

Joyful sounds

Music stirs memories for A Gift of Time's participants

By BRAD STUTZMAN

Rolling away years and knocking back rust they sang, with joyful recognition, of yellow submarines and bridges over troubled water.

As usual the emphasis was on memories — good ones — at the August 18 Camille's Memory Café. About 20 participants joined in singing and hand clapping, when Tara Jenkins brought her Harmony in Dementia program to Georgetown Public Library.

Those taking part joined in hands-on accompaniment to Ms. Jenkins' acoustic guitar. They shook sleigh bells, clapped wooden sticks and simulated ocean sounds with a water drum. The latter brought discussions of seaside places they had known; from the Atlantic to the Pacific and with Chicago's Lake Michigan in between.

"My mom loved it," said Barb Tomeo, who brought her mother, Helen, to the Memory Café. "I had tears in my eyes during one of the songs, just seeing her so engaged. She couldn't stop talking about it on the way home."

"Music connects us back to memories," Ms. Jenkins said. "We can share a song and all have different connections to it. Sometimes it's a broad memory. Sometimes it's something specific."

Camille's Memory Café is one of the programs A Gift of Time Georgetown offers. The non-profit sponsors online classes and seminars, but also places an emphasis on free, informal gatherings for those with mild to moderate memory loss and their caregivers.

A Gift of Time hosts live Memory Cafés at the library from 10 a.m. to noon on the third



Joanne Myslinski of Georgetown coaxes ocean sounds from a water drum that Tara Jenkins is holding. The hands-on experience was part of Ms. Jenkins' music program on August 18 during the Camille's Memory Café at Georgetown Public Library. Next month's gathering marks the one-year anniversary of live Memory Cafés and A Gift of Time will welcome the return of Frank Sinatra tribute artist Ken Kruse.

PHOTOS BY BRAD STUTZMAN

Friday of each month. The scheduled September 15 gathering marks the one-year anniversary of live Memory Cafés and A Gift of Time will welcome the return of Frank Sinatra tribute artist Ken Kruse. Virtual sessions, led by Vic Figurelli and

Reg Rowe, are on the first Friday monthly.

On September 7, the first bilingual Memory Café is scheduled to serve Spanish speakers at New Creation Baptist Church, 702 East 15th Street.

A Gift of Time also hosts respite programs each Wednesday at St. John's Methodist Church, 311 East University Avenue. The respite program includes music, games, crafts and snacks. Caregivers drop their loved ones off at the church, with activities ongoing 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. There is no charge for any Gift of Time programs.

The August 16 respite gathering included music from the Sun City Sons of the Pioneers; featuring Phil Hines, Jay Baker, Ken Buerkle and George Gaumont. Participants sang along with old-time cowboy songs, plus country music classics.

"It [music] is in that part of your brain that's the last to go," said Becky Folta-May, A Gift of Time's executive director. "Music is one of the things that stays.



The Sun City Sons of the Pioneers brought old-time cowboy songs and country classics to A Gift of Time's respite program August 16 at St. John's Methodist Church. Pictured are Phil Hines, Jay Baker, Ken Buerkle and George Gaumont.

That's why we try to incorporate it in all our programs."

For more information about the respite program, Camille's Memory Café or any other Gift of

Time offerings, contact Ms. Flo-ta-May at 512-489-0160 or becky@agiftoftimegeorgetown.org.

Brad Stutzman is a volunteer for A Gift of Time.



Carolyn Mangels of Georgetown and her daughter-in-law, Mary Mangels of Round Rock, join in the music with sleigh bells during the August 18 Camille's Memory Café at Georgetown Public Library. A Gift of Time Georgetown sponsors live Memory Café programs from 10 a.m. to noon the third Friday of each month at the library.