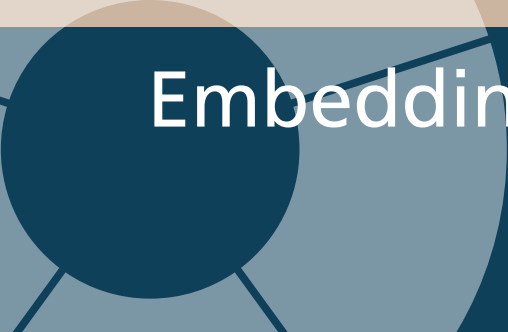




Embedding Music in Everyday Care

IMPACT REPORT | 2025-2026



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From The Leadership

Over the past year, we have witnessed something extraordinary: the growing recognition of music as an essential part of care. A familiar melody can awaken memory, calm anxiety, inspire connection, and bring comfort in moments when words alone are not enough. Every day, we continue to see firsthand how embedding music into care environments creates meaningful change for individuals, families, caregivers, and communities.

This year's report, *Embedding Music in Care*, celebrates the expanding role of music in shaping more compassionate, person-centered approaches across healthcare, senior living, education, and community support. Through Room 217 education, training, partnerships, and innovative programs, we are helping individuals and organizations integrate music into everyday care practices in ways that enhance wellbeing, connection, and quality of life.

Behind every program and every metric in this report is a human story. It is the story of a caregiver discovering a new way to connect with a resident living with dementia. It is the story of a healthcare team using music to reduce stress, foster trust, and create moments of joy. It is the story of an educator supporting students' emotional regulation and compassionate learning through the shared experience of song.

As the demand for innovative, person-centered care continues to grow, so does our commitment to advancing the integration of music into health and wellbeing. This year, we expanded our reach, strengthened partnerships, and deepened our impact through training, advocacy, and evidence-informed practice that supports embedding music into care systems and daily interactions.

We are deeply grateful to our supporters, partners, and donors who make this work possible. Together, we are building a future where music is embedded in care — recognized not simply as entertainment, but as a vital tool for connection, healing, dignity, and belonging.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen Ward".

Stephen Ward
Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bev Foster".

Bev Foster
Founder & Executive Director

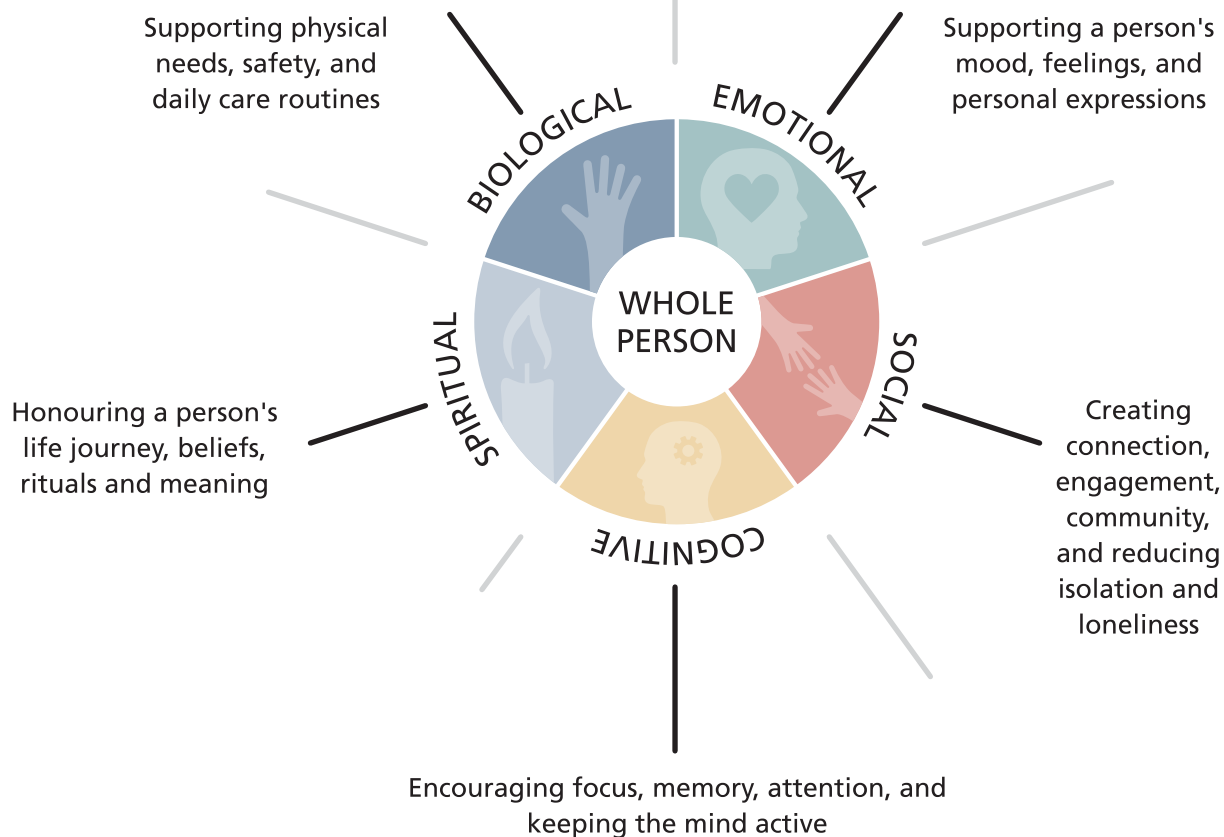
What Does Embedding Music into Everyday Care Look Like?

When music is truly embedded into care, it transforms from a passive activity to a solution for whole-person health.

Room 217 defines whole-person care within 5 human domains structured into the Change Wheel. Through our certification programs, participating care organizations and schools choose one of the five core domains as the foundation for their Action Research Project,

turning music into a practical solution for their specific need that becomes integrated into daily care. For example, using music to lower restlessness so students can transition into a calm, "ready-to-work" state and in hospice care to bring comfort and dignity to end-of-life journeys.

Throughout these pages, you will find real-world case stories highlighting how the domains of the Change Wheel come to life in practice.

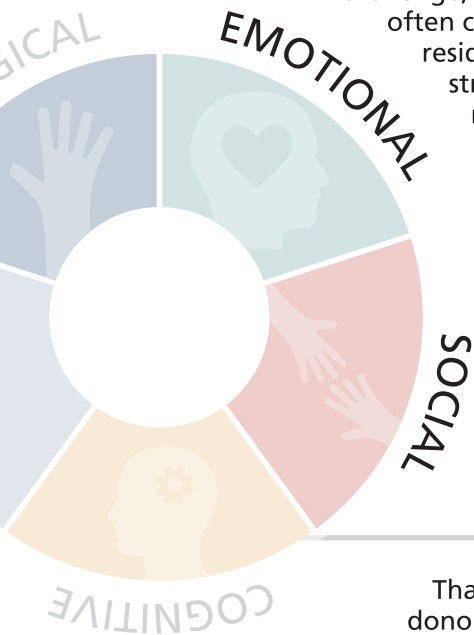


Embedding Music in Long-Term Care Across Canada

Glen Hill Terrace, Whitby, ON

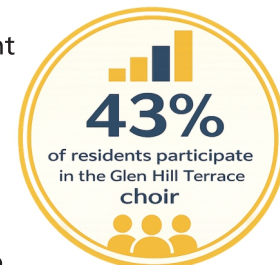
Durham Christian Homes's Glen Hill Terrace is a 160-bed not-for-profit long-term care home that provides 24-hour nursing and personal care, recreation programming, and spiritual support to residents. As one of our newest Certified long-term care homes, Glen Hill Terrace undertook an Action Research Project focused on embedding resident-preferred music into daily care routines to help transform the culture of care.

The team identified expressive behaviours during personal care as a significant challenge, with care routines often creating anxiety for residents and emotional strain for staff. In response, staff began incorporating resident-preferred music before and during care interactions. While expressive behaviours did not always



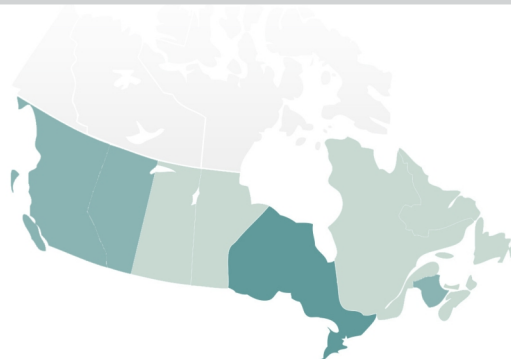
decrease, staff consistently reported that music helped make care experiences more positive and manageable. Music supported improved mood, eased tension, and

fostered more meaningful connections between residents and caregivers during daily routines. What began as a targeted care strategy soon evolved into a broader culture of musical engagement throughout the home. A resident choir was established, with participation growing to include 43% of residents, reflecting a meaningful shift toward embedding music into everyday life, care, and connection across the community.



Thanks to the generosity of a donor who shares our vision of embedding music throughout long-term care, we are currently supporting 10 long-term care homes in Atlantic Canada on their journey to becoming MUSIC CARE Certified.

This year marked the launch of MUSIC CARE CERTIFY in Alberta, where we are working with four care sites in Calgary to embed music into daily care practices and strengthen person-centered approaches to wellbeing.



Music and Wound Care Research Kindera Living, ON

We value the relationships we have with care organizations that have not only certified, but become recertified. This is where the deeper work of music care integration takes place. This year saw the launch of an exciting recertification project with 11 long-term care homes at Kindera Living (KL).

Pressure injuries are of major concern among seniors. Wound care is essential but often painful. KL wants to explore how music might improve the wound care experience and outcomes for residents with pressure injuries. This will be a research partnership between KL and Room 217's McMaster Research program.

In the Fall of 2025, a literature review was completed around music and wound care. While there are studies around this topic, there are very few with this specific population: residents in long-term care and pressure injuries.

Ethics approval was obtained. During the Spring, KL teams were onboarded with the protocols and in

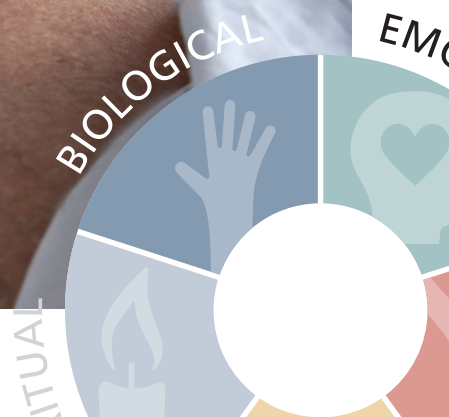
May, the study began. This is the first clinical study that Room 217 has been involved in. It is the first study of its kind for KL.

Nine homes will be given resident-selected music for 15 minutes before and during standard wound care. Two homes will be given standard wound care without music.

Here's what we're hoping to discover:

- whether the music mitigated pain during wound care
- whether there was a change in wound size
- how long it took to complete healing of the wound
- what the caregiver's perception is of the experience

The research will take place over 6 months. We look forward to reporting on the final results.



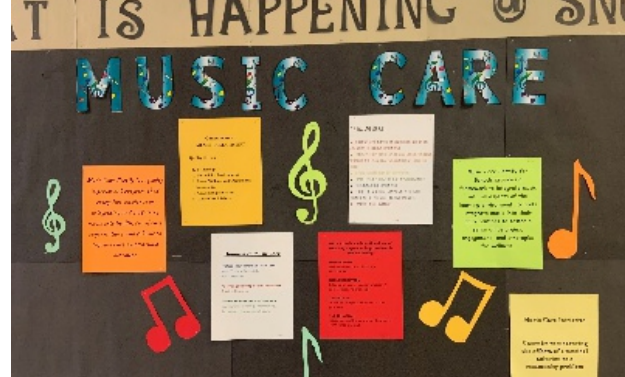
Embedding Music Care in Schools

Using music as means of caring for student and teacher wellness is the goal of MUSIC CARE CERTIFY for Schools (MCCS). After three years of development, pilot and beta testing, we launched the program in September 2025.

Designed for all aspects of school life, not just music class, the program provides educators with evidence-informed strategies, practical tools, and guided support to help them use music with intention throughout the school day. MCCS focuses on helping educators use music to support regulation, connection, transitions, engagement, and inclusive learning environments in ways that fit naturally into real classroom and school settings. By embedding music into everyday routines and interactions, the program aims to strengthen school culture, support mental health and well-being, and foster connection across school communities.

Steele Street Public School – Simcoe County District School Board, Barrie, ON

Steele Street students do a school-wide walk several times a week. The intermediate students created playlists designed to support engagement, motivation, and connection. Staff observed that the inclusion of music elevated student voice and strengthened participation in a community project where this age group can naturally begin to disconnect. The initiative demonstrated how intentional music practices can foster belonging, well-being, and meaningful school-wide engagement.



Appleby College, Independent Private School, Oakville, ON

At Appelby College, intentional music practices were integrated into student dormitory spaces through curated playlists designed to support different points of the day, including energizing morning playlists, mood-lifting afternoon playlists, and calming evening playlists to encourage relaxation and readiness for sleep. The school plans to expand the initiative through the installation of hallway speaker systems to further integrate music care throughout the residential environment. The school also developed "Perform for a Smile", a community partnership connecting students with residents at Vistamere Retirement Home through musical and dance performances, further extending music care into intergenerational community connection.

Highlights from the Year

Published Book Chapter

We had a chapter published in a new book called *Music and Dementia: Perspectives on Research and Implementation*. Our chapter is entitled: *Embedding Musical Care in Everyday Care Settings*. Using our certification model, the chapter advocates for integrating music into care plans, tasks, and environments to improve the quality of life for individuals with dementia.

A National Honour

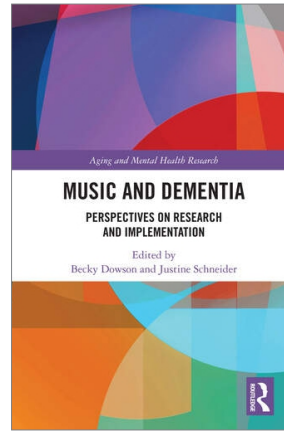
Room 217 received the Outstanding Achievement Award at the Canadian Caregiving Summit in Ottawa in November 2025. Presented to 'an organization making an outstanding contribution raising awareness of the experiences and challenges of caregivers in Canada', Room 217 is grateful to the Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence and the Azrieli Foundation for this notable recognition.

A Visit from the Ontario Minister of Long-Term Care

Ontario's Minister of Long-Term Care, the Honourable Natalia Kusendova-Bashta brought compelling words to our annual conference in November. The Minister is passionate about improving quality of life and care for Ontarians living in long-term care which includes leveraging the power of music.

Without A Song

With the help of our 2025 conference attendees, we recorded *Without A Song*, written for Room 217 by Canadian Singer/Songwriter and past Director of the Board, Murray McLauchlan. The song is available on all streaming platforms and you can watch the video on our YouTube channel @Room217Foundation.



Our Conferences

In November 2025, in partnership with Metalworks Institute, Alzheimer's Society Peel, Acclaim Health and Mississauga Arts Care, we held two days of conferences around the theme of The Power of a Song in Dementia Care in Mississauga, Ontario.

Day 1 was geared for high school students interested in careers in music, arts, and health in the Toronto area. Day 2 was our annual, national conference, a mix of family, professional, and volunteer caregivers, educators and musicians, and anyone interested in music in care.



Speaker
Dr. Taylor Kurta



Student drumming workshop Day 1,



Attendees sharing stories Day 2

Our Training

Training caregivers to embed music in their daily practice is the heartbeat of Room 217. Through standard training delivered in person and online, skills days, an online classroom, conferences and webinars, our team tools up caregivers to use music more confidently, effectively and responsibly in everyday care.



Gill Wortley – Training Caregivers at
RK MacDonald LTC, Antigonish, NS



Dawn Ellis – Ukulele Workshop
Student Conference – Mississauga, ON



Bev Foster – Speaking at Behaviour
Supports Ontario conference, Sudbury, ON

SarahRose Black – instructing an
online MUSIC CARE TRAINING

New Programs

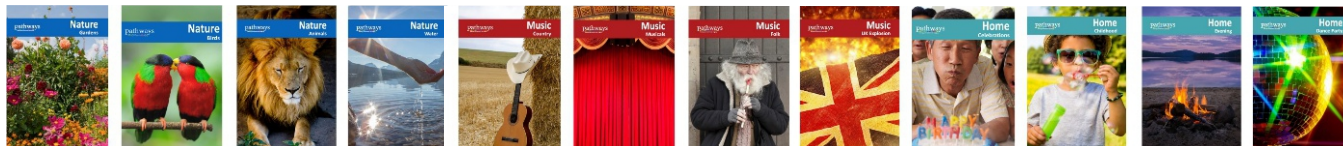
PATHWAYS Singing Program

PATHWAYS is a singing program designed to support engagement for people living with dementia. When used in a group, the additional aim is for social cohesion.

This year, we launched 12 new episodes of PATHWAYS. Each PATHWAYS collection is based on a theme and includes video episodes with singing sessions led by a singing host with accompanying activities. Participants are invited into a warm, respectful singing experience that feels safe and accessible.

The PATHWAYS program was launched on our MUSIC CARE CONNECT streaming app. It will also be available on Room 217's new web app coming this Fall.

We also published a Do-It-Yourself Toolkit for caregivers who want to personalize the musical content even more precisely for group or individual programming. The PATHWAYS DIY Toolkit is available at musiccare.org/resources.



New Online Courses

Our online course library continues to expand, providing more opportunity for learning and skill-building. This year, we launched two new courses: Guitar Basics in Care and Music Wellness. These courses are available at musiccare.org/virtual-learning-studio



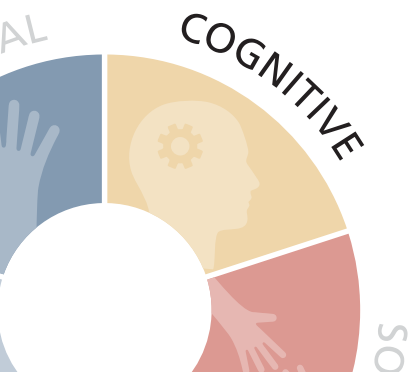
Music Wellness

The goal of this course is for you to make some distinctions between the various ways music is delivered in care so that you can recognize what you are already doing and find new ways to deliver music in your caring community.



Guitar Basics in Care

Learn to use simple guitar and vocal activities to build engagement and community among older adults through inclusive, participatory music-making — all in a self-paced virtual course.



Financial Partners

Thank you to many individuals for their one time, monthly, Legacy Fund, and My Tribute donations. We're also grateful to the following foundations, trusts, and corporations for their generous support:

Audrey S. Hellyer Foundation • Azrieli Foundation • CemeCare Inc. • Durham Community Foundation
Evans Financial • FAVDTR Foundation • Foster Hewitt Foundation • GP Bikes • George Lunan Foundation
Karis Trust • J & W Murphy Foundation • Jericho Foundation • John & Ellie Voortman Foundation
Knew World Foundation • LiUNA • Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation • Pedro Luna Fund • Pick
Foundation • Robert Green & Kelly Willis Green Foundation • Sarah McKinnon Foundation • Sony • Stait
Family Fund • Wolrige Foundation • Several anonymous donors

Meet Tim Wyman & Susan Scott-Gabe

Tim & Susan share a deeply rooted belief that music is integral to care. This conviction has been shaped by both of their unique paths.

For Tim, music is a lifelong family legacy. He was raised on all genres of music, influenced by an uncle who played cello for the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and was in Henry Mancini's band. This deep connection to the arts is reflected in the Wyman Recording Studio at the Vancouver School of Music, which bears the family name. Driven by an action-oriented desire to give back to his community, Tim has passed this deep love for music down to the next generation. Tim and Susan's son went on to complete a Master of Music degree from Berklee.



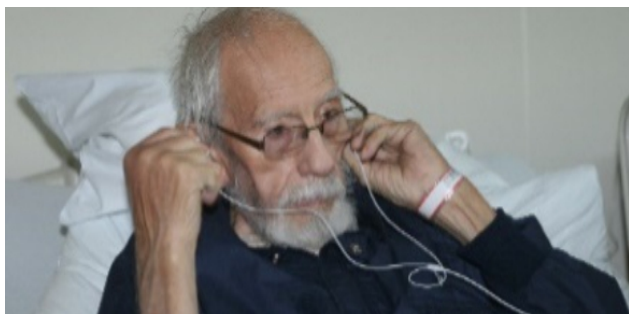
Susan's background is in healthcare. Throughout her nursing career, she valued evidence-based care and saw firsthand the profound impact music has on quality of life. When individualized music plans were created and delivered for residents in long-term care, aggressive incidents, and the use of antipsychotics decreased. When music is used to address complex symptoms like restlessness, pain and shortness of breath at end of life, Susan has witnessed its deep impact, especially with families. Music opens the way for more reminiscing, tears, affection, and connection. Susan believes music is not an add-on but an essential part of true person-centred care.

Together, through their Knew World Foundation, Tim and Susan support healthcare and environmental causes that demonstrate an evidence base, innovation and impact. That is why they contribute to Room 217. They believe music is integral to care. In Susan's words, "We have just touched the tip of the iceberg as to how music will impact our communities whether through institutional care or through social prescribing. We'll be successful when we look at music's impact on health and well-being using a preventative model."

Our Impact Over Time

Embedding music into everyday care takes time. Leaders need to believe in the efficacy of music as a legitimate, evidence-based care modality. Caregivers need tools, training and operational standards of delivery. This high level snapshot quantifies our efforts and outcomes over the past several decades towards integrating music into everyday care. We know it is a significant part of why there is a growing recognition of music as an essential part of care in Canada.

Designed Tools Since 2006

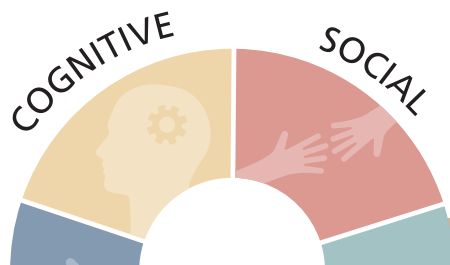


- 51,341** music albums delivered to enhance quality of life in palliative and EOL care
- 4,289** RECOLLECTIONS videos delivered to increase stimulation and recognition in dementia care
- 963** PATHWAYS Singing programs delivered to increase social engagement in dementia care
- 1,842** CONVERSATION CARDS delivered to enhance 1:1 care visits

Learning Hub Since 2010



- 4,123** attendees at 20 MUSIC CARE CONFERENCES to increase public awareness of impact of music on health
- 2,398** attendees at 110 webinars to increase deeper understanding of music and health issues
- 5,157** caregivers received standardized MUSIC CARE TRAINING to increase confidence using music
- 553** caregivers received SKILLS DAY training to increase skillful music care
- 361** caregivers received online training through the VIRTUAL LEARNING STUDIO to increase topical music care knowledge and skills



Total Number of People Touched: 359,137 (18,000 per year; 49 people per day). Our impact modelling for total number of people touched includes numbers from Designed Tools, Learning Hub + Research. We estimate that every tool and learning experience impacts a minimum of 5 people. The impact of certification is measured by results in action research projects. Note: These numbers do not include our reach speaking at conferences and community events, research publications and articles, donor events and stakeholder meetings.

Research Since 2017

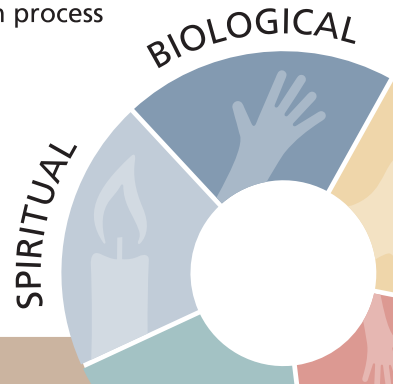


- 3,170** participants at 317 sites in a study that showed singing increases social cohesion in adult day programs in Canada
- 540** participants at 27 sites in a study that showed musical engagement can decrease isolation and loneliness in long-term care
- 17** students (1-2 per year) involved in music care research through our Room 217 McMaster Research Practicum
- 220** participants involved in a study that defined Music Wellness and a model for implementation
- 55** participants involved in a study that explores the effects of music and wound care

Certification Since 2021



- 25** individuals certified to increase competencies using music their scope of practice - 16 in process
- 13** organizations certified to raise the standard of music care delivery in care settings - 20 in process
- 8** schools certified to improve student/teacher wellness through music care - 2 in process



Financials

SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT FEBRUARY 28, 2026

ASSETS	2026	2025
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 112,764	\$ 456
Short term investments	761,658	713,236
Accounts Receivable	25,939	3,950
HST receivable	16,219	18,462
Inventory	21,000	28,773
Prepaid expenses	8,430	281
Property and Equipment	8,400	5,835
Website and app development costs	57,874	109,976
	1,012,284	880,969
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	18,759	27,443
Due to related party	27	0
	18,786	27,443
NET ASSETS		
Internally restricted reserve - Legacy Fund	700,915	669,064
Unrestricted	292,583	184,462
	993,498	853,526
	1,012,284	880,969

Complete audited financial statements are available
on our website, musiccare.org/financials.

SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28, 2026

REVENUE	2026	2025
Unrestricted contributions	\$395,692	\$424,968
Grants and Foundations contributions	173,500	166,000
Education programs and therapeutic resources	293,416	89,325
Internally restricted contributions	50,000	66,130
Investment income	30,372	32,267
	942,980	778,690
EXPENDITURES		
Administration and operations	47,553	56,928
Amortization	76,014	73,942
Communications	3,346	3,347
Contracted services and staffing	512,273	403,882
Marketing	73,193	78,804
Office and general	19,580	16,978
Postage and courier	1,920	819
Professional fees	25,541	30,205
Program expenses	96,168	52,746
	855,588	717,651
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses before the undernoted items	87,392	61,039
OTHER INCOME (EXPENSES)		
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	52,580	45,475
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	139,972	106,514



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