

Belles of the ball

Iler Lodge offers music therapy for residents

By SARAH FISHER

Trina Hoekstra knows the power of music. She sees its effects twice a week in the Iler Lodge Belles — a group of ladies at the Essex nursing home who play the hand bells to their favourite old songs. The Irish tune Danny Boy and Do-Re-Mi from the Sound of Music are common requests from the performers. They enjoy their hour with Trina and they like to play music.

“I never have to beg anybody to come,” Hoekstra said at the end of the lesson in the main gathering room of Iler Lodge. “They love coming and, in fact, they’d love to be here more. It’s important, with these instruments everyone can be successful.”

Hoekstra started with the Belles a year and a half ago. The program had already begun with another director, but was in need of someone when Hoekstra walked

through the door. She was a perfect fit having previous nursing home experience.

The group July 28 was made up of 10 women. Some were limited to using one hand because of illness or a stroke.

During Friday’s visit, the group also played the drums for the first time. Hoekstra had a feeling it would be an easy transition. The drums are used during the music therapy program at Country Village nursing home in Woodslee, which has the same owners. Hoekstra sat in on a session and knew her group would like them as well.

Wendy Swick is the program manager at Iler Lodge. She said the nursing home is committed to continuing the program. Participating in music has been shown to reduce depression in older adults, she said. The nursing home purchased the drums for the Belles because of the benefits including relieving depression, increasing physical dexterity and coordination, and boosting the immune system.

“They’re very faithful,” Swick said of the Belles. “It’s the same people that come every time we have



June Tanskley and Bertha Shepley play the drums Friday at Iler Lodge. A group of ladies participate in the Iler Lodge Belles twice a month at the nursing home.



Rosemary Arsenault listens for her turn to ring the bells July 28 during the practice of the Iler Lodge Belles.

this. They also put on concerts a few times a year. It gives them a purpose and a reward to do this for their peers.”

The music therapy program at Iler Lodge is interactive. Hoekstra isn’t performing for them, she is instructing the group’s performance. She was mindful July 28 to ask what songs they wanted to perform.

“What should we play next?” she asked the group Friday morning. “... Does anyone want to play a drum they haven’t played yet?”

Hoekstra is also respectful of the women’s experience.

“I’m saving the best for last,” Hoekstra said to Rosemary Arsenault as she pushed one of the Belles to the elevator back to their

room. “You always say that,” Arsenault answered.

Arsenault had a career in music. Hoekstra doesn’t know the full details, but she knows Arsenault was a vocalist who performed in Windsor and several other cities. She is originally from Winnipeg.

“I’ve been singing since I was six years old,” the slender lady with a light-coloured pageboy haircut struggled to say.

Arsenault said the Belles is her music therapy as well. The women are always happy to see her, she said. That feels good.

“We’re a kind of club here,” Hoekstra said. “They look after each other. It’s nice for them to be a part of that. It’s nice for me too.”

EYC
ESSEX YOUTH CENTRE
242 Talbot St. N.
Essex, Ontario
N8M 2E1

The Essex Youth Centre is pleased to announce that
The Delta Driving School
(29 Years In Business)

will continue to serve the youth of Essex and the surrounding area.
M.T.O. Approved Beginner Driver Education Course Provider

Driving Lessons in Essex

WEEKDAYS
Aug. 8, 9, 10, 11
9:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

4 SATURDAYS
AUG. 5, 12, 19, 26
9:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

EVENINGS
4 WEEKS
STARTING...
AUG. 15 - SEPT. 7
TUES. & THURS.
6:00 p.m. - 9:10 p.m.

10 Hours in car **Insurance Certificate**

25 Hours in the classroom

*“When You Drive With Us...
You Also Support The Youth Centre.”*

DELTA DRIVING SCHOOL Register by calling
967-8383 or 967-1303

First Steps 169 IRWIN AVE.
CHILD CARE CENTRE Phone: 776-8699

Ages 3 Months - 12 Years
Quality Child Care with a
Before/After School Age Program.
Hrs. 6:00 am - 6:00 pm

CASTLE **CASTLE** **CASTLE** **CASTLE** **CASTLE**

CORRECTION
ENJOY THE ADVANTAGES OF A CASTLE CREDIT CARD

BUY YOUR PROJECT PACKAGE MATERIALS WITH A CASTLE CREDIT CARD AND RECEIVE... NO INTEREST NO PAYMENTS FOR 6 MONTHS
On purchases of \$250.00 or more. Apply now for yours today! (O.A.C. see store for details.)

KIMBALL
L. KIMBALL LUMBER AND BUILDING SUPPLIES LTD.
“Value and Service You Can Count On”

2 miles South of Essex on Cty. Rd. 23 (Arner Townline)
(519) 776-6404

This correction applies to the ad that appeared in the “Summer Living Guide” distributed the week of July 24, 2006.