

Music therapy can ease some symptoms of developmental disabilities

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Highlands County is very lucky to have a free Music Therapy Program available for local youth who have conditions such as autism and various types of developmental disabilities.

The program, which lasts about a year, is available due to a grant received by Handicapped Americans Love of Life Organization which, in turn, has partnered with Clear Sky Music Therapy. "Music Therapy is an established health profession in which music is used within a therapeutic relationship to address physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs of individuals," according to Ryan Adamov, MT-BC.

The classes are one-on-one with the child and are very personalized. Adamov requests that a parent be present so they can help with feedback on how the sessions assist with changes in the child's behavior at home.

Clear Sky Music Therapy is currently located in the offices of HALLO at 112 Medical Lane in Sebring, next to Highland's Regional Medical Center. HALLO offers the "Tru-Tone" Therapeutic Fitness Program which consists of a "passive" exercise program that improves muscle tone and endurance, flexibility, posture, circulation and other physical and mental benefits.

"Music therapy provides avenues for communication that can be helpful for those children who find it difficult to express themselves in words," explains Adamov. "I look for behaviors during music therapy that are good or positive. Our hope is that these positive behaviors will carry over into other areas, like home or school."

A Music Therapist must complete a minimum of

a bachelor's degree, serve an internship and pass a national certification exam. Adamov graduated from Kent State and plays a variety of instruments. "Music therapy is supported by decades of qualitative and quantitative research," he said.

Clear Sky's therapy room is delightful and offers a plethora of instruments: various types of guitars, electric piano, rhythmic keyboard, various drum sets, percussion instruments, a rain stick, shakers and much more.

"When I am working with a child I am looking for what conditions in music therapy are causing a positive response? I then try to work with the family to create those same conditions in the home," Adamov said. "The goal is to successfully use music to increase the positive behaviors. Sometimes it helps to do music before homework or before going to bed."

When working with children who are autistic, Adamov likes to try a percussion instrument. He tries to get them to copy a pattern, sort of like playing the repetitive pattern game of Simon.

"I want to cause a response — to try and connect," he said. "Another instrument I like to use is the steel drum. I will ask them to play and then I'll copy the notes."

He is heavily involved in the perceptions of the children and their musicality. Music therapy helps to teach tonality and how it relates to their emotions as well. The goals of music therapy are to improve communication (increase speaking ability), improve cognitive skills (reading, colors, focus and attention), improve physical skills (when used in conjunction with physical therapy — can improve



Sharon Weatherhead/Highlands Sun

Ryan Adamov with guitar and drums used in a free Music Therapy program offered in Highlands County.

their gait), improve social skills (being able to connect and interact with others) and even possibly decrease the need for medications (for example in a child with Attention Deficit Disorder).

While the program is geared toward youth ages 4-18, the material will help any age group. The program is open to children in Highlands County. There are still

openings in the Music Therapy Program and it is free. Contact Ryan Adamov with Clear Sky Music Therapy at 863-232-6799 for more information. The email is clearsky musictherapy@gmail.com. The website is <http://www.clearsky musictherapy.com>

You can also contact Deanna at H.A.L.L.O. at 863-385-1196 or by visiting www.halloinc.org. "Music Therapy can be very fun and motivating," Adamov said. "The kids get excited and look forward to coming. It can help them provide an outlet for expressing their feelings. With this training we can try to unlock the musician within and provide them a lifelong access to music."

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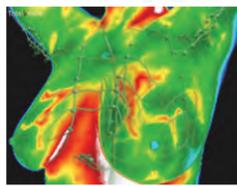


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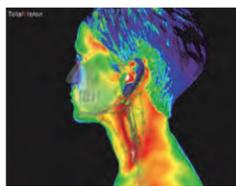


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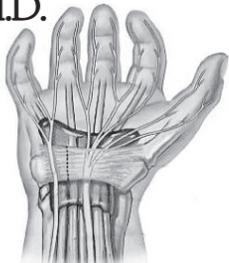
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