

## OUR MENTAL HEALTH



LEN McCULLOCH

## Music therapy promotes health

**T**he American Music Therapy Association has defined music therapy as: The use of music and music-related activities to promote emotional, mental, social and physical growth and change.

Music therapy is a creative, flexible and sometimes spontaneous means of using the appeal of music to help people of all ages and abilities. Music therapy is now an established health care profession which positively affects the lives of thousands of adults and children each year. From a child with autism to an elderly person in a bell choir, music therapy can make the difference between isolation and interaction.

Historically, music was solely synonymous with entertainment. Increasingly, music has acquired many new medicinal roles. Because music therapy is a powerful and non-threatening medium, unique outcomes are possible. In addition to its applications in mental health, music therapy is being used with individuals suffering from physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, cancer, chronic pain, and substance abuse among others.

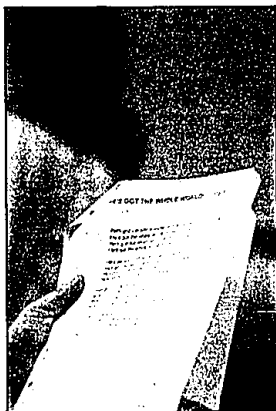
The American Music Therapy Association was established in 1996 when the American Association for Music Therapy, founded in 1971, and the National Association for Music Therapy, founded in 1950, joined forces.

Its mission is to advance the public awareness of music therapy benefits and increase accessibility to quality music therapy services. Currently, criteria are established for the education and clinical training for music therapists. Members of the American Music Therapy Association adhere to a code of ethics and standards of practice in their delivery of music therapy services. In Michigan, Wayne State University and Michigan State University are considered among the top training institutions for music therapists.

Music therapy departments can now be found in many of our hospitals, outpatient rehabilitation centers, and assisted living homes for the elderly.

Therapists work in concert with interdisciplinary teams to facilitate and enhance traditional medical and psychological treatment.

Some of the benefits of participating in music therapy for those afflicted with mental or physical disease or people who are recovering from cancer and related maladies include the following: Exploration of personal feelings and therapeutic issues such as self-esteem; positive changes in mood; expression of one's self verbally and nonverbally; development of relaxation skills; and social interaction with others.



**Heavenly notes:** The choir's selections tend toward the inspirational although one medley contains the theme from the *Flintstones* television show.

BY DIANE GALE ANDREASSI  
SPECIAL WRITER

**S**ue Wulff, a member of the Broe Tabernacle Therapeutic Choir, likes to remind people to beware of drugs and never drink and drive "or you might be eligible for our choir."

"Instead of harping on kids not to do drugs or to drink and drive, this really shows them why," she said.

All of the 28 singers in the choir have brain injuries and receive treatment from Broe Rehabilitation Services, Inc., a private outpatient and inpatient rehabilitation facility in Farmington Hills.

The choir has given more than 35 live performances at schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centers and nursing homes since it was established four years ago as a means to help a patient who was withdrawn.

Louis came to Broe in October 1998 after living for 18 years at Northville Psychiatric Hospital. For the first few months Louis hardly spoke no matter how hard staff coaxed him.

That changed when Len McCulloch, Broe director of psychological services, noticed Louis moving to the beat of a song on a nearby radio. "I asked if he could sing and he stood up and belted out *Amazing Grace* and it was really beautiful," said McCulloch, a diplomat of the American Psychotherapy Association who also writes a monthly column, *Our Mental Health*, for the *Observer Newspapers*.

Louis continues to sing that song at every Broe Tabernacle Therapeutic Choir performance. "We would sing together," said McCulloch. "He still wouldn't talk much, but he would sing. Grad-

ually other people would hear us and want to get involved."

### Healing song

Nearly four years later, the choir promotes the therapeutic value of singing for audiences as well as its members.

During performances Broe owner Dr. Timothy Broe shows a video depicting healthy brains compared to brains that have been damaged by alcohol, drugs and accidents, as well as excessive caffeine and nicotine use.

"I heard a quote that on any given night there are 10,000 individuals who are drinking and driving in Oakland County," Broe said. "People who see a visual impact of what drinking and driving can do will have a better remembrance to remind them not to drink and drive."

The importance of the choir on the members is tremendous, too, he added.

"The people in the choir who are survivors of brain injuries desperately need an avenue to give back to society, because often they can't return to work," Broe said. "By going out into the public and singing a message of sobriety and prevention it really builds their self-esteem, self-confidence and self-worth."

The most poignant messages during performances come from members of the choir who talk about how they were injured. For instance, one singer, Dan, was out with his best friend on the night they graduated from high school. He was a passenger of the car that hit a tree at 90 mph. The friend, who was the driver, died. Dan was in a four-month coma that left him with severe memory impairment and severe seizure disorder.



**Singing together:** The BROE choir rehearses for an upcoming concert.

## Choir sings message against alcohol, drugs



**Getting in tune:** Choir director Len McCulloch holds the microphone for Joseph Mitchell's solo of *Kumbaya*, while Wilfred Nikolai (left) and Faris Najim study their music.

STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BRIDGEMAN

His plans to attend a university in Michigan never materialized.

### The message

"By drinking, the more you lose control of your own behavior the more you put yourself at risk of having a brain injury," said Wulff, 52, who was injured in 1994 when a car rear-ended her vehicle, which was stopped at a red light.

**■ The third week in May, Broe Tabernacle Therapeutic Choir is taking part in a program called "Project Protection" in cooperation with Students Against Drunk Driving and Mothers Against Drunk Driving. The location of the performance is undecided; however, it will be free and open to the public.**

Wulff lives at a Broe group home in Detroit. There are seven Broe group homes and one apartment complex in the metropolitan Detroit area.

Residents are among 5 million Americans who have traumatic brain injuries. Every 21 seconds in America someone sustains a brain injury, McCulloch said. Motor vehicle accidents is the chief cause of these injuries and of that more than half are caused by drinking and driving.

"Brain injuries are forever and the only anecdote is prevention," he added.

One of the things that Dan has been able to remember before the accident was a short poem that he reads at every performance. The end of his poem is especially meaningful for him: "Life is everything you make it. Life is beautiful, so take it."

"For Dan this has given him a tremendous sense of importance and being special in a positive way instead of being special because he has brain damage," McCulloch said. "People think those with brain injuries are crazy. They're educating the public about this disorder."

The Broe Tabernacle Therapeutic Choir started out with five members, including Dan and Wulff. The choir currently has four CDs and three television videos, two of which have been shown on PBS.

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"We're targeting teenagers the week before

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## Happy 50th, Boy Scout Troop 110!

Susan Ehrlich, who is in charge of Troop 110's publicity, has two sons associated with the troop: Matt, 17, became an Eagle Scout on March 6, and David, 20, also an Eagle Scout, is a college student and the troop's assistant scoutmaster. Ehrlich wrote the following history of Troop 110, which celebrated its 50th Anniversary in February.

BY SUSAN EHRLICH  
SPECIAL WRITER

It was a cold February day in 1952 when 35 young men and several adults gathered together at Our Lady of Sorrows church in Farmington, at that time an old white wooden building heated by a wood stove. The participants had to keep their jackets on because the stove was not adequate to keep the hall warm.

They met with a purpose. On Feb. 28, 1952, under the direction of Thomas Blattner, Boy Scout Troop 110 was founded. Blattner was the troop's first scoutmaster.

Troop 110 has come a long way since its beginning 50 years ago. The troop started with old, leaky army tents. Today, our tents are less than a year old. The troop's first event was a hike on Gill Road, and its first canoe trip took place in northern Wisconsin. In 1953, the troop headed to Camp Agawam for its first summer camp, and in 1965 it became the first troop to camp at Lost Lake Scout Reservation near Clare. Since then, most summer camp weeks have been held at either Lost Lake or Camp Rotary.

During the 1960s, under the guidance of Scoutmaster Thomas Mahoney, Troop 110 started to attain needed camping equipment. Soon a troop trailer was made out of an old mobile home. A new trailer was purchased in 1992.

Troop 110 marked its many achievements Feb. 3 with a 50th Anniversary celebration at Vladimir's Banquet Hall in Farmington Hills. Almost 240 people attended, including many past Scoutmasters and Eagle Scouts. Ken Cameron, a former NASA space shuttle com-

mander and pilot and current General Motors executive, was out guest speaker was Ken Cameron.

The celebration was definitely impressive. Troop 110 looks forward to many more years of scouting experiences under the guidance of Gene Roma, its current scoutmaster.

### Active troop

The energetic Troop 110 manages at least 10 camp-outs per year, pitching tents at Kensington Metropark, Camp Agawam, D-A Scout Ranch, Lost Lake Scout Reservation, and several State Parks including: Waterloo, Proud Lake, Island Lake and Maybury. Its members have canoed the Pine, AuSable, Rifle and Huron rivers; taken high-adventure trips to Algonquin Provincial Park, Mammoth Cave, Isle Royale; hiked parts of the Appalachian Trail; and went white water rafting in West Virginia.

During the 1970s, the troop came up with

Please see **ANNIVERSARY**, C9



**Color Guard:** Scouts Kevin Thiel (left), Matt Ehrlich, Jay Gronbach, and Todd Maki carry in the flags in honor of Troop 110's 50th anniversary, which was celebrated at Vladimir's Banquet Hall in Farmington Hills.