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## Assisted living home enhances residents' lives through music therapy program

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Oftentimes, when seniors experiencing memory impairment listen to music, they will remember old times, exhibit powerful emotions and engage in life. Recent studies show that the therapeutic use of music by board-certified clinicians can reduce stress and agitation, support creativity, improve mood, as well as help with engagement and memory recall. Understanding the tremendous impact music can have, Mustang Creek Estates of Sachse is offering a new music therapy program led by board-certified music therapist Tiffany Wyndham, M.A., MT-BC, CEO of Music Therapy Solutions. The therapy sessions may include gentle movement to music, therapist-supported use of instruments, musical affirmations, easy songwriting and more. These sessions are especially fun and important for Doris Trousdale, a retired choir director and resident of Mustang Creek Estates of Sachse, who devoted her entire life to music.

"When someone asks me how music makes me feel, I always say that it's like somebody you love is standing before you and you want to hug them, it comes naturally to me," said Trousdale. "It can make us feel so many emotions, it's fascinating. But music touches the heart most, and it doesn't matter what instruments are used."

Trousdale was introduced to music through her aunt at a very young age. She began with playing piano and eventually started to sing in a church choir. Today, when asked to talk about music, Trousdale starts moving her arms as though she is directing. She directed the chancel (adult) choir, the youth and children's choirs, as well as the adult and youth hand bell choirs, and all of these choirs were active at the same time. Trousdale was a charter member of Garland Music Teachers Association and the Dallas Area Hand Bell Association. She taught piano lessons for approximately 20 years and was known fondly by her church choir members as their "Fearless Leader."

"It's truly inspiring to watch Doris and all of our residents during the music therapy sessions," said Sharon Flowers, executive director of Mustang Creek Estates of Sachse. "We are thankful we found Tiffany because she loves working with seniors, and it is a pleasure to have her regularly come over to our community to light up the residents' faces with music."

Wyndham has been practicing music therapy for 11 years, and in addition to senior living communities, she focuses on rehabilitation centers, adult day programs, children's enrichment, and palliative care. The music therapy sessions usually have a theme and start with a hello song. Residents have the opportunity to play different instruments and incorporate gentle movements that are natural to their bodies.

"Music in general can light up so many different areas of the brain, and it is fascinating to watch people's reactions during the sessions," said Wyndham. "I love what I do because I help people engage in life through music. Because I moved to America when I was three, I missed growing up around my grandparents. I think this may be one of the reasons why I enjoy working with seniors so much. We have so much to learn from them and their wisdom, and I am thankful I have the opportunity to enhance their lives through music."