

In 2016, The Grove Nursing Home and the Arnprior Public Library launched the Music of Your Life Program. iPods were collected to create playlists for The Grove's 60 residents, plus those in the Adult Day Program. The inspiration came from a documentary called *Alive Inside*, which showed the power of music in memory care.

The iPods came by donations (both of money and gently used iPods), financial support through the local service club sector and Apple Canada. By the end of the summer of 2016, the library began the purchase of music.

A rich body of research supports the benefits of music in dementia and palliative care, and this project has demonstrated a marked increase in socialization. The music helps to calm brain activity, enabling the resident to focus on the present moment and regain that vital connection to others. It also allows a resident to create calm within an often busy long-term care facility.

The selection of music is as individualized as their life



stories. No two playlists are alike and music can be a great equalizer in the relationships across the spectrum of care. It also helped staff to gain a deeper connection to each resident.

For seniors without dementia, the program allowed residents to share memories over old familiar songs and form new bonds with fellow residents. Others created acrylic frames to mount iPods, and more joined in photography sessions. The involvement created moments of resident togetherness, laughter and joy.

Family members have been

amazed with the results, and that excitement has resonated throughout the community. Requests for an expanded program came pouring into the library, and there is now a Music of Your Life Program for the general population and for clients of Hospice Renfrew.

While the project saw the local community rally in support of seniors, additional recognition has taken place. Following CBC Radio coverage, the library was fielding calls from library systems throughout the region, and The Grove was taking calls

from across Canada on how to develop a similar partnership. The Ottawa Public Library now has a similar program. The producer of *Alive Inside* and the founder of New York's Music and Memories Foundation offered congratulations and invited both The Grove and the Arnprior Public Library to join the foundation. Finally, this spring, the Grove received the Community Connections award from AdvantAge Ontario for the program. As the project evolves, the need for additional devices has grown. The library has re-issued a call for the donation of gently used iPod Shuffles which may be tucked away in drawers and not being used. This project will breathe new life into these devices and mean so much for seniors in the community.

ASK THE EXPERT:

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