

MusicLINKs, Calgary Zone

LINKages Society of Alberta

Project Lead: Mae Chun, Executive Director

Research has demonstrated music has positive and long - lasting effects on seniors with dementia, and takes little time to show successful results. MusicLINKs will use an innovative approach to provide intergenerational music programming involving residents from two Carewest Care centres and youth from nearby schools in Calgary. Twenty- four dementia residents will each be paired with two youth volunteers. Each pairing will collaboratively develop a weekly engagement plan with input from their families, care providers and care centre staff.

Engagement activities will be developed, and a personalized playlist for each resident, stored on an I-pod will be given to each participating resident. In partnership with the University of Lethbridge, evaluation measures will yield information on engagement and changes in well-being for participants in this intergenerational initiative.

Initial Findings

In the MusicLINKS program, students are seeing over and over again, the change in the residents' mood and behavior, from being pensive and unengaging to being active, smiling and just beaming. During one of the sessions, students Jane and Allison helped their senior put on her headphone and they took time to make sure it sat comfortably on her head. The resident was so excited, she exclaimed, "I have never used headphones in my entire life. Now I know what it feels like to have one on my head. I love it!"



The MusicLINKS experience has been equally impactful for the students in the program too. One student commented, "When she (the resident) puts on her headset, she likes to move and dance. It's so nice to see her happy". Another said, "I love seeing how happy he is when he listens to his music"

