

For immediate release

May 8, 2018

OTF grant will help scale Music Care Partners into 24 long-term care homes

Port Perry – The Room 217 Foundation is pleased to announce that as the recipient of a two-year \$181,400 Provincial Impact grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the work of last summer’s Music Care Partners pilot study will be scaled to 24 sites in Ontario.

“The Music Care Partners study was a great tool to improve the lives of our seniors through the power of music. I am so pleased that the pilot was successful, and that more people will be touched by this important program,” said Granville Anderson, MPP for Durham.

Partners was piloted last summer in three long-term care (LTC) homes in the Central East LHIN (Port Perry Place, Lakeview Manor and Fenelon Court) and was designed to reduce social isolation in seniors through music. Care partners in LTC are looking for non-pharmacological, relational approaches that will improve resident experience through engagement, that are flexible, easily integrated into regular care, and cost effective. Music care is one of the approaches that will meet this need.

The music care approach allows the therapeutic principles of sound and musical effect to inform caring practices. Music has social agency that invites engagement through participation, mutual respect and personal empowerment and plays an integral role in strengthening relationships and building community. Research tells us that for persons living with cognitive impairment, music is often the care modality that most deeply reaches the “preserved self” and makes connections with others.

Partners explores how music can be integrated fully into care to reduce the social isolation of LTC residents. The Room 217 Foundation facilitates the program which includes the training of a facility site team, provision of resources, development and implementation of a Music Care Action Plan that will be unique to each site. The program takes place in a six-month time frame, which includes a three-month period of data collection. Participatory action research is used for all care partners (including residents) to solve a community problem, and allows for mixed method data collection.

Outcomes from the Partners pilot study included reduced isolation of marginalized residents, increased engagement of all care partners with residents, increased musical opportunities for connection and engagement for marginalized residents, and increased caregiver confidence for using music 1:1 or in groups.

The outcomes of the pilot led to the successful application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation to scale the Partners program to 24 LTC homes. There will be three cycles of eight homes, with Cycle 1 will take place in Hamilton; the others will be in Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo.

Bev Foster, Executive Director of the Room 217 Foundation, is thrilled that the Ontario Trillium Foundation is seeing the value of music as an important social solution. “We appreciate their continued investment in Room 217’s mission, to change the culture of change with music.”

A leading grantmaker in Canada, the Ontario Trillium Foundation strengthens the capacity of the voluntary sector through investments in community-based initiatives. An agency of the Government of Ontario, OTF builds healthy and vibrant communities. For more information, please visit: www.otf.ca

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