

Options

A quarterly newsletter of Anixter Center

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Winter 2004

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Music therapy offers harmonious path

“**M**usic therapy can make the difference between withdrawal and awareness, between isolation and interaction, between chronic pain and comfort – between demoralization and dignity,” said Barbara Crowe, past president of the National Association for Music Therapy. Her observation sheds a great deal of light on the reason music therapy thrives at Anixter Center – in addition to its status as a very popular offering among clients.

Encompassing activities as wide-ranging as drumming, group performance and rhythm exploration through a variety of instruments, music therapy is defined as the prescribed use of music by a qualified person to effect positive changes in the psychological, physical, cognitive or social functioning of individuals with health or educational problems.

Music has been heralded as a healing influence that could positively affect health and behavior since the ancient writings of Aristotle and Plato. Modern-day music therapy began after World War I. In an effort to lift the spirits of the war weary, both amateur and professional musicians visited veterans’ hospitals around the country to play for the thousands

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Anixter Center Music Therapist Rachel Karnoscak accompanies clients during a music therapy group.

Concertante di Chicago thrills clients with notes of beauty

More than 125 Anixter Center clients and staff members swayed in tune with the music, clapped their hands and took turns “conducting” an orchestra on Friday, Jan. 16 as the second floor of Anixter Center’s building at 2032 North Clybourn was transformed into a magnificent concert hall. The musicians who worked their magic on the crowd were several members of Concertante di Chicago, a thematic Chicago classical ensemble which performs works written for chamber orchestra, from Mozart to premieres of modern Russian works.



Hilel Kagan

Ensemble members demonstrated their instruments, answered questions and joined the group’s artistic director and conductor, Hilel Kagan, in taking clients inside the workings of a small orchestra. Cellist William Cernota kicked off the event by saying, “We want to have an exchange of communication between our orchestra members and everyone who’s here today.” And indeed, the informal session

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Lost in translation? Hardly

Imagine a play with more than a dozen roles. Then imagine only two cast members playing all of those parts. American Sign Language interpreters Donna Reiter Brandwein and Michael Albert faced that challenge Jan. 30 at Chicago Shakespeare Theater's production of Stephen Sondheim's "A Little Night Music."

"Performance" interpreters translate theatrical productions into sign language for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing. Donna and Michael prepared for the performance for months – listening to tapes, reading the script and attending shows.


"We see a show many, many times so we know where our reference points are," says Donna, also a Chicago Hearing Society (CHS) Advisory Board member. "We keep practicing together and on our own."

Donna and Michael took on roles from a 9-year-old to an 80-year-old in "A Little Night Music." Seated on stools at the audience level, they represented characters through body language and facial expressions.

"The idea is to take on the general aura of each character," says Michael, who works for CHS Interpreter Services.



Sign language interpreters Donna Reiter Brandwein and Michael Albert rehearse for "A Little Night Music."

 That talent requires a background in drama. Donna majored in acting at Loyola University and has 20 years experience in performance interpreting, and Michael has experience in community, high school and college theater along with 13 years of interpreting. "We get to play characters we would never be cast as," Michael says. "And I would never be cast in Steppenwolf productions, but there I am."

CHS interpreters are also available for musical performances, like last summer's Sting concert at Grant Park. Some theaters in Chicago regularly schedule one or two

interpreted performances, and others offer them upon request. The interpreters, unlike the actors who will act in the play's entire run, usually only have one chance to get things right.

"You put so much work into one shot," Michael says. "We want our audience to get the most out of the performance. We have very high standards."

CHS interpreters work in a variety of settings such as hospital emergency rooms, college classrooms and business meetings. For more information about Interpreter Services go to www.chicagohearingociety.org.

Concertante, from Page 1 included a number of questions and comments from the audience. More than a half dozen clients jumped at the opportunity to try conducting members of Concertante di Chicago, with Hilel encouraging them every step of the way. Others moved easily to the sounds of the ensemble.

Two days later, eight clients attended a performance of Armenian music by the ensemble at DePaul University Concert Hall. This concert-going experience is the brainchild of board member Sheryl Sharp, who also serves on the board of Concertante di Chicago. Clients also will attend Concertante di Chicago performances in March and in May.

Getting to know you Anixter School

This article is the third in an occasional series of stories that will spotlight one of Anixter Center's 70 programs.

The classroom is silent as Allison Heller reads from the pages of "Sounder," a novel about an African-American family and their faithful dog in the 19th-century South.



Education

Allison, a certified special educator, asks her group of eight students what they think will happen next. Students around the room eagerly raise their hands.

It's a typical day at Anixter School, where 14- to 21-year-olds with disabilities receive individual academic attention along with vocational training and community integration opportunities. Founded in 1988, Anixter School has grown from an enrollment of eight to a capacity of 40 students. The school consists of four classrooms on the fourth floor at 2032 North Clybourn Avenue and includes a sensory room with swing chairs, a "squeeze" machine and other adaptive equipment.

Students, whose diagnoses range from autism to behavior/emotional disorders and cognitive disabilities, earn high school diplomas while gaining volunteer work experience and receiving specialized services. "We want to prepare them for the real world," Anixter School Principal Janis Nicholson says.

Students develop work skills at Loews Cineplex Webster Place, North Park Nature Center and a local Social Security Administration office. They also visit Little Sisters of the Poor, playing bingo with residents and working on ceramics projects. Outings to the



Students 14 to 21 years old attend Anixter School at 2032 North Clybourn.

Museum of Science and Industry and Lincoln Park Zoo also afford social interaction.

"Being in the community is a natural setting for our students," Janis says. "They come in contact with a lot of people and can enhance their social skills."

Anixter School students have a strong presence at 2032 North Clybourn. They volunteer in the Alternatives for the Developmentally Disabled Program and coordinate paper recycling throughout the building. A winter holiday party drew parents and family members as students presented information on various traditions. "We're giving the young people more input," Janis says.

Nine students are on course to graduate this year. Their goals after graduation include working in supported employment settings or attending day programs like Anixter Center's Community Resources and Support. "The students' needs are met here," Janis says. "They receive personal attention in a comfortable environment."

Philanthropy Update

In support of CALOR programs

Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust • Hearts Foundation
• Season of Concern

In support of Chicago Hearing Society Youth Programs

Daniel F. & Ada L. Rice Foundation • George Eisenberg Foundation for Charities • Julius Frankel Foundation

In support of Chicago Hearing Society's Choices for Parents Initiative

Polk Bros. Foundation

In support of equipment for medically fragile children served by Byron School and Anixter Center's pediatric residences

Grant Healthcare Foundation

In support of National Lekotek Center

George R. Kendall Foundation

In support of National Lekotek Center's Safe Haven program

Cashel Foundation

"After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music."

ALDOUS HUXLEY

Music, from Page 1

burdened with the physical and emotional trauma that resulted from their battle experiences.



Assistive
Community
Services

Anixter Center has a long history with music therapy. It has been a consistent offering since 1983 when the first musical options included a bell choir, barbershop quartet and chorale group. Today, more than a dozen groups take place weekly, with current choices including: "Music Madness," a survey and review of various musical genres; "Drumming for Health," an exploration of percussive styles including African drumming and Japanese Kodo drumming; and activities for tactile stimulation.

A "Relaxation to Music," group highlights positive ways to release stress. As part of her efforts to help clients relax through music, Anixter Center Music Therapist Rachel Karnoscak conducts a guided imagery exercise through which participants learn to envision a safe, calm and peaceful place that can provide comfort in difficult situations. Two singing groups are available, and clients are invited to suggest their favorite tunes for group enjoyment. The invitation to sing becomes something more universal – an invitation to communicate with peers, says Rachel. Through singing together, clients share their personal experiences of the same song, engaging in lively discussions that evoke both happy and sad memories.

Different types of musical explorations are used to achieve a variety of therapeutic goals, according to Rachel, who delights in the many kinds of connections and growth experiences she observes as clients progress through an 11-week session. "My goal is always that people will feel more comfortable in expressing themselves through some kind of musical experience, whatever that may be," Rachel says. Common therapeutic objectives are the development of self-esteem, teamwork and decision-making skills, and enhanced confidence is a natural byproduct of learning to make decisions. Another goal is to

Golf outing scheduled for June

The Lester J. Anixter Memorial Golf Outing is scheduled for June 29 at The Glen Club in Glenview. The event will benefit the children's programs of Anixter Center and its divisions: CALOR, Chicago Hearing Society and the National Lekotek Center. Golfers receive a buffet lunch, cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and dinner along with awards and prizes. To reserve early or learn about sponsorship opportunities, contact Nancy Trueblood at (773) 973-7900, ext. 249 or ntrueblood@lekotek.org.



THE
GLEN CLUB

Lekotek benefit slated

"Small World in a Big City" is the theme for the National Lekotek Center's annual winter benefit featuring a gourmet Italian dinner, 50/50 raffle, and live and silent auctions. Mark your calendar for Friday, March 5 at Galleria Marchetti, 825 West Erie, Chicago. For advance reservations or more information contact Nancy Trueblood at (773) 973-7900, ext. 249 or ntrueblood@lekotek.org.

Stuart Ferst takes part in panel

Anixter Center President and CEO Stuart G. Ferst recently participated in a panel discussion at DePaul University. The Lincoln Park Community Research Initiative presented "Through Thick and Thin: A Century of Service in Lincoln Park." The event highlighted the history of the Lincoln Park neighborhood's commitment to social services.

develop a comfort level within community settings. One group achieves this objective by performing at hospitals and nursing homes, among other venues.

Rachel says that progress is sometimes slow – but also steady. She relates the story of a client who, upon starting the group, wouldn't join the group circle but preferred to be on the periphery. As weeks passed, he moved closer to his peers, eventually joined the circle and even began tapping on a drum. This anecdote testifies to music's ability to transform people, says Rachel. "It's very powerful," she observes.

Cochlear implants offer chance to hear

Less than a year ago, everyday sounds like a telephone ringing or the tapping of a computer keyboard were unknown to Jenni Ewald. A recent cochlear implant, though, has introduced her to a new world of sound.

"After I heard the doorbell or phone ring a few times, I knew what that sound was," Jenni says. "But understanding conversation is much more difficult."

Jenni, victim assistance counselor at Chicago Hearing Society (CHS), a division of Anixter Center, had the hearing device surgically implanted in April at Loyola University Medical Center to help her respond to the needs of her baby daughter, Camille. The implant surgery, performed by Dr. John Leonetti, also a CHS Advisory Board member, was only the beginning. Meetings with an auditory-verbal therapist are helping Jenni, who became deaf after a fever as an infant, teach her brain to hear again.

"The easiest part of it is the surgery, but the hardest is the rehabilitation afterward," says Dr. Alan G. Micco, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Northwestern University, and an Anixter Center board member. "It can take years to get that done."

Since the first cochlear implant in Australia in 1978, 60,000 individuals have received them worldwide. People of all ages, including those who are late-deafened and those who are prelinguistically deafened (people who lost their hearing before learning to hear and understand speech) can be candidates



A microphone (1) picks up sound and sends it to a processor (2). There sound is digitized into coded signals for the transmitter coil (3). The transmitter sends the code across the skin to the internal cochlear implant where it is converted to electronic signals that are recognized by the brain.

for cochlear implants. The surgery is typically an outpatient procedure and takes about one-and-a-half hours. An electrode is implanted in the inner ear along with a transmitter under the skin on the side of the head. A microphone detects sounds and sends signals to the transmitter that are relayed to the electrode.

Chicago Hearing Society and Cochlear Americas, a leading provider of cochlear implant technology, hosted a workshop for consumers and their families in November. Doctors from implant centers around Chicago were on hand to share information.

"Chicago Hearing Society presented this workshop as part of an ongoing effort to provide a variety of information to the public," says Jill Sahakian, director of CHS. "Cochlear implants are one of the many choices people have."

"We tell people that some candidates are better than others," Dr. Micco adds. "Each individual case

is different. If certain cells aren't stimulated for long periods of time, they atrophy. These people may hear but not understand sounds as well."

The FDA has broadened the scope of who can benefit from an implant. Dr. Nancy Young, head of otology at Children's Memorial Hospital and an Anixter Center board member, recently performed surgery on an 8-month-old, the youngest person to receive a hearing device in Illinois.

"The age restrictions have gone down. And the external equipment is smaller and more cosmetically appealing," says Jeff Graunke of Cochlear Americas.

Jenni continues to encounter new experiences as she develops her hearing.

"Sometimes I'll start reading the paper while the TV is on and, even though I'm not watching the screen, I'll clearly understand a phrase. The first time that happened, it was so cool!"

E-mail newsletter

Anixter Center's monthly e-mail newsletter keeps readers informed with up-to-date news on issues that affect people with disabilities. To sign up for the e-mail update, send your full name to ncornell@anixter.org or visit www.anixter.org.

CORE Center honors Omar Lopez

The CORE Center recently honored Omar Lopez, director of CALOR, a division of Anixter Center, with its Hope for the Future Award. The award was presented at the CORE Center's Fifth Anniversary Celebration at the Hyatt Regency. The CORE Center provides a comprehensive range of outpatient care to individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.



"We recognize Mr. Lopez's commitment to the community for furthering the cause and improving access to care for those affected by HIV," said Dr. Robert Weinstein, CORE Center chief operating officer, in presenting the award.

Other CORE Center honorees included Cook County Board President John Stroger and U.S. Rep. Danny Davis (D-7). "I was in good company," Omar says.

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The mission of the Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center is to assist people with disabilities to live and work successfully in the community. Anixter Center is a leading provider of high-quality vocational, residential and educational options, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and health care. Anixter Center is an advocate for the rights of people with disabilities to be full and equal members of the community.

Editorial Offices

Development Department
6610 N. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60626-4062

To make a donation or gift-in-kind, or to request information, call:
(773) 973-7900, ext. 226; (773) 973-2180 TTY
www.anixter.org

Stuart G. Ferst, President and CEO

Editors

Betsy Storm, Mary Kozil and Bob Dolgan

The Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center is a nonprofit charitable organization with various programs accredited and/or licensed by one or more of the following: CARF, the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Human Services. Anixter Center is a member of the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago and the Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities. Anixter Center is a designated Helen Keller Center Affiliate.

*Assisting people with
disabilities to live and
work successfully in
the community*

6610 N. Clark St. Chicago, IL 60626-4062

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