



COMMUNITY

Radios needed to keep residents connected during outbreak at Caressant Care in Lindsay

Nurse says donations of portable radios are encouraged help entertain and keep residents connected to the community during nursing home outbreak

By Catherine Whitnall Kawartha Lakes This Week

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Playwright William Congreve may have believed music “has charms to soothe a savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak,” but for Monica Petras, it’s also a good treatment for being isolated during a pandemic.

The Caressant Care McLaughlin Road Nursing Home registered practical nurse is asking people to dust off their old portable radios to help keep residents not only

entertained but connected to the community.

“Music is a wonderful outlet for many of our residents. Everyone really enjoyed it when our musical therapist was here, but she hasn’t been able to come because of the pandemic,” said Petras. “We tried Zoom, but when we went into outbreak, it really wasn’t an option because of our infection control practices.”

To make matters worse, the nursing home is currently in outbreak with roughly two dozen residents and staff members having tested positive for COVID-19. As a result, the affected residents are being cohorted and isolated from others during treatment.

Wanting to make a difference, Petras is asking for donations of portable radios — anything that has an FM setting — that can be distributed to residents. Donations will be quarantined for three days and cleaned. Donations of TV tables/trays are also being sought for extra space for meals.

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“Sometimes people wonder what they can do to help because it’s a medical setting,” said Petras. “This is such an easy thing and it can have a huge impact.”

Music is particularly beneficial for people struggling with cognitive decline because it is easier for them to access the memory of a cherished melody than to recall a person’s name or a past event. In some cases, music may be even more powerful than traditional medical interventions, such as prescription medications and physical therapy exercises.

A study conducted by researchers at the University of Helsinki found that a group of Finnish stroke survivors who listened to music daily while recovering enjoyed improvements in auditory and verbal memory, focused attention, and mood. When compared to stroke patients who listened to audiobooks or nothing at all, those who listened to music for a few hours a day regained their verbal skills much faster. The

music listeners were also less likely to be depressed and confused — two common post-stroke side effects.

Donations can be dropped off at the main entrance to the nursing home. Simply ring the buzzer so someone can retrieve the item(s).

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