



FSU Professor Wins International Award for Music Therapy Research

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — A Florida State University professor is the first-ever winner of a new international award designed to recognize the top researchers in the field of music therapy.

Jayne Standley, a Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor, received the global award from the World Federation of Music Therapy during its 2014 meeting in Vienna for her body of music therapy research spanning more than 20 years.

“That made it really special — to be the first researcher recognized,” she said.

Specifically, Standley was recognized for her contributions to the care and growth of premature infants through music therapy techniques and devices. She is widely known for inventing the Pacifier Activated Lullaby, or PAL device. When a premature baby successfully sucks on the PAL, they are rewarded with a soft lullaby that causes them to want to continue to suck. The positive reinforcement provided by the lullabies has been shown to improve their feeding and self-soothing skills, which can lead to an earlier discharge from the hospital.

Standley is professor of music, but also holds an appointment in the College of Medicine. She directs the music therapy program at FSU, the National Institute for Infant and Child Medical Music Therapy and the Medical Music Therapy and Arts in Medicine Programs in partnership with Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare.

She started her career on a music scholarship at Florida State where she played the French horn. But, she wound up attending a student meeting about music therapy as an undergraduate student.

“I was hooked from the first night,” she said.

Now, Standley is also working to see if the device can be used to take infants off of respirators faster. Essentially, she is hoping music can make the very immature brain “turn on” faster to provide continuous, autonomic breathing.

She also has had some success at getting toddlers with oral aversion off of gastrointestinal feeding tubes by using music to reinforce oral feeding.

“I’m always surprised at how powerful music is in affecting human behavior,” Standley said.



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