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DEMENTIA MELODIES

Music is helping Wairarapa elders with advanced dementia reconnect with the world around them and reunite with seemingly lost memories.

Trust House Community Enterprise and the Roy and Jan Mace Charitable Trust have granted funding for Enliven's Kandahar Court to run music therapy with residents.

Kandahar Home recreation office Di McCuish says music therapy, which involves interactive musical performances, is making a notable difference to the residents' lives already.

"It is just awesome. Elders who don't normally participate in activities are participating in the music therapy sessions," says Di.

"One resident used to play the trombone and he's only played it once over the past few years he's lived here. The music therapy session inspired him to get it out again!"

Di explains that music therapy is proven to be very beneficial to bringing back memories with songs.

"The music therapist sings one-on-one to residents in the group and gets down to their level and makes eye contact. She asks them about the memories that come with the songs which usually results with the resident recalling a memory. It's quite amazing."

Mike Keyworth, manager of Kandahar Court and Kandahar Home, says Enliven will be seeking funding to continue to offer music therapy.

"It is proven that singing and music reduces social isolation and gives elders the chance to reminisce and share stories about themselves through music, which draws on memories," says Mike.

"Music therapy has so many potential benefits and we're very excited to see what it will do for our residents."

Kandahar Court and sister-site Kandahar Home are both operated by Enliven, part of the not-for-profit organisation Presbyterian Support Central, and provide a full spectrum of aged care including dementia care, rest home and hospital level care, as well as respite, health recovery and day programmes.

For more information about Kandahar Court or Kandahar Home free phone 0508 ENLIVEN (that's 0508 36 54 83) or visit www.enlivencentral.org.nz.



Music therapy inspired Kandahar Court staff and residents to reminisce and dance