



 PercussionPlay®  
Outdoor Musical Instruments

Outdoor Musical Instruments for  
Senior Living Communities

# Music Made For The Great Outdoors

Percussion Play are the world's leading manufacturer of outdoor musical instruments. Designed with durability in mind, we are committed to making musical expression accessible to everyone, everywhere.





# Accessible Sensory & Music Gardens

The great outdoors stimulates all senses and awakens our connection with nature and each other. Being outdoors should not end as mobility and other issues arise in older adults.

Incorporating outdoor musical instruments into well-thought-out and accessible gardens can bring renewed opportunities for seniors to enjoy time outside and encourage them to play tranquil music on authentic instruments. This helps enrich the senior residents' lives in many ways - both physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Spending more time outdoors means that residents are exposed to more natural sunlight and all the positive effects this has on our overall health and well-being. Some known benefits include lower blood pressure, reduced stress levels, improved brain function, and improved bone and muscle health.

Beautifully designed surroundings can lift spirits. An outdoor musical instrument installed as a centerpiece or in a quiet, shady corner next to a bench or chair will offer a sensory experience and a moment of reflection to wonderfully interrupt everyday life.

Senior living, care, and nursing homes are seeing the benefits of creating sensory gardens for residents and visitors while bringing life to their outside spaces.



Petal Drum



Duo



Cherub



Cattails

# Physical Activity and Therapy (Therapeutic Recreation)

Activities for seniors are not just for filling up the hours of the day or keeping busy. They are designed to nurture the mind, body, and spirit.

Music and music therapy can engage residents in new ways. Music transforms the atmosphere, and its effects ripple throughout the entire place. Installing outdoor musical instruments will motivate residents and provide opportunities for them to remain active. Moderate physical activity can be gained through playing a musical instrument, improving mobility, strength, and endurance. It will engage many different muscle groups, promoting hand strength, joint flexibility, and overall improvement of motor skills.

Active music-making has been found to enhance social cohesion, enjoyment, personal development, and empowerment. While “breath of fresh air” may be an expression, the benefits of a little outdoor activity are, in fact, very real.





# Music For Mood & Memory

Engaging in activities is crucial for an individual's overall well-being as it provides a sense of purpose and enjoyment in their daily routine. For people living with dementia, participating in creative activities, gentle exercises, or any other activity can help them achieve their potential, increase their self-esteem, and reduce agitation and loneliness.

Music-making has profound benefits on the memory of seniors, serving as a bridge to recall and cognitive rejuvenation. Engaging in musical activities stimulates the brain, enhancing neural connections and potentially slowing down the memory decline associated with aging. Music can trigger memories and emotions, helping seniors to reminisce about their past, which in turn can improve their mood and quality of life.

Furthermore, the act of learning and playing music challenges the brain, promoting mental agility and memory retention. In essence, music-making is not just an enjoyable pastime; it's a powerful tool in maintaining and enhancing cognitive health in senior citizens, offering them a sense of accomplishment and joy while nurturing their memory and overall brain function. In the advanced stages of dementia, music provides an alternative means of communication.

***“One of our dementia residents has difficulty lifting one arm but when he starts to play the outdoor xylophone he can lift it higher and higher. The effect can be seen after just a few minutes!”***

♪ Care Worker ♪

Care Worker at Aars Elder Centre



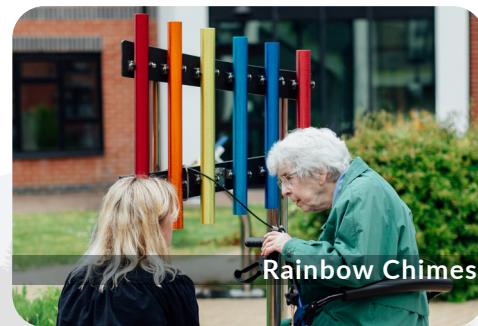
Forget-Me-Not Petal Drum



Cavatina

# Music For Socialization

Lack of socialization is related to negative impacts on health and well-being, especially for older people. However, socialization must encompass more than physical presence or conversation. Outdoor musical instruments promote interaction, providing a wonderful way for seniors to engage with others while getting a little physical activity and spending some time outdoors.





Sharing the musical instruments with family, friends, and visitors will imbue a sense of community pride and ownership amongst the residents.

Playing music is a multi-generational and fun experience, and playing music together with family members, other residents or helpers, creates social interactions that will have a positive impact on mental function, mood, and overall well-being.

For many families, the external spaces are a key factor when considering moving elderly relatives. The garden tends to be a place where people can connect with each other in a more meaningful way and having musical instruments in the garden gives residents a reason to go outdoors, and then a reason to want to stay there once they've arrived, contributing to psychological and physical wellness whilst simply making life more fun!

***“The musical instruments bring joy and life to both the residents and the island’s population. It is fantastic to hear music around the care home, attracting children, the elderly, and tourists.”***

♪ Maria Weisbjerg ♪

Manager of Kildemosen Care Home

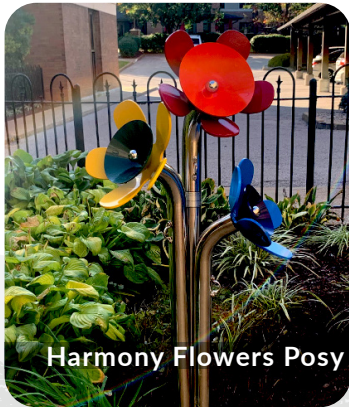


# Laclede Groves' Harmony Garden, MO

Emily Sitzes, Director of Community Wellness at Laclede Groves, a Lutheran Senior Services community in Webster Groves, Missouri, spearheaded the creation of an outdoor music sensory space. As a Board-Certified Music Therapist, Emily understands the power of music in healing and supporting well-being, particularly for older adults. Her goal was to create an auditory sensory space that would benefit the residents, their family members, and employees.

Emily sought to fundraise for instruments, and her music therapy program was selected as the recipient of last year's auxiliary project fund supporting residents in Laclede Groves' skilled-nursing households. She discovered Percussion Play online, which led to the birth of the Harmony Garden. The garden is located in the chapel courtyard, central to the Laclede Groves community, creating an inclusive area for everyone to enjoy.

It wasn't only the sound of the instruments that were important, but also their aesthetics. Emily says, "We loved the collections from Percussion Play as we wanted them to be vibrant and draw people in. The [Rainbow Collection](#) really fits that focus, and we also loved how natural the instruments felt. Being inspired by nature was important, so we chose the [Harmony Flowers](#)."



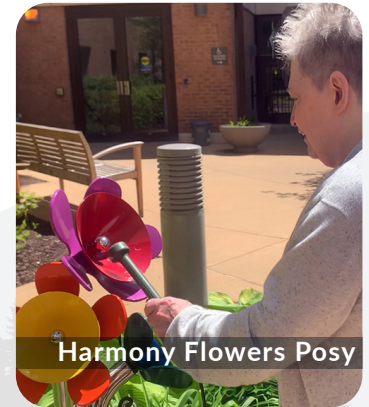
Harmony Flowers Posy



Calypso Chimes



Rainbow Chimes



Harmony Flowers Posy



The Harmony Garden is the focus of the music therapy program, where they host one-on-one sessions and sing-alongs, which is a great motor exercise using the upper body and hand-eye coordination. Many residents with dementia are also enjoying the instruments.

The garden is also used as a greeting to everyone, including the wider community in Webster Groves. Laclede Groves has a partnership with a local Lutheran school, and they often facilitate a pen pal connection between the students and some of the residents. When students visit, intergenerational opportunities are happening where the youngsters can play and share the Harmony Garden. Emily says, “This illustrates the connections being built and being made stronger between generations.”

Emily is inspiring fellow music therapists who didn’t think this would be possible. She wants to open up a musical conversation where everyone can join in. With plans to hold more intergenerational events, Emily looks forward to expanding the music program to other Lutheran Senior Services communities to support the mission of Older Adults Living Life to the Fullest.

***“Residents who have dementia light up when a staff member plays, and they can then replicate that sound. They can follow the musical phrase.”***

♪ Emily Sitzes ♪

Director of Community Wellness at Laclede Groves



# John M. Parrott Centre Creates Music Garden, ON

The John M. Parrott Centre is an inclusive long-term care home in rural Canada with a resident garden area that includes a [Cadenza](#), [Sunflower Petal Drum](#), and [Freechimes](#). These musical instruments provide a delightful and engaging platform for residents, staff, visitors, and families to come together, play, and create music, regardless of their previous experience. Music therapists are on staff to promote the use of music as a means of healing and supporting both mental and physical well-being.

This space serves as a source of creative play, where individuals can explore their musical abilities, learn from others, have fun, and engage in self-directed activities, which gives residents a sense of independence. Instruments cater to all ages and provide a unique and exciting opportunity for people to connect and interact through music.

Music-making outdoors can be an incredibly beneficial activity for seniors. Being outside in a natural environment can have a positive impact on mental and physical health, and music can further enhance the experience. It can help stimulate the brain, improve memory, boost mood, and group music-making can provide opportunities for socialization, which can be especially important for seniors who may be isolated or lonely. Overall, music-making in the great outdoors can be a wonderful way for seniors to stay active, engaged, and connected to their community.





# Outdoor Musical Engagement at Cecil House, UK

The Dutch approach to elder care gave Chris Barber, Engagement Manager for London-based senior housing association Central and Cecil Housing Trust (C&C), and his team the inspiration to create four sensory gardens for four care homes the trust manages.

Dutch innovation in caring for elderly people and those with dementia has seen the country create 'Dementia Villages,' which help residents stay as independent as possible. The Netherlands is one of the leading countries in dementia care and has also embraced sensory gardens with an array of stimuli, including musical instruments. Chris saw these gardens and realized C&C should include opportunities for residents to create music.

The bright colors and aesthetics of the [Calypso Chimes](#) and [Petal Drums](#) were chosen to bring the gardens to life. Instruments are designed to be inclusive, and when they were installed, the residents were able to get outside, be creative and start making music.

Some of the residents at C&C's care homes have dementia, and carers have been seeing the benefits the musical instruments have had on their physical and mental well-being. One resident who was a musician is regularly engaging with the instruments outside and enjoying the on-site entertainment.

***"Music therapy sessions are helping residents, both with dementia and without, to exercise their brains in different ways, engage in physical activity, and importantly have fun!"***

♪ Chris Barber ♪

Engagement Manager for Central and Cecil Housing Trust



# Retirement Village Creates Dementia Friendly Music, DK

Danish retirement home Hesselvang has transformed its grounds to create a very special destination that will entice residents and staff outside into the fresh air for some outdoor musical fun.

Hesselvang is a newly built independent retirement home located in Hvalpsund, Denmark. Residents are encouraged to spend time outside and the appealing space features a beautiful garden full of scented flowers in the summer and the sound of music following the creation of the country's largest music garden!



Duo



Harmony Bells Major Bunch



Cavatina



Recognizing the many benefits of both time spent outdoors alongside active music-making, the friend's association - made up of residents, relatives, and staff - applied to the Danish Health and Medicines Authority's 'relief grant for people with dementia' for the funds to create an outdoor music garden in the grounds.

Hesslevang has weekly events and musical activities planned, inviting the residents to step outside together to try the different instruments, learn something new, support each other and have fun.

Residents can now play on the [Cavatina](#) with [Music Book](#), [Duo](#), [Grand Marimba](#), [Large Congas](#), [My Tunes](#), [Cherub](#), [Tubular Bells](#), and the [Harmony Bells Major Bunch](#).

Keen they remain part of the wider local community, Hesslevang plans to host musical performances and 'sing-alongs' in their outdoor music space to not only help to increase awareness of the facility but to expand social connections for the residents and encourage multi-generational interactions.

***"We have Denmark's largest music garden attached to our nursing home and look forward to the warmer spring where we can really get out and make use of all the instruments."***

♪ **Dorthe Bredtoft** ♪

Hesslevang's Friends



# Residents Take a Walk Through The Senses

St. Joseph's at Fleming - a long-term senior care home in Peterborough, Ontario - has created a wonderful sensory path that aims to enhance the quality of life for its residents.

The 'Resident Sensory Accessibility Path' is a paved pathway that wraps around the building, incorporating environmentally friendly features such as gazebos, flowers, memorial gardens, sensory stations, and a pond.

Included in the sensory path is a [Sansa-Rimba](#) outdoor xylophone which is a bright and stimulating teaching resource that works well within care home gardens and musical trails. Residents, carers, and visitors can now play on the instruments while taking a moment to rest, stop and admire the view.

Patrick Gillespie, CEO at St. Joseph's at Fleming said the residents didn't have many safe places to walk, and getting outdoors is crucial. The wrap-around is open to the public and the path has proven to be a great way to get the home's two hundred residents, family, and onsite day care children outside in the fresh air and socializing.

***"The Xylophone looks great and is a real highlight for our residents and visitors on our new sensory path. Outdoor musical programs are now encouraged and residents can engage with others along their walk"***

♪ Patrick Gillespie ♪

CEO at St. Joseph's at Fleming Foundation



# Elder Care Centre Welcomes Music and Children

Percussion Play Denmark was asked to create an interactive musical garden for elderly residents, visitors, and local children to enjoy together.

The main purpose of the outdoor musical instruments was to prevent loneliness. It has become clear that the instruments can be used in many other contexts including physical exercise and therapy. Trollemose chose four instruments, the [Cadenza](#), [Grand Marimba](#), [Duo](#), and [Babel Drum](#). Each instrument has been strategically placed so that it can be clearly seen from the public path that leads up to the garden, with the intention of attracting neighbors and curious passers-by to the care center's garden.

The musical trail has become part of the center's everyday life and is used by both outsiders and care center residents. Near to the center is Poppellunden nursery who have become regular visitors and come to play on the new outdoor musical instruments. The older people are very keen to help the children. It's a completely instinctive reaction for them. Because of this, it often mobilizes them in ways that they probably don't realize.

***“When an outsider comes and starts playing music, the residents also come out and look because they find it interesting and it's a great opportunity to meet people”***

♪ Agnete Bille ♪

Care Center Manager



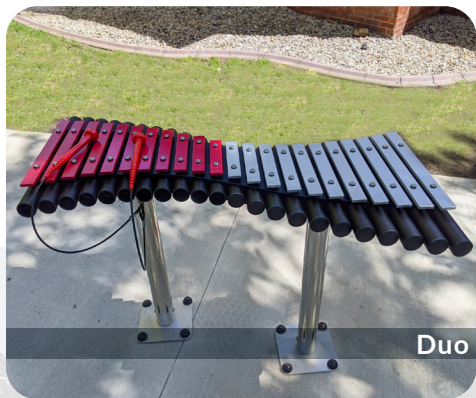


# Music-Making for The Young at Heart

Active music-making can be such a rewarding experience for seniors, however, some percussion instruments used for music-making and music therapy can be quite child-like. Age-appropriateness is at the forefront of our minds during development. Percussion Play instruments are tuned, look authentic, and sound great - ensuring players have an enjoyable music-making experience. Here are some examples of instruments that work particularly well within senior living communities:

## ♪ Duo

The [Duo](#) is built as standard with half aluminum notes and half GRP notes in the color of purple-heart wood. Each of these materials gives a distinct sound when played: the aluminum will produce a bright, clear tone when struck, while the GRP is fast and punchy. It features a curvy design that makes it easier for individuals with a limited range of movement, or players in wheelchairs, to reach all the notes. The notes are offset, allowing two people to interact and make music together comfortably and in their own space. Playing music with someone can create an extraordinary bond, and the Duo allows residents, therapists, care workers, or family members to play together easily.





Large Babel Drum

## ♪ Large Babel Drum

These stainless-steel tongue drums offer a unique hand drumming experience that help to produce beautiful melodies with remarkably long sustain. Usually played using the hands, but we can supply with small lightweight mallets. These produce a calm and mesmerizing sound. Perfect for musical exploration in a sensory-rich environment. [Babel Drums](#) can also be engraved, making beautiful memorial or remembrance gifts to remember someone cherished in the community.

## ♪ Forget-Me-Not Petal Drum

A botanically-inspired instrument based on the [Forget-Me-Not](#) flower which is linked to memory and remembrance. It is the recognized emblem for dementia-friendly environments, communities, and hospitals. Popular with sensory or healing gardens because it adds a hint of happiness to any space.



Forget-Me-Not



Sansa-Rimba

## ♪ Sansa-Rimba

The [Sansa-Rimba](#) is a small, appealing instrument, perfect for a care home garden or musical trail. It is a clever blend of two African instruments, the Sansa (thumb-piano) and Marimba (xylophone), producing a bright, happy sound. Easy to play and perfect if you are looking for ways to introduce musical exploration and encourage improvisation among residents.

# 5 Reasons to Bring Music to Senior Living Communities

Here are five great reasons to include outdoor musical instruments:

## ♪ MUSIC IS GOOD FOR THE MIND

Music engages areas of the brain which are involved with paying attention, making predictions, and updating events in our memory. Making music together and music therapy will help seniors process their thoughts, help dispel anxiety, frustration, or fear and help maintain memories.

## ♪ MUSIC BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

Making music together in a group is very powerful and creates an experience of shared emotion. A communal outdoor music space will foster positive informal interactions and avoid social isolation by providing residents with opportunities to have fun together, learn something new, support each other and make friends – all in the fresh air!





## ♪ MUSIC IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL

We have such a deep connection to music because it is 'hardwired' in our brains and bodies. Music can lift our mood, relax the mind, energize the body, and even help people better manage pain. The simplicity of these instruments and the instant musical success they provide will give a sense of accomplishment and increase self-esteem.

## ♪ MUSIC IS A MOTIVATOR

Easy-to-play outdoor musical instruments will facilitate cognitive function and coordinate motor movements. Placed in attractive outdoor settings, residents will be motivated to step outside to play them, or for those with reduced mobility, benefits are still gained from small movements such as gripping and lifting the mallet and hitting those sweet notes!

## ♪ MUSIC MADE IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Being in nature boosts our energy levels, improves our circadian rhythm, encourages the production of serotonin, reduces stress, and simply makes us feel good. Spending just 30 minutes outside (even on cloudy days) gives the daily recommended dose of Vitamin D. Playing music outside provides exercise and stimulation, breaks up the monotony of the daily routine, and encourage people to stay outside for much longer than they would perhaps do normally, therefore maximizing the health benefits that being outside provides us.



TM



**Global Sales & Manufacturing**

Percussion Play Ltd

[info@percussionplay.com](mailto:info@percussionplay.com)

[www.percussionplay.com](http://www.percussionplay.com)

**UK:** 01730 235180

**USA/CAN:** 866-882-9170 (Toll Free)

**ROW:** +44 1730 235180

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