

Engaging Persons with Dementia and their Family
Caregivers in the Community: A Lake County Music &
Memory Initiative

Seniors Making Connections Through Music

Lake County Senior Citizens Collaborative Initiative
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Fund

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Project Background

This project offers a unique and timely opportunity to engage seniors with dementia and their family caregivers living in Lake County in a group music intervention, Seniors Making Connections through Music. Groups are designed to be led by senior volunteers recruited from the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Lake County. The six-session group program will be implemented and evaluated with 100 participants in Lake County. This project is a collaboration between RSVP of Lake County and Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging (BRIA). This document serves as the one year status report as requested by the funder.

Updated Progress on Project Objectives

Physical and Mental Health Well-Being Domain

Unmet need: Engaging in Activities that Promote Well-Being

1. **Goal:** To address this unmet need, seniors 60+ who are living with dementia will participate in the Music and MemorySM intervention. By engaging persons living with dementia in such a meaningful activity, it also presents an opportunity to assist their family caregivers, who are often in need of a break from caregiving demands.

Progress: Since the project start period, we have conducted 4 more successful groups in two Lake County Senior Centers and an assisted living facility. In addition, we have distributed 15 iPod kits contained personalized music for each participant who took part in a group session during this reporting period for a total of 26 during the project period.

2. **Goal:** To address gaps in service for persons living with dementia and their family caregivers, a subgroup of seniors often isolated in the community, a group of 20 senior volunteers will be trained to how to conduct personalized music playlist assessments, load music on iPod Shuffles using iTunes, and run music groups specifically designed for persons living with dementia to participate in successfully.

Progress: In November 2017 we conducted a refresher training for existing volunteers. Ten retired senior volunteers participated in the four-hour refresher training [See Appendix B below for the refresher training agenda]. Changes made to the program were reviewed with volunteers in preparation for upcoming sessions. In addition, video demonstrations were shown to highlight the successes and challenges of the first two pilot groups. Volunteers were also given additional training on how to use iPods in session. Five volunteers will not be returning to the project due to other volunteer opportunities and time constraints.

In January 2018, 3 new volunteers were trained and 11 existing volunteers attended in order to take part in a presentation given by Stacy Heffernan of the Alzheimer's Association to provide volunteers with an in-depth training on dementia [See Appendix B below for the January 2018 training agenda].

Promoting Social and Civic Engagement

Unmet need: Participation in Social/Recreational Activities

1. **Goal:** The proposed project will address gaps in creating meaningful connections with family, neighbors, and friends and specifically increase attendance at senior centers by offering Music and MemorySM groups at 2 senior centers to start. In

addition, the project will address the need for more volunteers by creating a sustainable collaboration between RSVP Lake County and two area senior centers. Recruitment of other Lake County senior centers to be involved with the project will continue throughout the project period, with hopes to set up the program within all Lake County senior centers by the end of 18 months.

Progress: Kirtland Senior Center has been unsuccessful in recruiting enough participants to run a group. However, the Perry Senior Center was added as our third senior center. Our goal continues to be to engage two more Lake County Senior Centers by summer 2018.

Recruitment and Marketing Update

Volunteer Recruitment: Recruitment of volunteers continues to be led by RSVP Director Cristen Kane. There were 3 new volunteers that joined the project since the last project period.

Subject Recruitment: In early December, Cristen Kane met with the Lake County Alzheimer's Association staff to update them on the program's progress. Outcomes from the meeting were positive; it was decided that a member of the Alzheimer's Association staff would participate with BRIA staff in the new volunteer training session held in January by providing a presentation on dementia education. In addition, the Association agreed to distribute flyers for the program to support group attendees in order to help boost enrollment in our program.

RSVP also collaborated with the Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library System and Mentor Senior Center to offer an informational session for caregivers of persons living with dementia to learn more about the program before registering. In January 2018, two

introductory project sessions were held by Cristen Kane, one at the Willoughby Public Library and another at Mentor Senior Center. The goal of the introductory sessions was to engage family caregivers in Lake County in learning more about our program and how music can help with socialization and quality of life. There was 1 attendee in Willoughby and 5 in Mentor.

Marketing Materials. Marketing materials have gone through a series of revisions throughout since the last reporting period in order to better reach more potential participants [See Appendix A]. Volunteers provided valuable feedback during the refresher training in November, and some of their suggestions were used to make changes to better reach potential participants and caregivers. In December 2017, program volunteer Jerry Hinkel spent several days in December posting the new 2018 session flyers throughout Lake County including Panera locations, doctor offices and libraries.

In addition, RSVP collaborated with the Lake County Council on Aging and provided 900 newly updated flyers for the agency to include in their monthly Meals on Wheels client mailing. The flyers were distributed in December to all the Meals on Wheels clients. RSVP has been posting the new flyer on the RSVP website and Facebook page and also shared the information with all 10 senior centers and all 80 RSVP agencies.

Participant Update

Enrollment of Subjects. To date, 43 potential participants have been screened for the study. Thus far, 34 PWDs have consented to participate in the program (13 – Mentor, 10 – Willowick, 11– Madison). In addition, 25 caregivers have also taken part in the group

sessions (13– Mentor, 11– Willowick, 1– Madison). 9 dyads were not eligible or not interested in participating.

Interview Assessments

To date, 2 Time 1 interviews have been conducted for PWDs, and 23 for CGs. For follow-up, 2 PWD and 10 CG Time 2 interviews have been conducted. In total, 20 PWDs did not pass the initial cognitive screen to determine their ability to go through an hour-long phone interview and thus, were not interviewed at either data point. CGs and participants at the Lantern Assisted Living in Madison were not interviewed due to high levels of impairment and lack of CG involvement in the day-to-day lives of the participants. Currently, 3 participants and 3 CGs are currently completing Time 2 interviews from the second Willowick group. Eight PWDs and 8 CGs are currently attending sessions at the Mentor Senior Center.

Financial Report

To be submitted by Cristen Kane, Director of RSVP of Lake County.

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Marketing Materials

Appendix B: Volunteer Training