



THE ARTS PART OF THE SOLUTION

FINE ARTS ASSOCIATION

Music Programs Benefit Special Needs Children

Christina, a 29-year-old female diagnosed with Down syndrome who functions at the social and educational level of a 15-year-old girl, has been attending weekly music therapy sessions at the Fine Arts Association (FAA) in Willoughby since 2007. With the help of her music therapist she has recently produced a CD of her own original songs, including *Lost in Your Dreams* which she wrote “for my dad who passed away from cancer. Writing this song helped me show my feelings and what I have been through.”



Seeing a need in their community for richer cultural experiences and quality arts education, Jim and Louise Savage established the FAA in 1957. For more than 50 years, the FAA has endowed Willoughby with a vibrant community arts center dedicated to arts education, performances and arts experiences for all ages and skill levels. With support from the Ohio Arts Council’s Sustainability program, the FAA has educated and entertained hundreds of thousands of community members.



In 2003, when a number of families whose children demonstrated a special emotional and behavioral need turned to the FAA for help, they initiated a music therapy program. The need for music therapy services has increased so dramatically that a third board-certified music therapist was hired in late 2008 to serve the growing client base.

Working closely with parents and caregivers to determine the clients’ individual needs and goals, a music therapist uses music and music experiences to benefit individuals of all ages who have behavioral, physical, cognitive, social, emotional or language and communication-oriented disabilities. Marlene, one of the parents of a music therapy student, says “Our daughter has become so much more at ease in social settings. She has always been a happy child, but now she is busting out of her shell and eager to learn new things. What a thrill it is to see her grow this way.”

The music therapy program at FAA currently serves clients with autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, attention deficit disorder, Lowe syndrome, Tourette syndrome, dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. In addition to offering Very Special Music Summer Camps, including adapted music, theater and visual arts opportunities for children and adults, FAA contracts with a variety of health and human services agencies in the area, including Lake Hospital System, extending its reach into the community and providing year-round therapy opportunities.

Bonnie Hayhurst, Christina’s music therapist, notes, “Christina has made great strides in her ability to express her emotions through her music and lyrics.” Christina’s success is indicative of the FAA’s commitment to providing opportunities for students of all age and skill levels, and to being a place where dreams are inspired, where creativity soars, and where lives are transformed.

Bringing
Unity to
Communities

Creativity and
Imagination

LAKE COUNTY
Fine Arts Association
Willoughby, Ohio



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Marlene, parent of music therapy child