



Join us at a new location for Beer for a Cause
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THURSDAY APRIL 23 2015 5:00 to 9:00PM ASTON MANOR 2946 1ST AVE. S., SEATTLE, WA 98134

NEW LOCATION

Spring 2015

Coming Alive With the Sound of Music

Awareness of Alzheimer’s disease or other dementia has increased in recent years with a focus on finding the elusive cure for the nation’s sixth leading cause of death. While nearly everyone knows of the difficulties dementia can wreak on those living with it as well as their families, a simple new therapy is rocking the caregiving and medical worlds: music.

This unexpected therapy is proving to be extraordinarily effective in improving the quality of life of persons living with dementia. And Full Life Care is at the forefront of a new movement to make personalized music therapy accessible to everyone.

Full Life’s memory care homes, Gaffney House and Buchanan Place, have always embodied the best person-centered practices for creating environments rich with opportunities to engage. Now, thanks to generous support from the Lucky Seven Foundation to help Full Life become a certified Music and Memory™ provider, residents are experiencing the joy of personalized music on a daily basis.

Everyone has his or her own favorite music. Mentha Howard had been slowing down before passing



Eric conducting Tchaikovsky

this spring, but when listening to her favorite gospel hymns, she still sang out “Praise Jesus!” Eric Mitgang responds to classical music, waving his arms like a conductor and exclaiming, “Tchaikovsky is a winner!”

“You’ve got to listen to this,” he says, taking off his headphones and offering them to a neighbor.

For Verna Brown, it is tears of joy every time Kenny Rogers comes up on her playlist. Verna and Eric see themselves as caregivers for the household. Always attuned to the needs of their housemates, the music helps them take a moment to focus on themselves, says Jennifer Herrmann, manager of Gaffney House and Buchanan Place.

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Together, Home Care Workers Solve Problems

Rayan Mohamed was always on the phone when she should have been doing her job. That's how it seemed to her home care client, who would routinely call Rayan's supervisor at Full Life Care after her weekly visits. "She spends the whole time on her cell phone!" the exasperated client reported.

Rayan swore she didn't use her phone on the job but it was a tough situation for a new home care aide. In most agencies, she would have faced this dilemma on her own. But at Full Life, Rayan had access to someone special: an experienced home care mentor. After talking with her mentor, Rae Kirumbi, Rayan decided to leave her phone in the car during the next visit.

Afterwards, the same thing happened! Rae knew they had to dig deeper to understand the client's needs. He asked Rayan to describe her routine. Her client always seemed eager to see her and engage in conversation. In fact, she found it difficult to break away to wash dishes, do laundry and prepare meals. Rae helped her realize that the client desired companionship and might mistakenly think Rayan was avoiding her to talk on the phone. With Rae's guidance, she came up with a plan to invite the woman to come with her to each room and talk as much as she



Rae with home care client Cole Younger

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RAE'S JOURNEY

Sixteen years ago, Rae Kirumbi arrived in the United States not knowing that the caregiving he found so rewarding as a hospital volunteer in Tanzania could become a profession. After a friend suggested he join an agency to get paid for the work he was already doing, Rae became a home care aide for Full Life. Fifteen years later, Rae has risen from Home Care Specialist to Field Supervisor, bought his first home and is now in his second year as program manager of the Training Partnership's peer mentorship program—a program that has exceeded its goals under Rae's watch.

"After all these years I go home on Friday and then on Monday I'm excited to go back to work," Rae says. "You can't say that about just any job."

Well-known for his wide smile and ability to connect with people, Rae beams when talking about his work as a mentor. Over the years he has honed the tenets of what it takes to mentor new home care aides and help them succeed. Rae says a mentor's role is not to solve problems for his or her mentee but to empower them.

"You can't just say the answer and then the problem is solved," Rae says. "You need to guide them and show them the problem solving tools they will need to use again and again."

Home care work begins with a lot of uncertainty and challenge, but Rae describes how it can progress into one of the most meaningful professions. "There's a mentality with some organizations that you should not become attached to people and should maintain professional distance. How can you not be attached? This is a human being," Rae says. "Being a caregiver is hard work but if you put your heart into it, it feels like an easy job."

TRAINING PARTNERSHIP PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

- 2008** Peer mentoring pilot launched
- 2012** Pilot wins U.S. Department of Labor's "Trailblazer and Innovator" award
- 2013** Rae hired as program manager to rollout expanded mentoring program
- 2015** Nearly 500 home care workers mentored by 60 mentors

The Ingredients of a Magical Friendship

By Laura Weiss,
Lutheran Volunteer Corps
ElderFriends Match
Coordinator

It's not uncommon for Marsha Paprowicz and Robin Brooks to experience a little magic during their adventures together. At a Seattle Symphony concert last year, this ElderFriends pair was treated to more than just classical music. They were seated directly behind a couple dressed head to toe in traditional 18th century attire. Their costumes were decorated with exquisite details and elegant patterns, fabulously complemented by towering wigs. Despite having to lean during the entire concert to see around them, Robin knew this was a memory they would cherish.

Recalling that evening, Marsha says she “looked at Robin and she looked at me and we busted up because [these strange occurrences] happen so much when we go out.”

These two are always on the move, largely due to Robin's uncanny ability to find free arts events in the city, often mysteriously accompanied by free parking close to the venue. As Marsha would say, “it's so Robin!” These details are important for Marsha, who has multiple sclerosis and uses a walker when she goes out.

Before she joined ElderFriends, Marsha lived several years in Poland and Scandinavian and Asian countries. Because of her disability, Marsha is no longer able to traverse the world as she once did. Marsha reflects, “My world gets smaller and smaller as I become more and more disabled.” That's why going on outings with Robin is such a big deal.



Robin and Marsha just celebrated their second anniversary as ElderFriends.

Marsha's convinced that Robin brings a magical energy to their friendship and she's quick to brag about her friend at every opportunity. With enthusiasm Marsha exclaims, “She's the most exciting person that you want to meet. She gives the impression of being laid-back and quiet, but she's not. She's a dynamo!”

It's true. Robin has a graduate degree in playwriting and most recently finished a short play for children. Having been invited to some of her plays, Marsha is undeniably Robin's biggest fan and most faithful supporter. She gives constant encouragement to Robin and points out her most positive traits, such as inspirational creativity and moral tenacity.

Robin smiles as she realizes, “She gives me a pep talk sometimes!”

When they're not at a local theater or concert venue, Marsha and Robin are content with a simple visit over a shared meal. Sometimes they head to a local café and on other occasions they'll enjoy some of Marsha's home-cooked Polish cuisine. While they do enjoy sharing stories from the past, Robin says “these days we talk more about the present than the past.” During their visits, they've found it most helpful to focus on the moments of joy and challenge they experience right now. Marsha thoughtfully names their relationship “an equal exchange.”

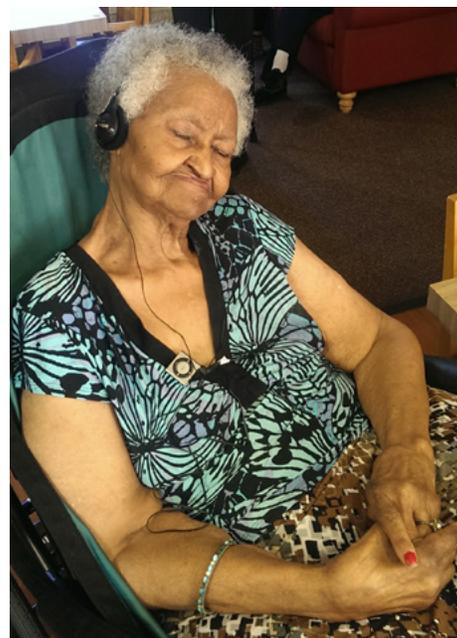
What's the recipe for a friendship so special? A few common interests, a heaping spoonful of support, and a small pinch of magic.

The Sound of Music

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“Everyone is loving the music,” Jennifer says. “The staff loves tailoring playlists to the individuals and the families love helping find their loved ones’ favorite songs.”

Tracking down residents’ favorite songs from decades ago is not easy, especially if residents can no longer communicate their preferences. Jennifer and other staff members spent weeks collecting questionnaires from family members



Margarine Pleasant

and countless hours Googling fragments of lyrics to track down song titles.

“Finding out what style of music they like is the first step, but finding those beloved favorite songs is the real key,” Jennifer says.

Mounting evidence suggests using personalized music helps decrease instances of difficult behaviors, connects people with loved ones and improves communication and overall quality of life. Breakthroughs in neuroscience have led to new understandings of the changes in cognitive function caused by Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia. One wonderful discovery is that music is stored in parts of the brain less impacted by dementia and has unique power to tap into other memories.

This power is aptly demonstrated in the recent award-winning documentary “Alive Inside.” The film follows the efforts of Dan Cohen, founder of Music & Memory, to provide iPods and headphones for elders who seemed to be “lost” to dementia. Again and again, it shows people coming alive to the sound of favorite songs and experiencing

prolonged periods of engagement and profound emotion.

Despite strong evidence of its effectiveness, few elder care providers have yet to make the upfront investment of money and time to become certified Music and Memory providers. According to the organization, only 1.6 percent of providers nationwide have signed on.

Full Life is participating in a local effort to make it easier for providers to roll out music programs by “crowdsourcing” music playlists and popular songs being developed by Music and Memory adopters nationwide. A local advocate, Victoria Selwyn of Adobe, is working with volunteers from the Newman Center at the University of Washington to organize a “hack-a-thon” to help solve the problem. Soon, organizers hope to build a Washington chapter of Music and Memory and connect with chapters in other states to share playlists and crowdsource favorite songs.

For more information about Music and Memory in the Seattle area, contact Jennifer Herrmann, jenniferh@fulllifecare.org, 206.838.1935.

Together, Home Care Workers Solve Problems

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wanted while she worked. Ultimately, this solved the mystery and they both enjoyed the extra dimension of companionship and social contact.

All Full Life home care aides are eligible to participate in the voluntary peer mentoring program through a partnership with SEIU NW Healthcare. The program has 12

training modules but at its core is the relationship between an experienced home care mentor and new home care aide. Rae, who became the program’s manager in 2013, said mentors play a valuable role for new workers. It is often easier to turn to a peer with challenging questions than to a supervisor, Rae says.

“Having this person who is not

your supervisor . . . you create a friendship, and they are free to ask any questions,” Rae says.

Combined with skills developed through the program’s curriculum on problem solving, communications, sensitivity and other topics, peer mentoring provides a solid foundation for a successful home care career, Rae says.



Still Learning About Effective Decision-Making . . . From My Dad

By Nora Gibson, Executive Director

Nearly 10 years ago, my parents made the wise decision to move to West Seattle from their large home in the Pennsylvania woods. My sisters helped them downsize; my parents brought just enough furniture for their 1,000 square foot condominium, located blocks from my home. Their “living wills” arrived before they did and they even decided to give up driving. My dad, a retired physician, told the DMV clerk he “didn’t want to be responsible for killing any people.” They were used to country roads and Seattle seemed like a very big city.

They enjoyed several happy and independent years, walking everywhere and becoming the King and Queen of California Avenue.

In time it became clear that my mother had a dementia, probably Alzheimer’s disease. I never put her through a definitive workup, because I knew there likely wasn’t an effective medical intervention. Instead, I focused on helping her to continue enjoying a rich social life, while supporting my father with layers of services offered by Full Life Care. She attended Memory Care and Wellness three days a week at our South Seattle Adult Day Center. And three afternoons a week, a Full Life aide came to their home to help with bathing, housekeeping and other tasks. Ultimately, as many of you may know, Mom moved into Gaffney House, where she died a year and a half ago.

My father stayed in the condo and coped well with her death. Like many long-time caregivers, his emotional response to her death included a measure of relief. The woman he had known and loved for so very long was lost to him much earlier in the process of the disease.

One of my sisters urged him to take up bridge at the nearby senior center and, after I suggested he use a walker, he also enrolled in a “Regain Your Balance” class there.

Still, he was slowing down, losing endurance, and barely able to walk the long block to his favorite Vietnamese soup restaurant. My husband and I gently suggested he consider moving in with us or check out other options, but he said he was doing fine at the condo.

Then, shortly after Thanksgiving, he asked to get on the waiting list for assisted living at Providence Mount St. Vincent. He was accepted within a month. When he moved, I offered to hang on to the condo for a few months in case he wanted to move back.

“Nora,” he said, “all my life, whenever I’ve made a decision, I just move forward. I figure there will be a few things I don’t like, but most of the experience will be just fine. I want to do this while I still have the brain power to be in control of the process.”

Dad is a prime example in planning and making decisions that ease the challenges we face towards end of life. My mother accepted support as well. I hear so many stories from friends whose parents face challenges in isolation, refusing support. My friends talk about waiting for the next fall or other crisis.

As I watch my Dad get out of the car at 89 years of age, barely five feet tall (having lost some inches over the years) and using a cane to steady himself, I feel so proud of the example he continues to set for his family. He walks into The Mount, signs himself in, and blends into his new world, where there are other people watching over and caring about him. “People who’ve never heard my stories before,” he points out. The only thing he doesn’t like is the coffee. And I’m confident he can solve that little problem.

Responses welcome to: norag@fulllifecare.org



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New Location for Beer for a Cause

Join us Thursday, April 23, 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm at
Aston Manor, 2946 1st Avenue South, Seattle.

Great news beer lovers and Full Life friends! The 2015 Beer for a Cause comes to a new venue: Aston Manor in Seattle’s SoDo district. This social club has an inspired décor that promises a twist on this very enjoyable event. “I recently attended a fundraiser at Aston Manor and loved the roaring ’20s-inspired Speakeasy style,” says Full Life Executive Director Nora Gibson. “It’s a great place to spend a fun evening with Full Life’s many supporters.”

As in years past, we’ll have cold beer, fine wine, and better-than-ever raffle prizes. All proceeds from this draft-fueled fundraiser support Full Life’s mission to build a future where adults with serious illnesses and disabilities can live fully supported in their communities rather than in hospitals or nursing homes. Celebrate building community with good beer for a good cause!

To order your Golden Goblet, please email meggjel@fulllifecare.org today. Look for more information at www.fulllifecare.org/bfac and on our Facebook page.

