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# Mather residents access memories through symphony program

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When Anna Clyne approached Mather LifeWays about participating in a program that explored music and memory, officials at the senior living residence were more than interested.

Clyne, a drama therapist and one of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's composers-in-residence, was put in touch with Caroline Edasis, art therapist at Mather Pavilion, 820 Foster St., Evanston.

"We got to talking about music and memory and about being flooded with music, this idea of music and memory and how meaningful music can be when it washes over you," she said, describing the aim of the embryonic program.

Clyne, along with musicians from the Civic Orchestra, spent

six weeks of hour-long sessions with staff and patients in the memory exploration program.

They met with memory care residents, discussing what music they liked, what memories they associated with certain music, even joined in after in the exercise with singing, games and hand massages "where the musicians really got to meet and connect with the residents," Edasis said.

At the final session Friday, musicians Emma Koi (flute), Amy Hess (viola) and Desiree Miller (cello) performed for the residents — their lilting compositions with the memories, stories and reminisces which grew out of the sessions.

"I used to go to the ballroom where we did tango and all the other dances at the time," recalled one resident, breaking into rhythm — "Da, da, da, dee, deede, dadah," she said, the musicians playing along.

About memory and songs, "I don't know if it's something that I experienced, or I'm remembering. It brings back the songs I like," the woman said.

At Mather Pavilion, "we really emphasize music and art," Edasis said. "It accesses a lot of emotion. It's really relationship-based, and it's something very present-moment experience. It doesn't require any prior knowledge. People can sing, people can paint without having to know what their kids' names are."

Laura Pawuk, music therapist at Mather Pavilion, who worked closely with Edasis and the CSO on the program, said music therapy is being recognized more and more around the world as a form of health care.

"Such programs enable residents to express their feelings in meaningful interactions with other people," and also help foster a sense of community, she said.



Musicians from the Civic Orchestra of Chicago (left to right), Emma Koi, flute, Amy Hess, viola, and Desiree Miller, cello, perform a special concert at Mather Pavilion last Friday. | BOB SEIDENBERG/SUN-TIMES MEDIA