



## **VOICES IN MOTION**

**A multigenerational choir for adults with memory loss,  
their caregivers, friends and students**

# **JOIN THE MOVEMENT**

In September 2017, four departments at the University of Victoria (Nursing, Psychology, Sociology and Music) joined forces in a study to research the effects of participating in a choir on those with dementia. Spearheaded by Dr. Debra Sheets, founder and researcher, Voices in Motion is a multigenerational choir that offers an effective non-pharmacological approach with surprising benefits for all who socially sing together.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Stigma represents one of the biggest barriers to living with dignity following dementia diagnosis. Why is this of concern? Social isolation is linked to elevated stress hormones and inflammation—well-known risk factors for numerous diseases and death.

In addition to a joy-filled choral experience, all participants in a Voices in Motion choir benefit from belonging to a supportive community where they experience love, connection and support. These life-giving moments of music foster increased socialization, cognitive function, meaningfulness, and a multigenerational appreciation of others.

## WHY IS CHORAL SINGING SO IMPORTANT?

Participation in social singing draws upon emotional and procedural brain systems unaffected by dementia.

## THE INTERESTING FACTS

Participation in the choir results in:

- significant improvement in the recall of details from long-term memory.
- memory gains for those with dementia and caregivers in particular.
- reduced levels of stress, anxiety and depression for both the person with dementia and family members.
- reduced sense of stigma for those with dementia (which is known to cause isolation).
- increased socialization and sense of belonging.
- promotes empathy and acceptance between the generations – adults and students.



## VOICES IN MOTION GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Many families and friends are touched deeply by dementia as they try to discern how best to support their loved one or friend as the disease progresses. Voices in Motion offers something completely different and highly effective in helping these families.



### RESEARCH FOCUS:

Ongoing research allows Voices in Motion to function as a cutting-edge program that offers a non-pharmacological approach



### MULTIGENERATIONAL FOCUS:

Each choir is multigenerational – comprised of children, teens, young adults as well as older adults – which helps foster a caring and supportive community for all ages.



### EDUCATIONAL FOCUS:

Voices in Motion has become a place where education unfolds naturally and intentionally. We are becoming educated about dementia together, which in turn destigmatizes the disease.



### MUSICAL FOCUS:

Voices in Motion Choirs are directed by professionally-trained choral conductors. Our singers develop new vocal skills, extend their range, increase their breath support, and develop musicality.



### SOCIAL CONNECTION:

We provide opportunities for social connection outside of rehearsals, inviting friendships to be formed and lived beyond the ViM choral experience.



### PARTNERS IN HEALTH CARE:

We believe that Voices in Motion has a critical (and creative) role to play alongside the existing healthcare system to help foster dementia-friendly activities and communities.

## HAVE YOU OR A LOVED ONE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH MEMORY LOSS?

Whether you have recently been diagnosed with memory loss or you are part of a family that has been on this journey for a while, Voices in Motion invites you to become part of its joy-filled and supportive choral community.

**When we sing together, amazing things happen. Stories are shared. Hearts are touched. Beauty is created. Together.**

Research backs this choir. It has proven that social singing is one of the most effective and life-giving activities, offering an increased sense of well-being, cognitive function and socialization. By adding students to the mix, it is an empathetic and multigenerational group of people.

Duets (a person with dementia and their care partner, caregiver, family member or friend) attend a weekly ViM choir rehearsal comprised of an hour of singing with social interaction before and after – an hour and a half in total. A public concert is given at the end of each term (fall and spring) by each ViM choir.

Voices in Motion is on a mission to reduce stigma surrounding dementia and memory loss and spread the message that it does not define you – the people around you, who love you, tell you who you really are through their actions and words.



I see this choir as a lifeline! My partner and I have been on this dementia journey for over a year now. I see her becoming more isolated as her world and her involvement in it diminishes. The choir is one thing she looks forward to – the singing and the socialization. She feels comfortable with this group.

**KATHRYN & VIKI, DUET**



As a caregiver of someone with Alzheimer's, Voices in Motion has been an enormous source of connection for me. I don't feel so alone anymore. Both my husband and I thoroughly enjoy the singing, companionship, our director Erica, and yes, the cookies. The choir brings us both so much joy.

**SUSAN-ROSE & BRAM, DUET**

## ARE YOU A YOUNG PERSON WHO CONSIDERS YOURSELF A LEADER?

We believe in the next generations of leaders. We believe that children, teenagers and young adults are the key to breaking down stigma and positioning our culture to become dementia-friendly.

By becoming part of a Voices in Motion choir, you are privileged to enter into a community that includes families who are on a journey together – someone special in their family has been diagnosed with dementia.

As you sing together, you'll experience the gift of sharing in another person's life story, learn about empathy, vulnerability, acceptance and love. You will also become knowledgeable about dementia and how best to engage people with memory loss. We'll help you with that.

### But above all – you will be changed.

You may be attending this choir in order to gain community service credits or to fulfill your high school or home school credits, or to learn whether or not you want to continue to pursue a career in music, psychology, sociology or nursing - but guaranteed you will receive a lot more than any of those things.

### What you will discover is the power of what you give – a part of your heart.



Generations can learn so much from one another and that is what this choir does. It bonds us. With ViM you have another family.

**KRYSTEENA, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT**



I like interacting with the residents and talking to them. Learning their stories is meaningful to me. I also enjoy volunteering with my Papa.

**LILY, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT**

## ARE YOU WANTING TO ADD A MEANINGFUL ACTIVITY TO YOUR LIFE?

This is no ordinary choir. It includes people with memory loss, children, teenagers, young adults and people like you who live in the community, who love to sing and care deeply about other people.

**In Canada, 1.1 million people are currently impacted by dementia either directly or indirectly. You probably know someone yourself.**

Perhaps you know someone who has been diagnosed with dementia and want to bring them with you to a Voices in Motion choir. Or maybe you are hoping to add a meaningful activity to your life.

By joining our community of singers, you'll watch music and science come together. We know through research what social singing does for people. We experience laughter and some tears but always a genuine and authentic community.

You can join one of the care facility ViM choirs or one of the community-based ViM choirs. What you will see and hear will surprise you. Choristers learn vocal technique and develop musical skills that make for a performance that they're proud of.



I sang in ViM as a caregiver for my husband and then as a volunteer after he died. ViM became a heartwarming support group!

**NIKI, FRIEND**



It's a challenging time in all our lives, the various transitions, the emotions that arise, the planning, maneuvering the system. Talking with others who are going through the same thing is incredibly enriching and useful. And it's just plain fun!

**PATTY, CAREGIVER**



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO FIND YOUR  
NEAREST VOICES IN MOTION CHOIR:**

**VOICESINMOTIONCHOIRS.ORG**



**NEVER SANG IN A CHOIR BEFORE?**

Our professional choral conductor will help  
you find your voice!