

# The Power of Music Therapy

Here is another example of the power of Music Therapy, written by our music therapist Summer Lall.

A resident who had extensive issues with angry outbursts, violence and needing to be repeatedly restrained, found a positive outlet in music. He discovered that he loves to sing as well as write songs and record.

When I first met him, he was shy, reserved and unwilling to take risks in front of the “cool” kids, for fear of judgment or ridicule. He wasn’t a kid who had any music background or was particularly well versed on any instrument and his preferences didn’t blend in with that of his peers. However, he decided to try the Songwriting & Support music therapy group anyway.

Every week I would witness him start to open up more, take positive risks, and build his confidence. Eventually he even started showing up with lyric and chorus ideas. He stopped apologizing for his opinions and unique musical tastes. He sang in front of his peers, and on the last day he even recorded. He went on to join our choir, sang a solo for the holiday show and performed at Open Mic Night.

He shared with me that the music therapy space makes him feel happy and calm and expressed his interest in becoming a volunteer. He was a quick study and now supports his peers in their music expression and building their self-esteem, coming full circle.

Since starting music therapy, the incidences of his angry and violent outbursts have decreased dramatically. It was a non-invasive and creative way that he could practice appropriate socialization, utilize positive coping skills and be a team player. I am so proud of his growth.



## Where Are They Now?



Matt Mellin was a resident at our Pacific Lodge campus from December 2006 to September 2007. After graduating from the program, Matt pursued his academic goals but remained connected to the agency and even participated in our special events as a guest speaker. Today, Matt is a father and has a beautiful family. He shares his story below. Enjoy.

“Pacific Lodge helped me in so many ways, both while I was a resident and after I left. They had counselors, peers, a school, a dining hall, and a sports field. It felt like a mini-college dorm.

They gave me weekly chores for which I got paid and I could use that money on outings, which I was able to go on if I was well behaved”.

I got my first real job working in the office and received an actual paycheck. I was able to socialize with peers in my own age group, make friends, and learn important life skills.

After leaving Pacific Lodge, I graduated high school and moved on to Moorpark College where I got four Associate's Degrees then transferred to the University of California, Santa Barbara where I got my Bachelor's Degree in Sociology. While I attended college, the staff at Pacific Lodge kept in contact with me and the agency even paid for my textbooks and supplies.

***I really appreciated my experience at Pacific Lodge and everything they have done for me.”***

Thank you, Matt, for sharing your story. We wish you success in all your future endeavors.