

# **Meeting Community Need: Developing A Music Therapy Charitable Organization**

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*"Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force...  
When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand."*

Karl Menninger

## **What Is Community Music Therapy Services?**

### **Mission Statement**

To provide music therapy services to persons with special needs and to promote music therapy as a profession.

### **Vision Statement**

Community Music Therapy Services (CMTS) will provide music therapy services in a fully equipped clinic setting to those who require them.

- CMTS will provide subsidized services to those clients who demonstrate a need
- CMTS will provide professional music therapy services as a group practice of accredited music therapists (MTA)
- CMTS will promote continuing education in music therapy
- CMTS will serve as a link between clients and professionals in the community

## **Beginnings**

CMTS began in the early 1990s as an outgrowth of the Music Therapy Program at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. Dr. Rosemary Fischer, the Head of the program, recognized the need to provide employment for music therapy graduates. In the beginning, Saturday sessions were held for clients in the on-campus clinic. As the music therapy program grew, more clinical workspace was needed for student placements. Practising music therapists were required to reschedule and relocate sessions. In time, CMTS could not be supported by the university and ceased to exist.

In 1998, a small group of music therapists began to discuss the possibility of restructuring CMTS as a community group practice. Regular meetings culminated in the decision to seek legal advice for the purpose of making application to the provincial and federal governments on behalf of CMTS for non-profit, charitable status. Bylaws were modelled on those of the Canadian Association for Music Therapy, and vision and mission statements were drafted. Board members who supported music therapy in general were approached in order to complete the legal documents necessary for the application process to occur.

In 2003, CMTS was informed that the applications were successful and the organization became incorporated.

In 2004, CMTS had applied for and received a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for a needs-assessment survey. A professional market researcher was contracted and the results indicated both a need and a desire for affordable music therapy services in the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

In 2005, CMTS has made application for an additional grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for the completion of a formal business plan. Upon completion of this project, CMTS will be in a position to approach corporate donors and to apply for further grants.

### **Why a group practice?**

Advantages:

- As a charitable, non-profit organization, CMTS may provide services to clients who might otherwise be unable to access music therapy
- MTAs may maintain a private practice and contract their services to CMTS
- MTAs may market themselves as affiliates of CMTS
- CMTS will provide clinic space and instruments
- CMTS will provide a learning environment for continuing education and peer supervision

Challenges:

- Deciding: how, where, when, why, what to do.....
- Defining CMTS, and what a group practice will look like
- Hindsight is a wonderful thing!
- Attracting Board Members who are willing to take on the enormous responsibility of building an organization from the ground up.
- Keeping the members motivated and on-track.
- Lack of available funds.

### **Let's Listen To and Support Our Communities**

- Our common vision and passion has enabled us to develop a model of community group practice that we feel obligated to share.
- When we listen to each other, we learn from each other.

*"It has been in the act of listening to each other as colleagues that we have created, unfolded and expanded our vision - the vision of CMTS."*

Caryl Ann Browning