

NOT ALL HOSPITAL INSTRUMENTS ARE SURGICAL



CREATIVE ARTS THERAPY
2019 IMPACT REPORT

Long&McQuade



SickKids

Limits

Music Therapists Toni (left) and Carolyn

MUSIC THERAPY GETS ON THE BANDWAGON

The new mobile recording studio has been a major boon for the program

MUSIC THERAPY'S newest tool isn't a guitar, tambourine, or handheld drum. It's a fully-stocked mobile recording studio, better known as the "bandwagon." Housed in a big fire-engine red case, the bandwagon has it all: a computer, keyboard, digital turntables, mics, and more. And since being introduced late last year, it's already proven a hit with patients, especially teenagers.

"They're kind of a population that's harder to get in with; they're more defensive," says Antonietta (Toni) Desideri, a Music Therapist who has been with SickKids almost five years. "But when I mention we have a recording studio on wheels with Garage Band, they're like, 'Oh, yes!'"

Toni recalls one group of teens who refused to open up. "Once we were able to introduce the bandwagon, they were very open to having us visit," says Toni. "It ended up becoming a way for them to share the trauma that had brought them here."

For Carolyn Williams, a Music Therapist at SickKids for nearly eight years, the bandwagon is also a great opportunity for patients to "explore their own music." When she introduced the bandwagon to one of her long-time patients, she created a beat, looped it, and let him sing—spontaneously and freely. "I knew that music therapy was very significant for this young person," says Carolyn. "But the bandwagon opened a backdoor to another form of expression... a real this-is-who-I-am-and-I'm-cool-and-hear-me-roar kind of idea."

Thank you for supporting programs like Music Therapy—and for helping our patients roar.

See cover for a photo of Toni and Carolyn



SICKKIDS WELCOMES ITS NEWEST CLOWN: PIP

In July, SickKids welcomed its newest therapeutic clown: Pip. A smiling sailor in pigtails and knee-length rainbow socks, Pip is excited about her new friends Fern and A. Leboo.

Of course, Pip also brought some old friends with her: Norbert the Oar (her ukulele) and Gladys the bucket. And while Pip is plenty silly, she's already making a major impact.

In waiting spaces and outpatient clinics, Pip's humour and spontaneity draw big crowds. She's also uniquely gentle, which allows her to connect to kids who might otherwise be too intimidated to play with a clown.

THE BEAT CARRIES ON

How Music Therapy provides powerful keepsakes through Heartbeat Songs

The sound of music doesn't often ring through the halls of SickKids paediatric critical care units, but Creative Arts Music Therapist Hannah You is working to change that. She spearheaded the Heartbeat Song program, primarily for patients in end-of-life care. Heartbeat Songs are a collaborative effort, involving patients' families in the process to create mementos after suffering the painful loss of their child.

Hannah composes lyrics based on the loved one's family's memories, such as what makes them unique and what they love about them.

"When people ask questions here, it's mostly medical," explains Hannah. "This is a way for them to just talk about their child. So that process is powerful in itself."

Parents sometimes want to include a special parting message to their child, which becomes the chorus. Finally, Hannah records the deeply personal lyrics against the most personal soundtrack possible: a recording of the patient's own heartbeat.

Upon request, Hannah performs the song for the first—and sometimes only—time the child will hear it. Participating in such an intimate moment has its challenges, but Hannah channels her emotions into her music and focuses on staying present for the family.

Says Hannah, "I think it's really important that families have this opportunity to share these last moments, and to forever have their child's heartbeat in a song that's written for them."



Music Therapist Hannah You gets a little help from one of her patients

ART THERAPY BREAKS THROUGH THE BMT BARRIER

Art therapy has long been integral to care at SickKids. Childhoods that would have been spent playing make-believe in playgrounds are replaced with doctor's appointments and surgeries. Art therapy allows patients to escape the confines of the hospital through their imaginations.

Art Therapist Jenn Bassin's carefully considered approach introduces objects in a way that allows patients to explore them and build their problem-solving skills. The need for creative exploration is especially important for patients who've undergone bone marrow transplants (BMT) and have to stay in isolated rooms for up to six weeks because of their weakened immune systems. Because outside objects like feathers and pom poms pose a contamination risk, art therapy here can be tricky—and require a lot of cleaning. But that hasn't stopped Jenn, who recently introduced the program to preschoolers in the unit.

One patient, a four-year-old girl, possesses what Jenn considers the most important personality trait of an ideal art therapy candidate: boundless curiosity. "I could just tell that in her personality, being introduced to things she's never seen before would be something that would bring her a lot of excitement," says Jenn.

In the stark isolation of a BMT room, that excitement speaks volumes.

THANK YOU.

Every day, SickKids works towards improving the lives of children, and our success depends on the generosity of donors like you. Your commitment to Creative Arts Therapy ensures that kids can laugh, play, and learn amidst the frenzy of hospital life.

Thank you for your remarkable generosity.



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