

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Florida Department of Elder Affairs and the Florida Alzheimer's Association  
Collaborate to Bring the Gift of Music to Families Living With Dementia**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.,** — This week, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) began delivering over 1,000 pre-loaded MP3 players to socially isolated seniors and adults living with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD). The gift of music is made possible through a donation from the Florida Alzheimer's Association. Each unit will be mailed to the caregivers and families of those living with ADRD.

"Protecting individuals with ADRD from further vulnerability and providing support for the caregivers of persons with ADRD remains a primary focus for this Department," **said Elder Affairs Secretary Richard Prudom.** "I commend Governor Ron DeSantis for making ADRD a priority in the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP). The music project helps improve engagement between caregivers and their loved ones, and music may help lessen social isolation by allowing people living with dementia to access long-term memories. I am grateful to the Alzheimer's Association for donating the MP3 players to support this initiative."

As Florida encourages social distancing and self-quarantining to reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially for the 65 and older population, it is equally important to ensure those same adults do not become socially isolated. Many caregivers have sheltered in place with their loved ones. Music may benefit both caregivers and those living with dementia by reducing stress or distress, enhancing their moods, and increasing the ability to effectively communicate.

"Although music cannot slow or prevent cognitive decline, it can improve quality of life for people with dementia. Numerous studies have shown that listening to familiar music can reduce anxiety, depression and aggressive behavior," **said Michelle Branham, vice president of public policy for the Florida region of the Alzheimer's Association.** "We know that music soothes the soul and now, more than ever, older adults may feel overwhelmed and isolated. We hope these music players bring comfort and a sense of peace to seniors."

Each device is pre-loaded with various musical genres ranging from patriotic and country to Broadway tunes and gospel. The distribution of music will be matched to the preference of the recipient, or with input provided by the caregiver whenever possible. Because areas of the brain linked to memories of music are often left undamaged by dementia, listening to music becomes an important part of treating and interacting with persons living with ADRD.

Music can be powerful. Studies have shown music may reduce agitation and improve behavioral issues that are common in the middle-stages of the disease. Even in the late stages of Alzheimer's, a person may be able to tap a beat or sing lyrics to a song from childhood. Music provides a way to connect, even after verbal communication has become difficult.

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***About the Florida Department of Elder Affairs***

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs, the State Unit on Aging, helps Florida's elders to remain healthy, safe, and independent. The Department provides most direct services through its Division of Statewide Community-Based Services, which works through the state's eleven Area Agencies on Aging and local service providers to deliver essential services to a vital segment of the population. For more information, please visit [www.elderaffairs.org](http://www.elderaffairs.org).

***About the Alzheimer's Association***

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia – by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia. Visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

