

# *Houston Music and Wellness Center*

Cindy St. Cyr  
713-464-SING (7464)  
[www.cindystcyr.com](http://www.cindystcyr.com)  
[www.musicwellnesscenter.com](http://www.musicwellnesscenter.com)



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## **HealthRHYTHMS Publish Research Summary**

# **Inspiring Creativity & Bonding in Seniors**

## **RMM Inspires Creativity & Bonding in Long-Term Care Residents**

Recreational Music-Making(RMM) Inspires Creativity & Bonding in Long-Term Care Residents

Bittman, B., Bruhn, K., Lim, P., Neve, A., Stevens, C., Knudsen, C., 2003 Provider (2004)

To test this hypothesis, two real-world laboratories were established at Wesbury United Methodist Retirement Community, Meadville, Pa., a facility with independent living, skilled nursing, assisted living, and memory support (skilled and assisted); and Fredericka Manor, Chula Vista, CA., a retirement campus with independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing, including 60 beds for persons with dementia.

While ongoing RMM programs are currently offered at both facilities, the data collection period extended from 2002 through 2003. A total of 550 seniors participated in the study. All subjects (or family members when appropriate) signed informed consents, and the protocol was approved by the Institutional Review Board for Human Studies of Meadville Medical Center. The program was conducted by an interdisciplinary facilitation team that included a physician, two music therapists, a music teacher, musicians, and members of the facilities' activities staffs. The

program included a Yamaha Clavinova Keyboard assisted drum circle which followed the HealthRHYTHMS Protocol.

### **Resident Observations**

After completion of the program, many residents noted the immediate benefits of creating connections with staff and other residents. Participation in just one RMM session often promoted identifiable and meaningful connections. The predominant conclusion was that there are no “strangers” at the end of an RMM session. Several residents remarked that their ability to more effectively deal with the loss of a loved one or friend was enhanced through RMM sessions. The acknowledgement of a person who had recently passed on served as an effective means for honoring an important relationship through empathetic group support. A number of participants commented that RMM positively influenced their overall perspectives and expectations for living in a long term care environment. In addition, residents reported that RMM activities produced far more favorable effects, when compared with antidepressants or mood-stabilizing drugs.