



NEWS RELEASE – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Chillicothe VA and Shawnee State University **Receive State Association Award**

The Chillicothe Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center and Shawnee State University in Portsmouth were recently presented with the Outstanding Area Agency on Aging Partnership of the Year Award at the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (o4a) Annual Conference that was recently held in Columbus. The two organizations were nominated by the Area Agency on Aging District 7, which covers ten counties in Southern Ohio including Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton.

The Chillicothe VA Medical Center and Shawnee State University's Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students partnered with the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (RLTCOP) and the AAA7 Department of Community Services to provide the Music and MemorySM program to Ohio's veterans, their caregivers, and others with cognitive impairment in home and community-based care settings. Music and MemorySM is a person-centered approach to dementia care that uses custom playlists on digital music players to reconnect people with dementia to the world around them. Although Music and MemorySM has been utilized in residential based care settings for many years, the state of Ohio was the first state to deploy Music and MemorySM in community-based settings with this project serving as one of the most successful in the state.

The AAA7 partnered with Shawnee State University's MOT students to provide on-site Music and MemorySM training for the staff of the Chillicothe VA Medical Center and selected adult day care and residential care facilities. MOT students provided hands-on demonstrations during the trainings; showing the deployment sites how to conduct individualized music assessments, use an iPod, purchase iTunes, create playlists, and load iPods with individualized music.

The Chillicothe VA Medical Center identified veterans in their long-term care facility, as well as veterans living in the community that would benefit from Music and MemorySM. This included training primary care team members, recreational therapists, pain psychologists, and nurses at the VA Medical Center. The MOT students worked with the various groups/deployment sites to place i-Pods with individualized playlists into the hands of 165 veterans and others with cognitive impairment living in the community over a year and a half in 2015, 2016 and 2017. The program continues to be a part of the Chillicothe VA Medical Center and AAA7 Veteran-

Directed and Caregiver Support Programs. Sustainability for the project comes from donations to purchase iPods, headphones and music as needed.

Music and MemorySM has been shown to help individuals feel happier and more social, build stronger relationships between caregivers and recipients, and may reduce the use of antipsychotic medications. This particular partnership was unique in that it brought together generations of individuals through the help from the college students to veterans of many ages who were able to experience the benefits of the Music and MemorySM program.

Attending the conference to represent the three organizations was: Mandy Kenz and Keisha Kelley from the Chillicothe VA Medical Center; Dr. Christine Raber from Shawnee State University's Master of Occupational Therapy Program; and Kaye Inoshita, Nina Keller, Merritt Sessor and Chelsey Wemmer from the Area Agency on Aging District 7

For more information about the Music and MemorySM program, call the Area Agency on Aging District 7 at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail info@aaa7.org

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis in ten counties in Southern Ohio including Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7's Resource Center is also available to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a trained staff member who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an in-home assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on www.aaa7.org, or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at info@aaa7.org. The Agency also has a Facebook page located at www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7.

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Pictured at the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging Annual Conference during the Partnership of the Year Award presentation was, left to right, Mandy Kenz, Chillicothe VA Medical Center; Merritt Sessor, Area Agency on Aging District 7; Keisha Kelley, Chillicothe VA Medical Center; Dr. Christine Raber, Shawnee State University; and Chelsey Wemmer, Nina Keller and Kaye Inoshita from the Area Agency on Aging District 7.