

# MUSIC MATTERS

If the story of Landermeads and music were to be given a 'once upon a time' it would begin in 2013. In this year, we looked closely at the *function* of the care we were providing to those living with us. The care was very task led and although effective and thorough, did not have a holistic comprehension of the needs of the individuals living with us. From here, Landermeads set in motion its project towards emotionally led support; support that looked at each individual and understood their needs beyond the physical.

Walking into Landermeads this morning I can hear Betty Davis oozing through the walls of the living room, I peer into the living room and see Jean swaying her hips and clapping whilst looking out into the garden. The home and the staff are moving with the rhythm of the music. Music has been central to our journey. In 2016 we worked with the University of Nottingham in their research project, 'Soundtrack to My Life'.

The motive was to investigate the effect that music has on those living with a dementia. Within Landermeads, we used this research and training and developed 'Music Matters', a programme that was run by our very own, Rachel Ravenscroft. 'Music Matters' sought to, with the help of team members and relatives, create personalised soundtracks for our family members, focusing closely on those living with an advanced dementia and as such found it difficult to express themselves through conventional means. Within this, each family member

was given an MP3 with their favourite music. The results were outstanding. One of our family members was quiet and often unsettled upon moving to Landermeads, after creating a music matters programme for her and finding out her history of weekly barn dances we were able to discover her relationship with music. She transformed when she heard country music, starting to dance around the living room and joining in with the other family members.



In recent years many charities, including Alzheimer's UK have published findings on the positive effects of music on those living with a dementia, often coining their findings into 'where words fail, music speaks'. We have used music to bring people together. Within the home we hold a weekly choir on a Monday lunch and regular dance classes, outside family members enjoy Vicky McClure's Dementia Choir at the University

of Nottingham. The silky thread of music ties a bow around people that may never have had the opportunity to meet otherwise.



Professor Paul Robertson has stated that 'the auditory system of the brain is fully functional at 16 weeks, musically receptive before anything else – so it's a case of first in, last out'. For the last three years we have run an annual Music Festival. The festival has brought together music from all ages; we have had performances from Footlights a

children's music and theatre group, the Beeston Rock Choir, local talent from budding artists and a dubious amount of karaoke from our family members. Our festival, 'All Together Now', celebrates the power of music to permeate boundaries. Through music, we have nurtured a sense of community, with 800 people coming to join us on the day! Not only does music help re-colour our memories, it also transforms the present.

Over the past few months we have been running a Dementia Community Awareness project. The aim is to help prevent the negative shadow hanging over dementia from congealing. By re-establishing threads with the community, both the family member and those in the community experience a greater sense of ease around dementia whilst also doing something they both love! In one instance, an individual was brought to live with us because he was increasingly withdrawn and unsettled at home. His behaviour did not change upon arrival; until, knowing he was a keen piano player and part-time piano teacher many years back, we rekindled his relationship with the piano. Since then, playing weekly in a local restaurant and accompanying a few others to the Dementia Choir and playing on a grand piano, his behaviour has completely changed. As of most Dan struggles with the frustration of expression but when he sits at the piano his emotions pour out onto the keys.



It is difficult to record the effect that music has on those living with dementia, it feels almost debilitating writing it down. The effect is love; love in the individual, their family, our staff, the community. We are aware of the difficulty this poses in relation to funding, but we are passionate that if we keep communicating and recording our own stories it will become infectious! With the success of last year, we are taking part in and attending the University of Nottingham Power of Music in Health and Social Care 2019 conference in November. Landermeads sings with music. The relationship is indistinguishable. Our story with music is one of love and results and we can't wait to champion the positive effects it has within and outside our walls to help the rhythm spread!

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