

Wilfrid Laurier University



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Laurier to expand music therapy services offered through clinic

Professional music therapy services are now available to the community through the campus clinic at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo.

Because of an increasing demand for the treatment services provided by student music therapists at the clinic since 1989, the university has now made additional services available for a fee from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

This avant-garde discipline uses music as a tool to achieve specific goals in the cognitive, emotional, and physical domains. For example, it can help establish contact with a patient who has Alzheimer's Disease, bring an autistic child out of his or her shell, or assist a person with a head injury to regain speech more quickly.

Individuals and small group sessions for clients of all ages and needs are conducted by professionally trained music therapists. Services include an initial assessment, and the development of treatment goals based on each client's needs, strengths, and preferences.

"We're excited to be expanding the music therapy services we offer to community residents," says Dr. Rosemary Fischer, director of Laurier's music therapy program.

"The benefits of this pioneering therapy are being recognized more and more."

Fees for the professional services vary depending on the length of the session, whether it is in private or in a small group, and the accreditation of the music therapist. Sessions may be conducted by a music therapist accredited by the Canadian Association for Music Therapy or by a music therapist who has completed training and a six-month internship but is awaiting accreditation.

Current students of Laurier's music therapy program work with two adults and seven children in the campus clinic during the week. Sixteen students serve field placements in 10 community settings including nursing homes, schools, and hospitals.

Laurier offers one of only four training programs for music therapists in Canada. Established in 1986, the four-year degree program blends studies in music and psychology. It requires students to serve four field placements and a six-month internship upon graduation.

The 34 graduates of the program are working in such settings as Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital, the Queen Street Mental Health Centre in Toronto, the Perley Hospital in Ottawa, the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre in Regina, and the W. **Ross** Macdonald School in Brantford.

Note: Interviews may be arranged with the clients (and/or their families) who are served at the campus clinic during the week.