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**Growing Your Music & Memory Program:  
How to Engage Student Interns  
and Volunteers**

## **Growing Your Music & Memory Program: How to Engage Student Interns and Volunteers**

Congratulations on completing your Music & Memory certification training! With your help, we can make the healing power of personalized music universally available to elder care residents and clients who are struggling with a wide range of cognitive and physical impairments.

This guide will show you how to grow a Music & Memory personalized music program in your care facility with the help of student interns and volunteers. Time is a precious resource for busy elder care professionals. Interns and volunteers can play an essential role in helping you to build out your Music & Memory program, especially in the initial, time-intensive stages of researching resident music preferences, creating a music library, developing policies and procedures, and training staff.

Of course, a successful personalized music program requires staff buy-in, commitment and involvement. Interns and volunteers can help lay the groundwork and provide a bridge between program set-up and ongoing implementation at your care facility—jump-starting your efforts to experience the many benefits of personalized music.

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## **Culture Change Through Personalized Music**

Grounded in extensive neuroscience research about how our brains respond to music, tested and proven in hundreds of [Certified Music & Memory Care Facilities](#), our personalized music system has helped thousands of residents, clients and the staff who care for them. Researchers from the Canadian Atlantic Institute on Aging sum up our program's benefits this way:

- Those who have been silent or less communicative may begin to talk and become more social.
- Those who have been sad and depressed often feel happier.
- Those who have been less mobile may become more physically active.

The experience for many of Music & Memory's certified facilities has been transformative. The social environment is calmer and more congenial, families are happy to find their loved ones more engaged, and care professionals like you are able to spend more quality time with each individual. In short, Music & Memory's personalized music system is an important tool for promoting culture change in elder care facilities.

### **How Interns and Volunteers Add Value to Your Music & Memory Program**

Many of Music & Memory's certified care facilities benefit extensively from talented, committed interns and volunteers who help with tasks ranging from interviewing residents about musical favorites and establishing music libraries to creating policy guidelines and raising funds for program expansion.

Music & Memory projects have provided meaningful experiences that inspire interns to pursue careers in the elder care field and keep volunteers coming back for more. Music is so loved by so many that this work brings its own joy to those who give their time to make music more accessible to individuals who have lost touch with the outside world.

Many of Music & Memory's certified care facilities have well-established internship programs with area colleges and universities. Interns are often graduate students in social work, but may also come from the fields of health care administration, rehabilitation therapy, music therapy

and other related disciplines. If your facility does not yet have such an arrangement, we encourage you to explore your options. Students in the helping professions are always looking for meaningful internship experiences, and college internship placement offices will assist with screening.

Volunteers with musical backgrounds, organizational skills or a gift for talking with elders can play a key role in program set-up and ongoing implementation. We have found that Music & Memory projects are a magnet for drawing qualified, dedicated volunteers who will give generously of their time to help with the many tasks of creating and maintaining personalized playlists.

### **Suggested Projects for Interns and Volunteers**

There are many ways that interns and volunteers can help you to set up and develop your personalized music program. Here are some projects that Music Memory's certified care facilities have found to be most beneficial:

#### **Establish a Music Library**

*Goal: Create a well-organized, computer-based music library with varied content that mirrors residents' personal music preferences.*

The heart of your Music & Memory program is your music library—the repository of the best of your facility's existing music collection, music purchased through iTunes, gifts from donors and other resources. Organizing your facility's music, researching and acquiring additional music, and setting up your iTunes library as your resource for personalized playlists is a great project for an intern or volunteer who loves to create systems and focus on details.

#### **Recommended Qualities and Skills:**

- A passion for perfection in finding the right music for each individual
- Enjoys researching music titles online and onsite
- Understands iTunes and can organize iTunes library using music downloads and CDs
- Logical, analytical mind
- Detail-oriented
- Computer savvy

## **Research Residents' Music Favorites**

*Goal: Discover residents' musical favorites through interviews with residents, family members and staff to develop personalized playlists. Conduct follow-up interviews to keep playlists updated.*

The discovery process is essential to creating each resident's personalized playlist and a very meaningful way to gain an appreciation of each individual as a whole person. Interns and volunteers who are thoughtful, compassionate listeners can conduct these interviews with residents and family members to learn more about personal history and the music that is tied to cherished memories. This research will guide playlist development. As your program becomes well-established, interns and volunteers can follow-up with residents to determine if there are other selections they would like to include in their playlists, to keep the music fresh and engaging.

### Recommended Qualities and Skills:

- Excellent communication skills; thoughtful listener
- Comfort with interviewing; oral history research a plus
- Compassion for and interest in elders
- Empathy
- Adept at note-taking or recording comments for retrieval and follow-up

## **Create System for Managing iPods**

*Goal: Adapt Music & Memory guidelines for iPod storage, distribution, safety and hygiene to set up a system the meets specific needs of residents and staff.*

Every care facility has its own needs, constraints and requirements for managing residents' digital music equipment. You will need to develop a practical system for storing and distributing the iPods and headphones, maintaining good hygiene with equipment, dealing with breakage and replacement of damaged items, and minimizing theft. Interns and volunteers can help to adapt the guidelines from your Music & Memory certification training to the specific circumstances of your facility, set up the system and trouble-shoot.

### Recommended Qualities and Skills:

- Analytical mind; well-organized
- Creative approach to problem-solving
- Detail oriented
- Enjoys developing systems
- Good listener; able to communicate with administrators and staff, and to incorporate their ideas into solutions

### **Develop Policies and Procedures for Personalized Music Program**

*Goal: Adapt Music & Memory guidelines for program implementation to needs and requirements of care facility.*

What is the process for creating new playlists? Who has access to your music library? Who is responsible for keeping track of iPods and headphones? These are but a few of the questions that your team will need to answer as you develop your Music & Memory program. Interns and volunteers can work with administrators to research and draft policies and procedures, drawing on the guidelines you received in your certification training, to create a well-organized approach to your program.

### Recommended Qualities and Skills:

- Excellent writing and oral communications skills
- Good listener; works well with administrators and staff to gain their input
- Well-organized; analytical
- Detail oriented
- Proficient with Word or similar writing software; able to lay out text clearly, organize content in a format that is easy to skim

### **Teach Residents to Use iPods and Headsets**

*Goal: Help residents learn how to access their favorite music, as well as proper use and storage of iPods and headsets.*

Residents often need help learning how to use and care for their iPod Shuffles. Depending on their status, staff may manage this for them, but more able individuals can master the equipment with some training. Interns and volunteers who are patient and enjoy teaching can fill this need.

### Recommended Qualities and Skills:

- Understands use and care of iPod Shuffle and headset
- Excellent oral communications skills
- Empathetic and patient
- Loves to teach; can adapt explanation to needs and abilities of the individual

### **Educate Family Members**

*Goal: Serve as liaison with families of residents to educate them about the personalized music program and gain their buy-in and support.*

Family support is very beneficial for the success of your personalized music program. Interns and volunteers can help to introduce the program to family members, explaining how it works as well as the benefits. This can be accomplished in one-to-one meetings and through presentations to groups such as a Family Council.

### Recommended Qualities and Skills:

- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Strong communicator, can adapt explanation to the needs and abilities of the individual
- Empathetic and patient
- Understands details of the iPod program as well as the benefits of personalized music, as explained in Music & Memory resource material
- Some first-hand experience working with residents and their iPods

### **Develop and Implement Staff Training Program**

*Goal: Create teaching materials, conduct presentations and training sessions to familiarize staff with goals of program, use and care of iPods.*

For your program to succeed, staff need to understand the benefits of personalized music, know how and when to use the iPods with residents, and develop a sense of ownership and commitment. This requires an ongoing training program. Interns and volunteers can work with administrators to develop staff training materials, conduct training sessions and teach staff on the floors how to use and care for the equipment.

### Recommended Qualities and Skills:

- Excellent oral and written communications skills
- Good listener; works well with administrators and staff to gain their input
- Well-organized; analytical
- Detail oriented
- Clear and confident presenting to a group
- Loves to teach; can adapt explanation to needs and abilities of the individual
- Proficient at Word, PowerPoint or similar writing and presentation software

### **Assess Program Effectiveness**

*Goal: Develop and implement evaluation system to assess program effectiveness in terms of desired outcomes, such as improved resident quality of life or decreased use of anti-psychotics.*

We hear from many Music & Memory certified care facilities how personalized music transforms the lives of residents and social environment for the better. We are also receiving more reports that our program helps facilities significantly reduce the use of anti-psychotics and other behavior management drugs. Interns and volunteers can work with administrators to identify assessment tools, collect data and analyze results to provide important quantitative measures of progress toward improving quality of life.

### Recommended Qualities and Skills:

- Experience with research design, survey tools, data collection and analysis
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Good listener; works well with administrators and staff to gain their input
- Well-organized; analytical
- Detail oriented
- Proficient in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, or similar software

### **Raise Funds and Build Community Support**

*Goal: Assist development and communications professionals to raise funds for additional equipment, create and implement an iPod donation drive, and raise community awareness and good will for the personalized music program.*

Interns and volunteers are a great resource for helping to raise money for your personalized music program. Working with your organization's development and communications



professionals, they can create and run fundraising campaigns and iPod donation drives, help to write grants, and assist with public relations outreach efforts. This is an excellent way to grow your program as well as build awareness and support among families and the community at large. Download our free guide, [How to Run an iPod Donation Drive](#), for ideas.

#### Recommended Qualities and Skills:

- Excellent oral and written communications skills
- Well-organized
- Detail oriented
- Strong interpersonal skills; enjoys working with the public
- Team player
- Fundraising and/or public relations experience a plus

### **Creating a Successful Internship or Volunteer Experience**

The best internship or volunteer experiences—for both you and the student or volunteer—are defined by these qualities:

- 1) A clearly defined project with specific goals, objectives and desired outcomes
- 2) Work that is important to your organization and meaningful to the individual
- 3) Guidance and support, not micro-management
- 4) Opportunity and encouragement to develop a sense of responsibility and ownership of the project
- 5) Constructive, two-way feedback; a sense of partnership

At one of our Music & Memory certified care facilities, the Mayo Clinic Health System's skilled nursing facility in Osseo, Wisconsin, former Nursing Home Administrator Angela Bulger describes the key to success this way:

“Be willing to allow your interns [and volunteers] to explore and ask questions. Give them a lot of autonomy. Work it out this way and they will take great pride and own their projects.”

## **Making the Transition to Staff Ownership**

While interns and volunteers can provide significant support for setting up and helping to maintain your Music & Memory personalized music program, long-term success depends on staff buy-in and involvement. Significant culture change can only take place when everyone is committed to the program.

From our most successful Music & Memory certified care facilities, we have learned that the greatest positive outcomes are achieved by organizations that include everyone, from the CEO to housekeeping staff, in the process of incorporating personalized music into the lives of every resident. Administrators, staff, residents and family members all have important roles to play.

We encourage you to treat your student interns and volunteers as key members of a facility-wide team effort to bring Music & Memory's personalized music program to your residents. Please feel free to share your questions and successes. We look forward to hearing from you and learning from you.

## **Case Studies**

You'll find illustrations of the ideas discussed in this guide in these stories from our [Music & Memory blog](#):

### **Internships**

[For Student Interns and Nursing Home Administrators, Music & Memory is a Win-Win](#)

### **Volunteers**

[Musical Detectives: A Tale of Two Music & Memory Volunteers](#)

### **System-wide Culture Change**

[For Ontario's Schlegel Villages, an iPod for Every Resident is the Goal](#)