



VOLUNTEERING FOR MUSIC & MEMORY



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide provides detailed instructions on how to give your time in support of a local Music & Memory program. For questions regarding this process, email carequestions@musicandmemory.org.

Our Story

Music & Memory trains healthcare professionals working in a wide range of healthcare organizations on how to create personalized music playlists for those in their care. We use digital music devices, such as iPods and other Mp3 players, to deliver the personalized music playlists. Musical favorites can provide relief in many different forms for residents participating in the program. For instance, music that is personal to an individual can help them access memories not lost to dementia, reawakening residents so they may communicate and feel like themselves again.

Our goal is to bring joy into the lives of people suffering from a wide range of cognitive and physical challenges. Through access and education, and creating a network of Music & Memory certified organizations, we aim to make this form of personalized therapeutic music a standard of care throughout the healthcare industry.

The Music-Brain Connection

As we all know, hearing the songs associated with a first love or a favorite movie causes a rush of emotions and memories. Music is profoundly linked to our personal history. In fact, our brains are hard-wired to connect music with long-term memory.

Even for persons with severe dementia, music can tap deep emotional recall. For individuals suffering from Alzheimer's or other related dementias, recent memory for names, places, and facts may be compromised, but memory from their teenage years is well-preserved.

Favorite music or songs associated with important personal events can trigger memories of lyrics and the experience connected to the music. Beloved music calms chaotic brain activity and enables the listener to focus on the present moment, regaining a connection to themselves and others.

How Personalized Music Can Transform Lives

Grounded in extensive neuroscience research, tested and proven in thousands of Music & Memory certified organizations, our personalized music program has provided therapeutic benefits for thousands of individuals, clients and the staff who care for them. Again and again, health care professionals tell us our program is often life-changing for everyone involved:

- Finally, professional staff have a way to give pleasure to persons with advanced dementia—often the most difficult to reach.
- Personalized music offers an enjoyable, fulfilling activity for persons on dialysis, on ventilators or who are bed-bound.
- Individuals are more cooperative, attentive and willing to accept care; their brighter moods boost staff morale and enable staff to be more person-centered.
- Because individuals are calmer and less agitated, sundowning (confusion and restlessness) is often reduced or eliminated.
- Individuals are more engaged with those around them.
- Family and staff are able to connect in a more meaningful way with residents around music and memories.
- Personalized music provides a valuable tool for the effort to reduce reliance on antipsychotic medications.

In the words of Tony Lewis, President and CEO of Cobble Hill Health Care in Brooklyn, N.Y., *“Despite the enormous sums of money spent on mood- and behavior-altering medications that are often not particularly effective, nothing compares to these iPods when it comes to improving quality of life.”*

Armed with the facts about Music & Memory and how personalized music can make a positive impact, you’re now ready to volunteer at a Music & Memory program near you!

Help Bring Music to Those in Need

Volunteers play a vital role at Music & Memory. Since the beginning, champions of our program have advocated and promoted the benefits of personalized music, often bringing news of the Music & Memory program directly to care organizations.

Today, thousands of dedicated individuals give their time and energy to help support our network of Music & Memory certified organizations in a number of different ways. If you’re passionate about helping people have access to life-affirming music, you can make a difference at Music & Memory. Whatever your interests and skills, we have a volunteer opportunity that’s right for you. Take the first step today!

Ways to Get Involved as a Volunteer

There are a number of ways to volunteer for Music & Memory:

- Volunteer your time at a Music & Memory certified organization
- Become an Music & Memory ambassador

- Fundraise for Music & Memory
- Launch a Music & Memory equipment donation drive
- Start a club/chapter at a high school or college

Volunteer Your Time at a Certified Care Organization

Many of our most passionate advocates volunteer their time at local Music & Memory programs, often working alongside staff to maintain equipment, create playlists, and provide personalized music. If you are interested in working directly with those living with Alzheimer's, dementia and other cognitive challenges, this may be a good option for you. Here's how to get started:

Find a Music & Memory Program: Your first step in volunteering for a Music & Memory program is locating one that suits your needs. Use our [online map of certified locations](#) to find a Music & Memory program in your area. Try to select an organization that has a planned route and is convenient for you to get to regularly, since you may find yourself scheduled to be there on a regular basis. Make sure to tick the box "open to volunteers" so you only see the organizations that accept volunteer assistance. Search by zipcode to find the closest fifty certified organizations within that range.

As you review the search results, identify two or three organizations that are of interest to you and are conveniently located, making sure to take note of the contact information for future reference.

Attend Music & Memory Volunteer Orientation: After selecting an organization, visit musicandmemory.org and take the Volunteer Orientation Webinar, a one-hour on demand training which provides an overview of the Music & Memory process, best practices for administering personalized music, and tips for working with a Music & Memory team. This will give you the experience you need to hit the ground running when you join a program.

Make Contact with the Organization: When you're ready, get in touch with the organization at the top of your list. Ask to speak with the staff in charge of their Music & Memory program. Let them know that you want to offer your time and ask them what they need help with; this might include technical work, such as setting up music players, assistance with downloading music, or offering music

directly to program participants. Make sure what they need from you aligns with what you are interested in doing.

Request Music & Memory Certification Training Once you're a team volunteer and comfortable moving forward, request to undergo Music & Memory Certification Training. The training consists of [two 60-minute live webinars](#) offered monthly. Taking the training will give you a comprehensive skill set for providing personalized music in a healthcare setting. Music & Memory offers unlimited team training as part of certification, so this is free for the organization.

Beyond that, it's up to you and the team to discuss how best you can take part in helping to provide personalized music at the organization. Roles may vary but talented and passionate people will always be welcome wherever there is a need.

Please feel free to [contact us](#) if you have any questions about this process.

Become a Music & Memory Ambassador

Is there a nursing home or care organization in your community that hasn't heard of Music & Memory? You can help spread the word by contacting organizations and sharing the benefits of personalized music. Sometimes all it takes is someone to show the way.

Please see our guide [Become a Music & Memory Ambassador](#) for key benefits of certification and step-by-step instructions on how to promote Music & Memory.

Fundraise for Music & Memory

Fundraising is a great way to support the use of personalized music, and there are a number of fun and easy ways to be successful. Our guide, [Fundraising for Music & Memory](#), provides tips and best practice for soliciting funds on behalf of Music & Memory, both online and in your community, including:

- Where to Start
- Fundraising Platforms
- Corporate Giving

- DIY/Offline Giving Ideas
- Other Ways to Give

The funds you raise can go directly to Music & Memory, which relies on donations to continue its mission, or you can donate directly to a care organization in your area.

Launch a Music & Memory Equipment Donation Drive

Hosting a donation drive is a great way to collect gently used music devices for people who need them most, support your local community or a sister community in need, and raise awareness for Music & Memory. You can also collect iTunes gift cards, cables and chargers (if in working condition), and cash donations.

This is a wonderful activity for a grade school, high school or college community service project; church, synagogue or mosque community outreach; or service club program.

Anyone whose family member or friend has been affected by Alzheimer's will have a strong motivation to contribute. In addition, as more and more people switch their music collections from music players to smartphones, there's a growing supply of second-hand music players. We want to keep these devices out of landfills and put them into the hands of elders who can really benefit from personalized playlists.

You'll find everything you need by downloading our free guide, [*How to Run a Successful Donation Drive for Music & Memory*](#).

Start a Music & Memory Club or Chapter

Initiating a Music & Memory club or chapter within your school creates a unique opportunity for you and your peers to bring personalized music to those who need it most. By creating such a group, you can directly support Music & Memory certified organizations in your community. A Music & Memory student chapter provides a consistent volunteer base to a Music & Memory program throughout the years; as seniors graduate, underclassmen continue the chapter as new freshmen join.

As a group of dedicated volunteers, you can provide support in many ways, including:

- Enhancing the care provided by staff and putting your tech skills to work by creating personalized playlists for Music & Memory participants
- Providing financial support to Music & Memory programs by holding fundraisers to buy equipment for existing programs or to get a facility certified
- Holding equipment drives to collect digital music players, laptops and other equipment for Music & Memory certified organizations
- Raising community awareness and support by hosting Alive Inside film screenings and Music & Memory speaking engagements at your school

Being a member of a student chapter also looks great on your college applications and may fulfill required volunteer hours. Volunteering provides an opportunity to discover new career options and create a network in the healthcare field. You'll find that your student chapter fosters meaningful intergenerational connections between seniors and young people. Many of our volunteers find their work with Music & Memory to be rewarding and life-changing!

Download the Music & Memory High School Student Chapter Kit for more information on how to launch a Music & Memory student club or chapter in your area.

Other Ways to Give Donations

There are always occasions for generosity, and those that look for them profit the most. Music & Memory will gladly accept in-lieu-of-flowers cash gifts, gifts of stock/bonds or funds allotted in an estate plan or will, because we know what it means to give during those times. Thank you for your gift!

- **Wedding:** in lieu of flowers
- **Funeral:** in lieu of flowers
- **Bonds/Stock:** send gifts of stocks/bonds.
- **Estate/Will:** funds allotted in estate planning

If You Need to Send a Check

For checks, please be sure to include your contact information so Music & Memory can send you a receipt for your donation. Mail to:

Music & Memory
160 First Street, PO box 590
Mineola, NY
11501

A Special Note for You

On behalf of all of us at Music & Memory, thank you for everything that you're doing to keep people living with Alzheimer's and dementia, and other cognitive conditions connected to the joy of favorite music. All of our success is due to passionate individuals like you who believe wholeheartedly in the power of music to help others. Thank you for helping to make a difference.

We look forward to hearing from you and helping you to succeed. Please [contact us](#) if you have questions.

Thanks again for your help, and good luck!

Music & Memory

Frequently Asked Questions

How does Music & Memory work?

Music & Memory trains care staff to work with people living with Alzheimer's and dementia to discover their favorite songs from when they were a teenager. These songs are then compiled to create a 20-40 song personalized music playlist, which is then offered to the individual with comfortable headphones as needed, usually for 30-minutes

at a time, and used proactively such as before medical or family visits. The results of this simple process can be astounding.

What are some of the benefits of personalized music?

Each year, we learn more and more about the therapeutic uses of personalized music. Here are some examples:

Nutritional and Hydration Issues

- Because music activates cognition and speech, it helps residents recognize food, follow cues, chew and swallow.
- Calming music can relieve anxiety generated by the eating experience.

[Learn more](#)

Agitation and Anxiety

- Music focuses a person's attention on something recognizable, which reduces the feeling of being overwhelmed and confused.
- It connects the person with positive memories, which has a soothing effect.
- Music stimulates movement, a positive outlet for restlessness.

NOTE: the improved cognition and mood continue after the person stops listening to music.

[Learn more](#)

Pain Relief

- Music brings pleasure, releasing opioids in the brain.
- Happy memories distract from the pain.
- Recipients move to the music. This relieves pain from stiffness and tightened muscles.

NOTE: Pain is a common reason for rejection of care and having music relieve or distract from pain can help residents be receptive to care, although always consult a physician if the pain is chronic.

[Learn more](#)

Rejection of Care

- Helps people relax, experience pleasure, connect to positive memories, improve their cognition and communication.
- Music improves the duration and intensity of concentration.
- People are better able to follow cues, understand what is happening, relate to their care-giver, and feel safe.

[Learn more](#)

Sleep

- Music helps relax tense muscles
- It tunes one's mind to positive memories and emotions providing soothing comfort
- Decreases production of cortisol, a hormone that can contribute to feelings of stress and anxiety
- Reduces sympathetic nervous system activity, decreases anxiety, blood pressure, heart and respiratory rate

[Learn more](#)

Mood and Depression

- Neurologist Oliver Sacks said that, "Music evokes emotion, and emotion can bring with it memory... it brings back the feeling of life when nothing else can."
- Music is pleasurable
- It brings warm memories and connections, and self-efficacy.
- It generates movement, engagement, cognition, and awareness.

[Learn more](#)

Occupational, Speech and Physical Therapy

- Music before a therapy session activates cognition, communication, and auditory and visual perception, making it easier to follow cues and engage in therapy activities.
- Singing uses consonants and vowels, activating speech.
- Musical rhythm generates body movement, reduces muscle tension and improves coordination.

Active Dying

- Hearing remains during active dying.
- Music connects people to their identity, emotions, auditory and visual perception.
- Music is a help to families as well.

Is there research around how personalized music helps participants and their caregivers?

Listening to music often results in decreases in agitation, anxiety, sleeplessness and depression. Personalized music can prevent distress, aid in the reduction in the use of antipsychotic medications and even improve swallowing. Caregivers and family members enjoy more meaningful relationships with those in their care and use the music as a tool to ease transitions, avoid challenging behaviors and save time. Visit

musicandmemory.org/research to learn more.

How does personalized music help memory loss? What does it mean for my loved one who suffers from Alzheimer's or other types of dementia?

The part of the brain that processes music and memory is the last part of the brain to be affected by Alzheimer's, which is why people with this disease are unable to recollect what happened in the last hour but can remember the words to their favorite songs from childhood.

In fact, the part of the brain that holds memories of familiar music is co-located with the part of the brain that stores autobiographical memory. So playing familiar music will spark those associated memories, "awakening" the individual, even if it's for a short moment. Research indicates that although this is no cure for Alzheimer's, regular listeners of personalized music will be more alert, engaged and conversant. Personalized music offers many benefits for its listeners.

Does this always work?

Personalized music does not always generate these results, but it does work most of the time. Success depends on identifying someone's favorite music from their youth. It's also worth trying at different times of day or week and around different activities.

How else can I help?

Please visit the Music & Memory website www.musicandmemory.org for more information on how you can support efforts to make access to personalized music a standard of health care.