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# PROMISING PRACTICES



## Building harmony between persons served and the community

*By Dr. Terry D. Ward, B.S.N., M.S.N., RN, executive director, PHP of NC, Inc.*

"Music is the universal language of mankind."

These words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow continue to inspire the staff of [PHP of NC, Inc.](#) Music has played an essential part of the treatment plans for the persons served since the organization was founded in 1996 to serve persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Recognizing that musical expression can help individuals attain their goals, PHP of NC, Inc., formed partnerships with Playground Studios and with The Old School Community Enrichment Center (TOSCEC). Playground Studios is a professional recording facility with state-of-the-art equipment and professionally trained technical staff. It offers music therapy, music lessons, and voice lessons. TOSCEC is a nonprofit community organization that helps individuals to develop their talents through the performing arts.

PHP of NC, Inc.'s two partners encourage creativity, instill hope, and provide opportunities for expression for the persons served. A recent [CARF](#) survey report notes, "The partnerships with TOSCEC and Playground Studios help build consumers' creative abilities by enhancing their musical and artistic talents."

The partnerships also connect the persons served with therapeutic resources. In addition to being professional artists, staff members at Playground Studios and TOSCEC are

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Volume 8, Issue 7  
August 2013

### About the ECS Promising Practices newsletter series

An organization receiving exemplary recognition in its CARF survey report stands out because of its professional and strategic response to a service or business need. CARF presents these ECS Promising Practices articles to encourage dialogue among service providers and to offer examples of creative solutions for improving service quality.

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Issues are categorized by topic: Business Practices, Community Services, and Employment Services.

trained as habilitation technicians who are skilled in behavior management and skills development.

Most of the persons served at PHP of NC, Inc., are gifted with creative abilities. Some sing, some dance, and some play musical instruments. Many who play an instrument demonstrate exceptional talent. Playground Studios producer/arranger/engineer Chaka Harley remembers, "One individual could hear a tune and play it back instantly. However, his school would not allow him to participate in music programs because of his disability. My role was to collaborate with him as a musician to transform his vision for creating music into a reality. Our collaboration led to the production of a Christmas CD, in which he was able to express his musical gifts without limitations."

The CARF survey report commends PHP of NC, Inc., for "providing useable and meaningful systems that can provide multisensory input to consumers with special needs. This unique opportunity gives the consumers access to systems that are designed to be simple to use with a high degree of controllability."

Many months are sometimes needed for the persons served to prepare for a public performance. But the pride on their faces and the appreciative smiles of audience members make the preparation rewarding for the performers and spectators alike.

PHP of NC, Inc., staff members agree that the universality of music strikes a chord that binds the community with persons with disabilities.

*Below: Musician Carolyn Warchol performs at Playground Studios.*



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