



Watercrest Senior Living Group and Central Florida Community Arts' Musical Minds Choir Sparks Memories and Joy Through Song

VERO BEACH, Fla, October 20, 2016 – Hundreds of Orlando area seniors, families and community organizations are rejoicing over the extraordinary impact of the Musical Minds Choir, the first Florida-based community-wide performance group designed for individuals experiencing early memory loss, dementia and Alzheimer's. [Watercrest Senior Living Group](#), owner and operator of Watercrest of Lake Nona Assisted Living and Memory Care Community, partnered with [Central Florida Community Arts](#) in establishing the Musical Minds Choir in the fall of 2015 and the results are extraordinary.

Since its inception, dozens of choir members and caregivers have gathered weekly from all over Orlando and beyond for a musical journey through the decades, singing along to the tunes of their youth, sparking memories and enlivening their senses through song.

As part of the Watercrest Common Unity Initiative, [Chris Shepherd](#), Vice President of Creative Program Development for Watercrest Senior Living Group, was compelled to serve local individuals living with early stage Alzheimer's and dementia-related diseases by expanding Watercrest's music therapy program.

Shepherd approached [Josh Vickery](#), Founder and Executive Director of Central Florida Community Arts (CFCArts), a non-profit musical arts organization with a mission to serve and enrich our community's quality of life through the arts. Since 2011, CFCArts has exploded in popularity and widespread community involvement, impacting thousands of individuals through their expansive music and art programs, all with a mission to give back.

With a common vision to serve, Watercrest and CFCArts established the Musical Minds Choir in partnership with the Brain Fitness Club of Winter Park, the Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center, the Alzheimer's Association of Central and North Florida, and hospice care provider, Vitas. Numerous senior living and health-related organizations have since joined through sponsorship and program involvement, attracting widespread media attention and requests for choir performances at local events.

"Musical Minds is the first program uniting Central Florida non-profits focused on dementia. As members enter rehearsals each week, it's easy to identify individuals with dementia from their care partners, but once the music starts, dementia disappears and the sounds of life, laughter, love and music fill the air," explains [Chris Shepherd](#), VP of Creative Program Development for Watercrest Senior Living Group. "Musical Minds has evolved into a support group for those affected by dementia, but the focus is not on dementia, it is a celebration of music and life!"

The widespread impact of the Musical Minds Choir has solidified Watercrest as a leader and change agent in the movement to support research and care for individuals experiencing early memory-loss, Alzheimer's and dementia-related diseases. Research shows music is stored in a part of the brain last affected by Alzheimer's disease and the therapeutic experience of making music or simply listening to it can stimulate the brain and promote brain health.

As the developer and operator of assisted living and memory care communities, [Watercrest Senior Living Group](#) advocates the benefits of music on the brain through implementation of the Music & Memory program in all of their communities, such as [Watercrest of Lake Nona Assisted Living and Memory Care Community](#) in Orlando, FL.

"The unification of senior living and healthcare organizations with our talented partners at Central Florida Community Arts has established a platform for our Musical Minds Choir to uniquely benefit individuals living with Alzheimer's and dementia-related diseases on a much broader scale than we have

ever experienced,” says [Marc Vorkapich](#), Principal and CEO of Watercrest Senior Living Group. “Our Watercrest team continues to break down the barriers of standard memory care and deliver diverse, enriching life opportunities for our memory care residents and local communities.”

The [Watercrest comprehensive memory care program](#) is specifically designed to engage the senses, expand the mind and enhance the emotions of residents. All Watercrest memory care associates are Certified Dementia Specialists and programming focuses on innovative lifestyle approaches, including personal life silhouettes, multi-sensory enhancements, Memories in the Making, and Music and Memory programs.

All individuals with early stage memory loss from Alzheimer’s or dementia are invited to join in choir rehearsals with their significant other or caregiver, regardless of experience or skill level. Rehearsals are held every Wednesday from 10am to 11:30am at Central Florida Community Arts, located on the campus of Central Christian Church, 250 SW Ivanhoe Blvd., Orlando, 32804. For questions about the choir or how to get involved, please contact Diana Acosta-Hosein at 407-937-1800, or email Diana.hosein@cfcarts.com. Registration information is available at <http://www.tfaforms.com/200838>.

Focused on the growth of servant leaders, [Watercrest Senior Living Group](#) encourages a commitment to serving others and fulfilling needs in our hometowns through their Common Unity program, a company-wide initiative supporting associates and residents in community service and enrichment. For more information on Watercrest Senior Living Group, their development projects and communities, please visit www.watercrestslg.com or call 772-539-4560.

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