It’s been ten years since Music & Memory began its mission to improve the lives of people with dementia. In that time, we’ve certified over 5,000 healthcare and community settings to provide personalized music, and thanks to state government leaders across the country, our program is now part of policy in 29 states—and counting.

Last year, the unprecedented happened, and like many organizations, we were unprepared for the level of need that would arise. To see seniors living in partial or total isolation was heartbreaking for all of us, but despite this we’re proud of the way Music & Memory responded. As the crisis emerged, our staff and board pivoted our services entirely to provide relief to those living in isolation, and provided tools and resources for staff on the front lines, to whom we still owe a great debt. We also increased support for our certified organizations, offering free and discounted services, and payment extensions to help those in need. All things considered, we did what we felt was right and we’re proud of the effort.

As the impact of COVID continues to evolve, our goals remain the same; to shape and reshape our services as often as necessary to provide the right tools and resources for those who need them most. Now more than ever, personalized music playlists can make a big difference in people’s lives. The constant presence of familiar music can help to combat the fear and uncertainty of these times, and improving someone’s quality of life today can help to lift both their spirits and yours. We hope you’ll join us in supporting this important mission.

Tony Lewis
Board Chair
In the most comprehensive study of its kind on the effects of the Music & Memory program, researchers from the Betty Irene Moore School of Nursing at UC Davis found that personalized music is associated with a reduction in the amount of antipsychotic medication needed by nursing home residents and fewer distressed behaviors. The results were published in the Journal for Post-acute and Long-term Care Medicine (JAMDA).

The three-year study of 4,107 residents in 265 California nursing homes found the use of antipsychotic drugs declined by 13% and anti-anxiety medications declined by 17% each quarter for residents with dementia using the music program. The odds of depressive symptoms decreased 16% per quarter and measurable reported pain decreased 17% per quarter. In addition, the number of days on medications declined by 30% and aggressive behaviors shrank by 20%.

“This Study provides further evidence of the positive impact personalized music programs can have for those with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia – not only on improved quality of life but also on the cost and quality of caring,” said Concetta M. Tomaino, DA, LCAT, MT-BC, Music & Memory Board Member, and Executive Director and co-founder of the Institute for Music and Neurologic Function.

In Texas, a statewide effort including the use of Music & Memory led to a 58% reduction in the use of antipsychotic drugs in nursing facilities – more than any other state, according to a report from the National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes. Texas first launched Music & Memory in 2015 as a pilot program in nursing facilities and at HHSC’s state supported living centers and Austin State Hospital in 2016. Since then, more than 1,000 nursing homes across Texas have taken part in the HHSC Music & Memory program.

Given the size of the study and the overwhelming evidence that personalized music reduces negative outcomes, it’s now more clear than ever that adoption of the Music & Memory program contributes to positive outcomes and quality of care for those living with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia and cognitive loss.

Several significant studies published in 2020 have validated our own observations about the benefits of personalized music playlists:
A receptive online audience joined us for Music & Memory: Help Bring the Gift of Music to Those Living with Alzheimer’s, an informational webinar featuring Dr. G Allen Power, MD, noted board-certified internist and geriatrician, as well as Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Rochester.

Sponsored by Harvard Business School Club of New York, the online presentation showcased the Music & Memory process and how to support our work, as well as how to use these techniques to support a family member or loved one, whether at home or in residential care.

Thank you to the more than 1,500 registered participants who participated in the Fast Forward PBS documentary screening and Q&A session with Fast-Forward Director Michael Eric Hurtig, and music therapy pioneer Dr. Concetta Tomaino.

The film features Music & Memory and demonstrates just how vital Music & Memory’s mission is for people living with a range of challenging conditions including dementia associated with aging.

“Our residents have had to endure a lot since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, with loneliness being at the top of the list. But when I put on their music, they are transported to a happier place. The music places them where they need to be, even when they cannot leave the facility.” — Cathy Adams, Music & Memory Coordinator, Morgan City Health Care Center

We are so grateful to those who continue to faithfully provide care for seniors living in long term care organizations during the COVID-19 crisis. Your work is deeply appreciated. In response to this need, we are working harder than ever to ensure that MUSIC & MEMORY® Certified Organizations remain connected and equipped with the best resources available for providing personalized music where it’s needed most. Over the past year, we have offered discounts and extensions on our provided services, and made several new resources available — including two new free trainings — MUSIC & MEMORY® Tablet Engagement and Sustaining Your MUSIC & MEMORY® Program — to help certified organizations sustain their programs in the long term and continue to weather challenges brought about by the health crisis.

These resources are now permanent aspects of Music & Memory program services. Many organizations shared with us what a valuable resource the program has been during the long months of isolation endured by residents.

Support for Certified Organizations
Sustaining Your Music & Memory Program
Music & Memory certified organizations have unlimited access to an array of training and other resources designed to help staff maximize the impact of the program, including a monthly support webinar, Sustaining Your Music & Memory Program. Running about one hour, the online webinar covers effective implementation, new therapeutic benefits of favorite music, available resources, quick start tips, hygiene recommendations and music discovery in the age of social distancing. It’s free for all certified organizations, and every session includes an extended Q&A.
The Power of Personalized Music at Home

While Music & Memory remains rooted in nursing homes and other healthcare settings, we’re branching out to bring home the power of personal music. Seventy percent of the 5 million Americans with dementia are cared for at home by family members who do their best to cope with daily challenges of the disease. Favorite music can help to ease those challenges by opening a back door to good memories, improving quality of life for everyone involved and enabling families to keep loved ones at home longer.

Through our community-based partners, we deliver the MUSIC & MEMORY® at Home Kit, an all-in-one package of accessible music equipment and support materials that teach family caregivers how to make the most of our personal music program.

“Personalized music is a profound gift to families, to see their relative come alive.”
— Jed Levine, Executive Director, CaringKind NYC (formerly Alzheimer’s Association NYC Chapter)

Dementia Alliance of North Carolina
MUSIC & MEMORY® at Home Program

Since 2018, Music & Memory has partnered with the Dementia Alliance of North Carolina (DANC) to offer the Music & Memory at Home program to families caring for a loved one with dementia. Led by a team of dedicated staff and volunteers, DANC provides personal, individualized support for the use of the MUSIC & MEMORY® at Home Kit to families from across the state.

Dementia Alliance of North Carolina is a Music and Memory Certified organization with the mission to improve the lives of all North Carolinians impacted by dementia, engaging and empowering them through support, education and research. Music and Memory at Home, Dementia Alliance’s adaptation of Music and Memory, meets the growing needs in North Carolina, providing comfort and assistance to all those living with dementia, as well as their in-home caregivers. https://dementianc.org/helpsupport.

In its pilot year, Dementia Alliance served nearly 100 families with the Music and Memory at Home program. The program continued in a remote format during the global pandemic, supporting families in isolation and a time of uncertainty. Dementia Alliance is excited to announce expansion plans for Music & Memory to meet the growing need in North Carolina, with the goal of offering three times the number of kits in 2022.

“There is not much that makes my husband truly happy anymore. I will walk on clouds for the rest of the day, and so will he!” —Anonymous Caregiver
Building Bridges to the Community

It is estimated that 70-80% of people living with dementia live in their homes. In response to this need, public libraries and other community hubs have begun providing Music & Memory, at no cost, for their patrons. Offering the Music & Memory program provides a valuable opportunity for library patrons who have dementia, or are caring for someone with dementia, to use the program.

Part of what makes libraries an ideal setting for Music & Memory is that they represent and serve a spectrum of individuals and groups, including individuals living with memory loss, care partners, professionals, and community members interested in the issue of dementia. In addition, there is no requirement that those attending library-based programs have a dementia diagnosis. Rather, anyone impacted by dementia or cognitive loss, either personally, as a family member, a professional, or as a community member, may participate.

Through continued efforts in education and advocacy at the community level, the Music & Memory program can be there for those who need it most, regardless of setting, and as individuals transition from one setting to the next.

Making a Difference in Palliative Care

For palliative care teams working to provide comfort and improve quality of life for those in their care, Music & Memory can provide a number of benefits. The presence of favorite music can ease the end-of-life journey by enhancing connection with family, friends and caregivers, and help to reduce stress and anxiety.

“One thing we really didn’t expect was the effect it had on families. We asked them to tell us what music is important to your mom, what did she listen to when cooking dinner, or what was your parents’ wedding song or favorite church music. It brought the family back to a time when their loved one’s life wasn’t all about hospice and dying—really happy family memories.”

— Mary Murray, former Clinical Director, Barnabas Health Hospice, West Orange, New Jersey

Favorite music can also reduce the impact of chronic pain, which can increase cooperation and attention, resulting in less resistance to care. And for individuals aging in place at home and their caregivers, research has shown that favorite songs provide respite, ease transitions and reduce caregiver stress.
Strengthening through Partnerships

Personalized therapeutic music programs are the first step in providing individualized care for those with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. For individuals with more complex needs, a consultation with a professional music therapist is strongly encouraged.

Music & Memory now partners with the Institute for Music and Neurologic Function (IMNF), the organization founded Music & Memory Board Member, Dr. Concetta Tomaino, and Dr. Oliver Sacks. Working more closely with the IMNF is helping Music & Memory deepen its support to organizations who raise questions that are more clinical in nature; for example, questions related to music and people who have suffered a stroke, or who have Parkinson's.

Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed music therapist. The IMNF is a leader in the research and provision of music therapy treatments for a variety of health needs. It has long pioneered and advocated for the use of personalized music.

Music & Memory regularly receives inquires from our certified organizations with questions that are specifically clinical, and we are grateful for the ability to provide these additional resources and support that cover a wider range of individual needs.

A steady stream of anecdotal success stories and smaller research studies have prompted leading researchers to embark on large, multi-year investigations of Music & Memory’s personalized music program. The largest is a $3.7 million, five-year National Institute of Aging grant to Brown University’s Center for Long-Term Care Quality & Innovation to test Music & Memory’s efficacy and effectiveness. This follows a retrospective evaluation that found reduced use of antipsychotic medications and improved behaviors among nursing homes certified in the program compared to control facilities, suggesting that there might be an effect when researchers capture detailed data on implementation and outcomes. The ongoing study involves capturing such data, in order to more definitively examine the program’s effect and to characterize implementation strategies leading to successful Music & Memory programs and outcomes.
Sustainability

Strategic planning guides our growth, with a mission-focused priority of remaining a small, streamlined organization that can scale to meet demand while staying nimble. We have diversified our funding to ensure that our efforts are sustainable.

Total Annual Budget: $520,780

REVENUE BY TYPE

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Meet Our Foundation Partners

“Music & Memory is one of the best projects we have ever done!”
—Brenda Gallant, R.N., State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Maine
MUSIC & MEMORY® is a non-profit organization that helps individuals with a wide range of cognitive and physical conditions to engage with the world, ease pain, and reclaim their humanity through the use of personalized music.

By providing access and education, and by creating a network of Music & Memory certified organizations, our goal is to make the therapeutic use of personalized music a standard of care throughout the healthcare industry.