



THE POWER OF MUSIC

Question: Is it true that music improves your memory?

Answer: According to the folks at Music & Memory in Minneola, NY, “Our brains are hardwired to connect music with long-term memory.” Music & Memory started as a project to provide iPods loaded with personalized music choices to nursing home residents and elders with dementia. Their work is captured in a new documentary called “Alive Inside: A Story of Music and Memory” that is playing in select theaters across the U.S. this year.

“Alive Inside: A Story of Music and Memory” tells stories of cognitive reawakening in older people with memory problems ranging from early-stage memory loss to advanced dementia. When earphones were placed over patients’ ears and music from their youth or lifetime was played, those who hadn’t spoken in years were able to utter words, and bed-bound seniors moved their feet to the tunes—very much to the amazement of their caretakers.

Astonishingly, listening to music reconnected their memory to long-lost functional abilities. In addition to awakening muscle memory for movement and

language and memory for speech, the music evoked memories of happier times—which can help fight depression. Recreation therapist and activities consultant Cheryl Kling, CTRS, said, “Music is by far one of the most popular activity programs at the nursing home.”

Famed neurologist Dr. Oliver Sacks attributes the music and memory connection to his belief that “music occupies more areas of our brain than language.” Sacks and other researchers believe that music is stored in our brains and when we access it, we are utilizing memory skills—even those that fade with age.

The Music & Memory organization stresses the importance of selecting music that is meaningful to each individual and also provides instructions on how to assemble a personalized playlist. Each generation has its own “Top 40” set of hits. The baby boomers might have lists of music from the ’50s and ’60s—all the way through the present day. Maybe show tunes are more your thing. Turn it up, man!

SOURCES: For info on “Alive Inside: A Story of Music and Memory,” see www.aliveinside.us. Music & Memory Organization: <http://musicandmemory.org>. *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*, 2007, Alfred Knopf.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

How many grad students does it take to change a lightbulb? One, but it takes ten years.

—*A Prairie Home Companion Pretty Good Joke Book*

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

Go Green!

Receive Social Services Corner by email. Call (888) 994-3863, ext. 2370, or email info@wrmail.org.

Do you or does someone you know need our assistance? Call toll-free (888) 994-3863 or visit www.wrpioneers.org to find out more about our assistance programs.

LOSS AND REMEMBRANCE



With autumn upon us, we encounter longer nights, Veteran's Day and staring down the holidays. For many people, this time of year

can bring up painful memories of loss and reactivate feelings of grief. More timely, October 15th is Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. The loss of an infant is something people carry with them for the rest of their lives, even if they have gone on to raise other children. And our American society allows very little space for personal grief or expressions of mourning.

With this article, your social workers at Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Assistance Fund aim to honor the grief and loss experienced by our members by sharing with our readers different mourning rituals and customs throughout the world. We want you to know that although loss is lonely, when you are grieving you are never alone. Will Rogers' social workers are just a phone call away:

Sources: www.october15th.com, The Official Site of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day. "Cultural Competency in Grief and Loss," by Robin Fiorelli, MSW, LCSW, and Wanda Jenkins, MHS, <http://www.nhpco.org>.

(888) 994-3863, ext. 2390.

It is the Jewish custom to "sit shiva" for a week while visitors from the community come to the home of the bereaved to share in the grieving experience. Mirrors are covered during this time, and prayers are said.

Whereas most Western cultures use mortician services, in other cultures around the world those members of the family or community who wash and shroud the bodies of deceased loved ones are held in high regard.

Indian, Japanese and other Asian cultural groups maintain shrines in their homes, often with daily offerings to ancestors and loved ones they've lost.

Many people pray to and speak to the deceased as if they are still present, both as a comfort and a remembrance. Wearing black or placing a headstone on a grave are also both acts of remembrance.

Again, please know that while the loss of a loved one is devastating, when you are grieving you are never alone. You can reach out to us at (888) 994-3863, ext. 2390. If we don't answer immediately, one of our social workers will contact you quickly.

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF'S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Disability Rights Legal Center, (866) 999-3752, www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.org

The Disability Rights Legal Center is a nonprofit legal advocacy organization that champions the rights of people with disabilities through education, advocacy and litigation. They have a pro bono arm to connect people with disabilities to lawyers.

National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC), (800) 388-2227, www.nfcc.org

The NFCC is the largest nonprofit credit counseling organization. They provide a variety of services, including budget counseling; financial education; debt management; credit, housing and bankruptcy counseling; and referrals.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“ We will never have true civilization until we have learned to recognize the rights of others. ”

—Will Rogers

To view our entire National Resource Directory, please visit www.wrpioneers.org.