



Hear My Story - Make Yours Happen!

by Ami Sarasvati

Have you heard of how music is being used with seniors, especially for those with dementia? If not, get a hold of the newly released film, *Alive Inside*, (watch the trailer at www.aliveinside.us/#trailer) and get ready to get inspired! Briefly, Dan Cohen, a previous social worker in a nursing home, took a great idea and created a breakthrough for many victims of Alzheimer's disease. For good reason, this program is now being used in thousands of senior living facilities around the country with more being added every day. His website is www.musicandmemory.org. Working with your senior (or their family), you can make a list of their favorite songs and artists from when they were about 20 years old. Next, put the songs (called a playlist) on a listening device, and expose them to it, via headphones or speakers. Be ready to experience something special!



I adapted this concept in two settings with amazing results. In my personal life, I am one of several family caregivers along with my brothers for our elderly parents who are enjoying their twilight years at home. I asked Mom and Dad, separately, to come up with a list of 10 favorite songs and the artists. My Dad produced his list within 24 hours with no additional prompting. My Mom needed some encouragement so we sat down together and picked out songs by hearing snippets of them in the iTunes store. We found the songs and exact versions she loved. Just sitting with her and picking the songs was so much fun for us both! We went back and forth between iTunes, YouTube, and Google, to identify some of the song names and artists. We watched and listened to a few of them on YouTube. She glowed as the music played. She requested that we find the song *Mam'selle*. Within seconds, we were listened to it. My Mom lit up and related to me, "It was 1947! This was our High School song." Next, we found the song she learned the Jitterbug (dance).

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Get It Gone - Furniture Moving and Removal

Here is a valuable resource for seniors transitioning to a facility, families downsizing, or anyone just needing to get rid of big items easily and safely. **Get It Gone** is a tried and proven trusted service in our community. Run by a small team of caring professionals, the company is owned and operated by Jake Edmunds. Jake worked in the furniture business early in his career. He recognized his customers' need to get rid of their old furniture but the furniture companies did not provide this service. He started his business to address this need. He quickly perceived additional needs people had to clear their over-stuffed homes, spaces, garages, or offices. From their website: "**Get It Gone** is Southern New Hampshire's and New England's best choice for furniture removal and disposal. We strive to give the BEST customer service possible in professional furniture removal and disposal. Let us take on the hassle of getting rid of your furniture. No more back breaking struggles up the stairs or out the door, our experienced professionals will safely remove your old furniture and leave the walls and doors intact."

Get It Gone has a great reputation for no hassles, upfront pricing, excellent communication, and stellar customer service. Check out their website www.getitgone.com or call Jake Edmunds at 603-315-0258.



Don't forget! Sunday, MARCH 8, is Daylight Savings. Be sure to set your clocks AHEAD one hour!

Hear My Story - Make Yours Happen! (cont.)

I asked her how she learned to Jitterbug and she told me about her friend, Alice, her best friend, and how... the story went on as she relived these treasured memories. to move and groove. Emotionally, she was back in her 20s. Dad joined in and they began to (gently) dance and have fun They were smiling, telling stories, recalling favorite times. What a hit!

There is a second part to this story. Remember the expression "Necessity is the Mother of Invention"? Several weeks ago, I began teaching a T'ai Chi class at The Arbors of Bedford as part of our activities outreach division. The Arbors is a dedicated memory care facility. About 15 minutes into the class, I realized I needed to think out of the box as the residents were not engaging in the class. As they have cognitive impairment, teaching T'ai Chi is a particularly challenging task. Divine inspiration came through and I thought ... hmmm ... I wonder how they would respond if I taught T'ai Chi to my parents' playlists. The next week, I made sure my parents' playlists were loaded and ready on my iPad. I wish I would have caught this on camera. I cued up Mom's playlist because it was longer than Dad's and I had an hour to engage about 20 residents. The results were remarkable! Even those in wheelchairs began coming to life before my eyes. Their feet were tapping, everyone's eyes opened, the smiles came over them like a wave of love in the room. They began to engage in the movements. Some of them began asking about the music, who I was, what day I taught, and asking if I'd be back next week. They told me to remember to bring the music. Some of the residents didn't participate in the T'ai Chi class, but just wanted to hear the music and be part of the "activity" while their feet bounced to the beat and that was enough. Maybe next week, they will try a few movements.

I told my parents about the experience at The Arbors and they were touched. I asked them to come up with new playlists. It is such a joy to see them enjoying their music. They are revisiting sweet memories *and* helping me create an engaging experience for other seniors whose memories are being accessed through music they listened to when they were about 20 years old. Music is a newly discovered backdoor into the mind.

Star Caregivers for February

Cathie M.

We are so fortunate to have Cathie M. as one of our Angels. How did she find us? One day, driving down the road, Cathie pulled into our driveway in Auburn to turn around and saw our sign on which was posted:



ANGELS WANTED.
She said she always wanted to be a Visiting Angels, so came in to apply and she was hired.

In asking Cathie what she enjoys about her job, she says, *"I love my job. There isn't anything I'd rather do. Everyday is exciting. I love meeting so many different people. They are so interesting and it's great knowing I'm doing a world of good."*

Passing along a word to the wise to new caregivers, Cathie encourages them to know that your clients are going to react to you so be happy because they are going to react to that!"

Cathie spent 30 years doing a desk job and is very happy being a caregiver now. "This is the best change in my life."

What the office staff has to say about Cathie:
Cathie steps up to the plate and helps out with any shift we request of her. She is versatile, can handle all levels of clients. She is a real asset to the agency.

We appreciate you all for your thoughtfulness, reliability, caring, and outstanding service.

Caregivers of the Weeks for February 2015:

Jane F.

Sr. Therese

Chris L.

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