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Music To Their Ears

By Tim Athey

Courtesy of Music Medicine Institute

According to Mr. N. Webster, Skidaway's most popular lexicographer, the word music means "the art of arranging tones in an orderly sequence so as to produce a unified and continuous composition using vocal or instrumental sounds with rhythm, melody, and harmony."

Music arguably may be responsible for evoking more memories in women, men, and children than any creation that has come out of Hollywood. Other than memories, music has been credited with many things including soothing savage beats. But one little-known source of magic given to us by music is the therapeutic value it brings to countless individuals. Music therapy is far from being a new rehabilitation program; it had its beginnings in the post World War II era.

The first well-documented implementation was in the military. It was found that many of the returning servicemen were dealing with a variety of stress issues which in today's society is known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Sixty years later, the process is still in practice.

Music therapy now has landed in Savannah. Elizabeth M. Jacobi, PhD, brought the concept with her eight years ago, when she relocated to Skidaway Island and The Landings. Dr. Jacobi earned her Bachelor of Science in Music Education at Saint Mary of the Woods College. She followed this with a Masters Degree in Voice Performance, and a PhD in Philosophy.

She has combined her passion for music and a deep caring for people to create The Music Medicine Institute in Savannah. The Music Medicine Institute is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation for education, treatment and research in the interface between music and medicine.



The goal of The Music Medicine Institute (MMI) is to enhance the quality of life of persons with acute or chronic illnesses through music therapy. MMI is accomplishing its mission by training health professions in the therapeutic use of music and guided imagery. In guided imagery, the client freely imagines experiences, sensations, feelings, and memories in a series of music-oriented explorations to assist in coping with chronic pain, depression, substance abuse, dementia, and a host of other afflictions, including self-worth in children.

The Music Medicine Institute has forged relationships with three of Chatham County's most influential organizations.

The affiliation with St. Joseph's/Candler came first. This alignment offers the community a music therapy program that addresses the mind and body wellness of individuals through music interventions both in the hospital and outpatient locations. MMI is in the process of developing a similar partnership with Memorial Health System's Children's Hospital.

The most recent and perhaps most timely alliance for MMI is with the military. Interacting with family members of soldiers at Hunter Army Airfield and Fort Stewart, MMI provides a wonderful service to children of troops being deployed. The fledgling but rapidly growing endeavor targets children of any age who have a father or mother who has been deployed to a war zone. The guiding principal for music medicine is to help relieve the never-ending stress that's endured by a child or family when a parent or loved one is overseas. The therapy enables the individual to open doors to their self-esteem and motivates them to discover their own inner wisdoms, thus helping children cope with fear and loneliness. All MMI

programs are available at no cost to military families.

In a continuing effort to provide support mechanisms for their families, the 3rd Infantry Division fully endorses MMI. To quote Brig. Gen. Jeffery E. Phillips, Senior Commander of Ft. Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield and 3rd ID Commanding General, "I really want to ensure that our families are cared for," he said. "Taking care of families is so important to the readiness of our force; it is central to ensuring that our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan can focus on their jobs."

The overriding success of MMI's program with the military can be sustained only by the help of volunteers. Imagine making a difference in the life of a child whose parent is in Iraq or Afghanistan. Again, just imagine opening the doorway to that child's self-worth through music, stories, and guided imagery. The Music

Institute under its director Dr. Elizabeth Jacobi, PhD invites all interested to join the program in a volunteer capacity. Think of the joy you could bring to the life of a military child.

The Skidaway Island Kiwanis Club is proud to have The Music Medicine Institute as one of its community partners. We encourage all interested people to contact Dr. Elizabeth Jacobi (598-2118 or ejacobi@musicmedicine.org).

This year, The Music Medicine Institute will be celebrating the First Annual Renaissance Holiday Party, benefiting military children of parents deployed. The Gala will be December 12, at 6 p.m., at the Plantation Club. Individual tickets are \$75. Tables of 10 may be purchased for \$65 per person.

Come one, come all, and join in the festivities. Dinner and cocktails, as well as lute and harp music, surely will elevate your holiday spirits. For more information, call 598-2118.

