



October 2021 Good News Story

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Grande Prairie Care Centre – The Miracle of Music Therapy

He was almost non-verbal, sitting with a group of his peers at the care home. The facility's music therapist and intern put a snare drum in front of him with two brushes. As the group began to follow the beat, the man began to play – for the first time in a long time – and started to act and feel like himself again.

Music Therapist, Kelsi McInnes, from [Grande Prairie Care Centre](#) has made similar things happen time and time again. “There is no one music centre of the brain,” Kelsi explains, “so as areas are damaged [through disease or aging], music is still understood.”



A music therapist “helps residents show who they are” through music; they use it as “the vehicle to access people.” The results can be miraculous.

At Kelsi’s practice, she plays the guitar and piano, and sings while working with residents in both group settings and individually. She recounts times in her career when family members of residents at Grande Prairie Care Centre would be brought to happy tears as they experienced their loved ones communicate after a music therapy session. For the first time in a long time, they would speak in a way that reminded the family members of their old selves.

Some favourite musicians of Kelsi’s residents (co-musicians) include Johnny Cash, Clarence Clearwater Revival, and Wilf Carter. They also enjoy Kelsi’s favourite song to perform, *5 Foot 2 Eyes of Blue*, for a little fun during some sessions.

The non-verbal man with the snare drum and two brushes ended up following all the songs, tempo changes, and even added his own drum flourish to end the session. When it was all said and done, the man looked over to the music therapist and Kelsi (who was the intern at the time) and said, “You almost got away from me on that one!”

He was back.

To learn more or hire a music therapist, visit <https://www.mtaa.ca/find-a-music-therapist>