

April 8, 2011

Thirteenth Annual MSU Music Therapy Recital to Feature, Celebrate Abilities

“If you can walk, you can dance. If you can talk, you can sing.”

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EAST LANSING, Mich. – **Celebrate Abilities**, the 13th annual Michigan State University Music Therapy recital, will be held on **April 15 at 4:30 p.m.** in the **MSU Union Lobby**. This event will celebrate, through music, the abilities of children and adults diagnosed with special needs such as autism, traumatic brain injuries, mental and physical impairments, developmental disabilities, and/or mental illnesses.

Randy Carrier, who was a band director in Benton Harbor before suffering a cerebral hemorrhage in 1996, started this annual recital in 1999 as part of his vocational rehabilitation.



“Celebrate Abilities is a day many individuals and their families look forward to each year,” said Cindy Edgerton, co-director of the MSU Community Music School's Music Therapy Clinical Services. “For many of the performers, this is their only opportunity to showcase their talents in front of an audience. It’s an incredible experience.”

This informal event will feature a wide variety of music performances, ranging from Disney to rock ‘n’ roll! There will be both individual performers and group ensembles. There will also be opportunities for the audience to join in with dances and sing-alongs. MSU music therapy students

and MSU Community Music School music therapists will assist and perform with the groups.

The recital is free and open to the public. Audience members are welcome to come and go during the concert. Donations will be accepted to benefit CMS’s Music Therapy Clinical Services program.

A Music Therapy Success Story

Tommy: Tommy was enrolled at the age of six months in an early childhood music program to help with his brain development. He continued this until he was two and started to have a hard time transitioning from one activity to another in class. Shortly thereafter, he was diagnosed with autism. His family found that they could use music as a calming tool when he became very stressed or upset about something he could not overcome at the time. Now, part of his therapy is music therapy to which he responds very positively.

Michigan State University Community Music School

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The outreach division of the MSU College of Music

“Tommy has been exposed to music since he was in the womb,” says Tommy’s mother. “I can honestly say that he understands music and can harmonize and appreciate a variety of instruments.”

Today, Tommy is ten years old. Since his involvement with music therapy at MSU he is now bridging words into sentences, is able to transition from one activity to another, and doesn't experience the stress in certain environments like he did before, his mother continues.

About the MSU Music Therapy Program

Music therapy is an established health care profession using music to address the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social needs of children and adults with special needs. Music therapists do not teach their clients how to sing or play instruments. Rather, instruments and voices are used to create a common musical language. Some music therapy clients may not be able to speak, but they may be able to communicate musically, and some who do not yet speak are able to sing. Music therapy cuts across all boundaries. It can be beneficial in inclusive settings because children who are unable to do the same math problems or read the same books can all participate in the same music making. Many clients develop self-confidence and enhance their self-esteem through participation in positive, success-oriented interventions.

In 1944, MSU established the first music therapy program in the world. About 30 years ago, the Music Therapy Clinic was established for student practicum training. In 1993, Music Therapy Clinical Services, a MSU Community Music School program, was established to provide professional music therapy services to schools, agencies, and private clients throughout Mid-Michigan. Clients are seen either individually or in groups, usually once per week for 30-60 minutes, depending upon individual needs. In 2001, the Eric ‘RicStar’ Winter Music Therapy Camp was established. This annual camp provides opportunities for musical expression, enjoyment, and interaction for all people with special needs and their siblings. Currently, there is a moratorium on music therapy as an academic major at MSU. Music therapy clinical services will continue, however, through the MSU Community Music School.

Editor’s Note: This event provides excellent photo and video opportunities. Please contact Cindy Edgerton, (517) 353-6426, edgerto3@msu.edu, to schedule video/photo shoots, for interviews with participants or therapists, client success stories, or more information.

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