

Music and so much more . . .

Like a symphony, the music therapist combines all elements of a student's developmental needs. Picture a therapist playing an instrument, leading the class in songs, incorporating choice-making, sharing, and communication skills all jam-packed into 30 minutes. Of course, everyone applauds at the end.

Three full-time music therapists and one music intern repeat that scene 115 times a week as 450 Cariola students receive music therapy. Small groups rotate in and out of oversized rooms large enough to accommodate a piano, a giant drum, guitars and chairs. Some students receive individual music therapy while other classes work as groups, while still others are involved in band lessons or choir practice. Each session utilizes music as the motivator to work on non-musical goals.

"Music pulls a lot of things together," said Music Therapist April Mounts. "A child may come into a session over-stimulated or tired. Music can engage them and help to modulate their sensory systems, allowing them an increased chance of success for the remainder of the day."

Throughout a session, the therapist attempts to address each student's communication, social, occupational and physical therapy needs.

"We work in each clinical domain, so many of a student's goals can be addressed within one session. It's a great collaborative effort," added Music Therapist Jason Willey. "It challenges us to break apart our music activities to address our student's needs. This may be as simple as plac-



AMANDA JANE EGLESTON PHOTOGRAPHY

April Mounts provides the music while Justin Lawrence supplies the lyrics during a recent sing a long.

ing a drum on a student's non-dominant side, facilitating use of weak muscles. The student perceives he is playing a drum, but in reality, he is also working on an occupational therapy goal." Some students have spoken their first word or taken their first

step in music class. Often, those words are "More!" or "Bye."

"In shock, staff sometimes will say 'I have never heard their voice' when that happens," Mounts noted. "On the other hand, students who have hearing deficits can also actively participate in sessions through the sensory stimulation of vibration that comes from rhythm and bass. Music elicits so many responses. It is a form of communication without being verbal."

In addition to music therapy sessions, the Agency provides other musical options for older students. A choir and chime choir provide opportunities to work in a large group as ensembles that participate in performances outside the Agency. In the near future, the Music Therapists would love to

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Rock On! The Music Therapy Department is in need of the following instruments in hopes of forming a Cariola band and garage band:
 Saxophones,
 Trombones, Tubas, Flutes,
 Clarinets, Euphoniums, trumpets,
 acoustic guitars, electric guitars
 and drum set. If you can help,
 contact April Mounts at 585-271-2897 ex.1471.