

Music Within

Music has the power to cause emotions to well up within us. These feelings can bring overwhelming joy, sadness or just pure entertainment. The sound of music can almost always be found at Club 36 Harvest Hills. Maida Higa, site coordinator, understands the effect music has on people and incorporates music into many of the activities for Club participants. "Music is a powerful tool. It allows people to find themselves," says Maida.

Because of her strong musical background, Maida is being honoured as one of Alberta's artistic talents in the documentary *Do Not Go Gently: the power of imagination in aging*. This documentary has come to Calgary as part of the National Seniors Assembly. As the baby boomers begin to reach 65, this assembly was created to create a plan for the future where age is an opportunity.

Students from the University of Calgary were asked to profile someone who has made a significant contribution to the arts community in Alberta, and Chelsea Cowle's profile of Maida was chosen.

Maida began playing the piano when she was two and since then she has inspired people through her entire life, first as a teacher, then a performer and now at Club 36. Harvest Hills has a strong musical focus to reach participants and allow them to take part through music. "I've gone from an entertainer to this position because it's about bringing the music out of people. It's no longer about what I can do," says Maida, "it's about what they can do."

Maida has formed two bands in Club: The Harmonie Gals for the women and the Harmonie Gang for the men. The groups meet twice a week to practice together. They have taken their musical talents on the road and performed for people - touching everyone with their music. "It is a pleasure to have someone like Maida on staff, she enhances our capacity and the quality of services we bring to our participants," says Sarah Price, Director, Dementia Care Programs.

It is through music that Maida evokes strong emotions and passion within participants, which is what truly makes her a pioneer of the arts. The documentary will be available May 1, 2008. For more information, please visit www.donotgogently.com.