with others is a critical component of maintaining cognitive health, improving mood and increasing feelings of wellbeing among the elderly. Regularly scheduled rehearsals with the involvement of younger musicians stimulates senior members, who view themselves as mentors and role models. This interaction increases self-esteem and feelings and generativity.

FOUNDING BAND MODEL

The 5th Dementia

The first band in West LA has developed collaborative partnerships with a local school (Windward School), university health system (UCLA Health System), and community centers (Brentwood Presbyterian Church and InsightLA). The band hosts bi-weekly rehearsals and seasonal concerts that encourage the older adults to engage in lifelong learning opportunities with the students.



OUTCOMES: MEDIA COVERAGE AND REPLICATION

Media Coverage

The 5th Dementia has demonstrated benefits for individual and community health in psychosocial, spiritual, and artistic domains that can be seen by the improved mood, emotional affect, and energy levels from the participating seniors. This has allowed MusicMendsMinds, Inc. to receive nationwide coverage from PBS, The Michael J. Fox Foundation, and The Jewish Journal, in addition to local coverage from CBS and the Los Angeles Jazz Society.



Replication

Six new bands have already formed in California, Texas and Washington State; and we have been in close conversation with the Michael J. Fox Foundation, the Colburn School of Music, California State University, Northridge, (CSUN) and the Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System.

HEALTH SERVICE IMPLICATIONS

Caregiver Support and Cost-Savings

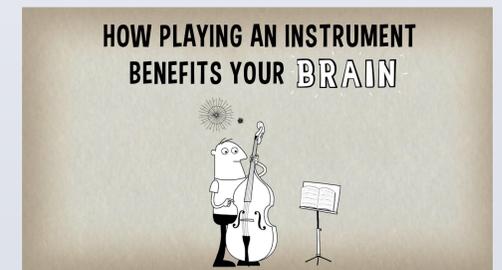
According to the Alzheimer's Association, unpaid care from friends and family members is valued at 217.7 billion dollars. However, nearly 60% of these caregivers experience high emotional stress and 40% suffer depression. The concerts and rehearsals help improve health outcomes for all. Caregivers experience joy, hope, and relief as they witness their loved one's reduced symptoms, elevated mood, and new-found ability to express themselves.

RESOURCES AND RESEARCH REFERENCES

Band Kit

Replication kits are available for those interested in creating a therapeutic intergenerational band in their community.

Ted-Ed : How Playing an Instrument Benefits Your Brain By: Anita Collins



Alive Inside by Michael Rossato-Bennett



Social Worker Dan Cohen, founder of the nonprofit organization Music & Memory, fights against a broken healthcare system to demonstrate music's ability to combat memory loss and restore a deep sense of self to those suffering from it.

Eggers, S., & Hensley, B. (2004). Empowering Spirituality and Generativity Through Intergenerational Connections. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*, 17(1-2), 87-108.

CONTACT

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