

Mini outdoor concert launches Warwick care home's search for permanent musicians

Monday 30 November, 2020

A live outdoor performance by critically acclaimed Armonico Consort helped a Warwickshire care home launch its search for permanent musicians.

Local care home charity WCS Care is looking to employ two part-time performers – who can play instruments and sing songs from a range of genres across the years – ensuring there's music seven days a week at Woodside Care Village in Warwick.

The care home community musicians will support residents on a one-to-one basis or through larger group activities at the home just off Spinney Hill, which features family-sized households for adults, including people living with mobility needs, dementia and deafness.

'Songs from the Plaza' was held outside within the care home's bubble at Woodside Care Village on Friday 30 October 2020 and celebrated the power of all things music.

It featured performances from local music charity Armonico Consort including international violinist Salomé Rateau, sopranos Elizabeth Adams and Laura Moretto, and a professional pianist.

The design of the home centres around an outdoor plaza surrounded by 12 households connected by external walkways, providing the perfect viewing spot for residents and staff to safely enjoy the hour-long performance of classical music and songs from the musicals such as 'I could have danced all night', which were signed by WCS Care staff for people who are deaf.

Armonico Consort's professional musicians have received specialist training from The Alzheimer's Society's Singing for the Brain project to enable them to deliver tailored music and singing therapy to support people living with dementia. These build on its existing resources for older people including group singing and a library of filmed online sessions.

Thomas Gamble lives at Woodside Care Village and watched the performance. He said: *'I love to play the drums and recently played in a band, so it was fantastic to hear live music again, particularly as it was on my doorstep!'*

'It brought back some fantastic memories and certainly got my feet tapping away throughout.'

The performance was made possible thanks to a grant from the Coventry and Warwickshire Creative Health Alliance, which has helped Armonico Consort develop a workshop methodology and content for the performance.

Christopher Monks, Artistic Director of Armonico Consort, said: *'We had seen through our work in care homes across this past year the electrifying results of singing and music on people living with dementia, but nothing can replace witnessing the effects with your own eyes.'*

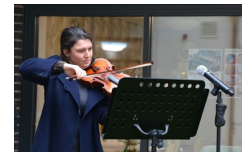
'You could see the joy on people's faces as residents - and staff - joined in with some of their favourite songs, be it baroque or music theatre. The impact this had was extraordinary and it's one of the most powerful experiences a musician can be part of.'

'It's wonderful to see that – like Armonico Consort – WCS Care is providing alternative employment for local musicians with their new roles, which helps create even more opportunities for music to be a part of everyday life at Woodside Care Village.'

Research has shown how vital live music is in improving mood and wellbeing, combating isolation in older people, and helping to reconnect memory and alleviate anxiety in people living with dementia.

Ed Russell, WCS Care's Chief Executive, said: *'Music isn't just the food of love at Woodside Care Village, it's the food of life. It has the power to connect people, elicit emotions and unlock memories - and Songs from the Plaza was the perfect opportunity to see this in action.'*

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'The atmosphere and acoustics were fantastic throughout the performance as residents and staff danced the afternoon away together, while playing their own percussion instruments.'

'It's clear from the success of the concert just how important live music is to daily life here and we're excited to be searching for two part-time musicians who can play the guitar, as well as other instruments, can sing and have a passion for sharing their love of music.'

Music and singing are already very popular at Woodside Care Village as residents and staff regularly join in with dance sessions throughout the week. Each household has their own personalised playlist on a smart speaker, as well as access to YouTube music videos on Smart TVs in their lounge.

To find out more about WCS Care and the Care Home Community Musician roles, visit www.wcs-care.co.uk, find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wcscare or add us on Twitter by searching @WCS_Care.

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