

## Local Music and Memory® Program Helps Seniors with Memory Deficiencies Live Fuller Lives

**St. Louis, MO. (DECEMBER 3, 2019)** – In the United States more than 50% of seniors who are residents of senior living communities have some form of dementia, Alzheimer’s, or memory loss, according to the Alzheimer’s Association. By the year 2050, the elderly population living with a memory loss deficiency is predicted to increase from roughly five million to a projected 16 million.

In order to help those affected and to ease the minds of their loved ones, programs like Music and Memory® have been implemented in numerous



senior living communities around the nation, including at both Friendship Village senior living communities in St. Louis County.

“For persons with severe dementia, music can tap deep emotional recall. For individuals suffering from Alzheimer’s, memory for things—names, places, facts—is compromised, but memories from teenage years can be well-preserved...Beloved music often calms chaotic brain activity and enables the listener to focus on the present moment and regain a connection to others,” according the Music and Memory® organization.

Welcome to the story of Arlene Mushenick, a resident of Friendship Village Assisted Living and Memory Care, located in Sunset Hills. Mushenick has dementia, and its symptoms have begun to negatively impact the quality of her life.

“Dementia has caused [our mom] to have short-term memory loss, difficulty finding the right words at times during a conversation and loss of interest in life activities,” says daughter Sara Day.

Because of this, Rebekah Manwarring, Friendship Village’s Life Enrichment Director suggested Mushenick begin working with certified music therapist Kimber McNaughton of Music Therapy STL about eight months ago.

**Following is a video of Mushenick’s and McNaughton’s November 18 Music and Memory® session:**

**<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m7CKB0MQ9lhU9nnNema2jO8SSxpTVGJ1/view>**

McNaughton and Mushenick now meet twice a month for what appears to be time spent simply singing and enjoying songs from years gone by. But upon closer inspection, these musical sessions are actually connecting Mushenick with her memories and in turn engaging her more in the present.

“Many people don’t realize that music triggers parts of the brain such as language, motor skills, and emotions. Memories are actually tied to strong emotions which are triggered when music is brought into the picture,” says McNaughton.

“My mother usually turns away from many activities due to her dementia, but she never turns away from music therapy. It’s her favorite part of the week at Friendship Village,” says Day.

“She looks forward to the singing, the conversation associated with picking out songs, and the happiness it brings to her. I have witnessed her light up in the room as she sings along.”

This success story, and others like it, is music to the ears of the community's administrator, Nicole Summers, who's responsible for bringing the Music and Memory® program to Friendship Village Sunset Hills.

In addition to private sessions, the music therapists also hold group sessions for residents and report successes similar to those shown by Mushenick. McNaughton also sees a real change in everyone's mood. She can tell that collectively the participants are more social with one another, have more eye contact, and will be able to talk to one another about their memories when the session is going.

Friendship Village Sunset Hills' staff members keep track of residents' progress by recording their mood trends before and after a Music and Memory® session. This tracking also helps the residents' families see their loved ones' progress and demonstrates the value of continuing these enriching programs.

"The Music and Memory® Program and Music Therapy sessions are a wonderful addition for our residents and their quality of life. Music connects us all, and for those living with dementia, music can take them back to a place in time that they remember so vividly. The residents become content and comforted by the music played, and some of them even like to get up and dance, which helps them to remain active. After witnessing how music allows residents to become engaged and connected with others, I can't imagine not having Music and Therapy in our programming," says Summers.

As for Mushenick's daughter Sara Day, she continues to be a fan. "I would recommend this program to others at FV who enjoy music. It engages [my mom] mentally and for this my family is very thankful!"



For more information about Friendship Village's Assisted Living & Memory Care programs and services, please contact the Sales Counselor, Carmen Worley, at 314-463-4128, or go to <https://www.friendshipvillagestl.com/health-services/assisted-living>.

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*Friendship Village Senior Services is a faith-based, not-for-profit organization devoted to providing a full range of senior living options. As the only provider of the Life Care program in the St. Louis metro area, Friendship Village guarantees residents access to all levels of health care—all on one campus—at a predictable cost for life. Friendship Village continually invests in wellness programs and technology to keep residents living well and independent, longer. From independent living, to assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing and in-home care, Friendship Village continues to build the future of senior living.*

*Friendship Village at Home brings the extensive experience and quality care of Friendship Village services to the homes of area seniors and includes Medicare home health and private duty care. Our mission-driven board of directors and highly experienced staff encourage a culture of friendship and loving care through the highest quality services and a focus on residents' spiritual, emotional, physical and social wellbeing. For more information about **Friendship Village Senior Services** please visit [www.FriendshipVillageSTL.com](http://www.FriendshipVillageSTL.com).*