



An Autistic Journey – Interacting with the world through music

It took years to teach him to say his name, address and phone number. Diagnosed with autism at age 3, Jefferson Lin's parents' biggest fear was that no one would be able to help him return home if he ever got lost. Yet, the music that flows under his fingers has

brought joy, inspired hope and entertained many in this community.

Jefferson started to “learn” piano at age 7. Lacking the ability to understand any words, it took a village and god-blessed talent to produce this accomplished pianist. His parents, sister, piano teachers, school educators and social workers worked tirelessly with the willing young man who has sat on the same piano bench and consistently practiced 2-3 hours daily for the past 13 years. His superb skills earned him the Top Talent Circle Rating at the National Guild Piano Playing auditions.

Since 2005, Jefferson has entertained at the Sunny View Retirement Center every Sunday without fail. It has become a major event that the elderly residents look forward to. Many of them dress up, put on make-up and climb into their wheelchairs to be wheeled to the piano room every week. Without words the young pianist has formed deep bonds with many of them. For this work and numerous other volunteering and guest appearances at nursing homes, senior centers, Christmas parties and open houses, Jefferson was recognized by the Rotary Club and received its 2007 Optimist Award. His example has instilled hope for many people with disabilities and their families.