

Heart of Florida Chapter

Newsletter Submission

Making Music Come Alive

The Heart of Florida Chapter of the Florida State Guardianship Association, made the music come alive on Tuesday April 4, as it distributed six preprogrammed I-Pods to the Memory Care Unit of the skilled nursing facility, Ocala Health and Rehabilitation in Ocala. The response by the residents was simply incredible. As the pictures reflect, residents began to stand up and dance, as the music impacted their spirit (and feet).

The idea for this project was presented to our membership by chapter president, Olivia Baird and is based on a movie called "Alive Inside". This movie chronicles the efforts of a social worker, who provides music therapy to dementia patients and the positive impact that music has on these patients. While the movie is touching, it pales in comparison to actually observing residents responding to this activity in real time. With the assistance of the Activity Director (Alice Thompson) and her staff of Ocala Health and Rehabilitation, headphones were put on various residents and their reaction was immediate. Some began smiling and tapping their feet, while others raised from their seats and began to dance. Some danced with partners, while others danced by themselves. The smiles and the laughter was an amazing expression of the human spirit and showed that even with dementia, a person can reconnect to the world through music. Ms. Baird was noted to say later "this morning was amazing and I have been happy all day".

This project was truly a team and community effort. The I-Pods were programmed by Star Scout Brandon Jones of Scout Troop 564. The only guidance given Brandon was to program the six I-Pods with six different genres of music, which included blues, country, classical, religious, 50s, and big band. While he may not have been familiar with these particular genres, his choices were spot-on, as he captured the essence of each style of music. Alice Thompson also deserves recognition for her efforts. As the new Activities Director at Ocala Health and Rehabilitation, Alice joined this project in the later stages, however, her enthusiasm and support for the project was instantaneous. On the day of distribution, Alice had a room filled with residents and she and her staff shared in the dancing and laughter.

A key component of this project is the follow-up with Ms. Thompson. She will collect data on the impact this program has on the behaviors of her residents. It is hoped that with this data, the Heart of Florida Chapter can provide more facilities with this opportunity and provide them proof that this program works to bring joy to dementia patients.

Until then, the music is alive and well in Ocala Health and Rehabilitation and in the Heart of Florida. Dance on!



Resident Leads the Band



Male resident dances with staff as Olivia Baird and Alice Thompson discuss the days success!



Brandon Jones "Disc Jockey for the Stars"



Headphones on: see the smile



Music on: Let's Dance!!