

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MUSIC THERAPY AT A SAFE HOME FOR EVERYONE

(Jefferson, NC) – At Ashe County’s Safe Home for Everyone (A.S.H.E.), domestic violence survivors use music to promote healing, through an innovative program sponsored by Ashe County Partnership for Children. Nicole Hahna, MS, MT-BC, FAMI, a resident of Ashe County and a board certified music therapist, provides the music therapy services through A Safe Home for Everyone (A.S.H.E.).

“Music therapy is an evidence-based and cost-effective treatment for survivors of domestic violence,” says Hahna. "It provides an opportunity for survivors of domestic violence to express their feelings in a non-verbal way and assists them in their healing process." Hahna works with the children's support group on goals such as increasing self-esteem, increasing appropriate boundaries, learning about the cycle of violence, increasing emotional expression, as well as other individualized goals.

Hahna has been a music therapist since 2001; she received her undergraduate degree in music therapy from Appalachian State University and her graduate degree in music therapy from Radford University in Virginia. Currently, she teaches in the music therapy program at Appalachian State University and provides music therapy services to residents of Ashe and Watauga counties through Music Journey (www.MusicJourney.net). In addition to teaching and clinical work in music therapy, Hahna has also researched the effects of music therapy with survivors of domestic violence. According to her research, music therapy has been shown to decrease depression and increase empowerment for survivors of domestic violence.

Hahna uses a variety of music therapy interventions with the children in the A.S.H.E. support group, including improvisation, songwriting, song discussion/lyric analysis, movement-to-music, and music-based relaxation. Some clients may benefit from learning about the cycle of violence through writing a song with the group, according to Hahna. “Peace Begins At Home” was written by clients in the children's support group and played at the candlelight vigil for the National Crime Victim's Right Week at the Ashe County Courthouse last year.

According to the American Music Therapy Association (www.musictherapy.org), music therapy is an established healthcare profession that uses music to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals of all ages. Music therapy improves the quality of life for persons who are well and meets the needs of children and adults with disabilities or illnesses. Music therapists work with a variety of clients, including children with special needs (such as Downs syndrome and Autism), children with developmental delays (such as speech delays),

survivors of domestic violence, adults with developmental disabilities (such as Intellectual Disabilities), adults with mental health or addiction needs (such as Depression or Schizophrenia), older adults in a nursing home, people receiving hospice care, and people in a medical setting. Music therapists work on a variety of goals with clients, including improving quality of life, social skills, motor skills, cognitive/academic skills, and communication skills.

"We are fortunate to have music therapy services as part of the programming we provide at the Partnership and a Safe Home for Everyone," says Executive Director Sarah Wolf. "It is inspiring to hear about the positive change that music therapy makes in the lives of the children." Residents of Ashe County are encouraged to contact the Partnership for Children for more information on the programming available.

Ashe County Partnership for Children, located at Family Central in Jefferson, NC, provides a variety of services for families in Ashe County, including Smart Start, A Safe Home for Everyone, Family Literacy, and Childcare Resource and Referral. For more information on programs offered through the Partnership, call (336) 982-4588. For specific information about A Safe Home for Everyone, call (336) 982-8851. Please contact the music therapists at Music Journey—Nicole Hahna (828) 964-6930 and Aaron Teague, (828) 964-8930—for more information about music therapy services. You can also find more information about Music Journey online at www.MusicJourney.net.

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