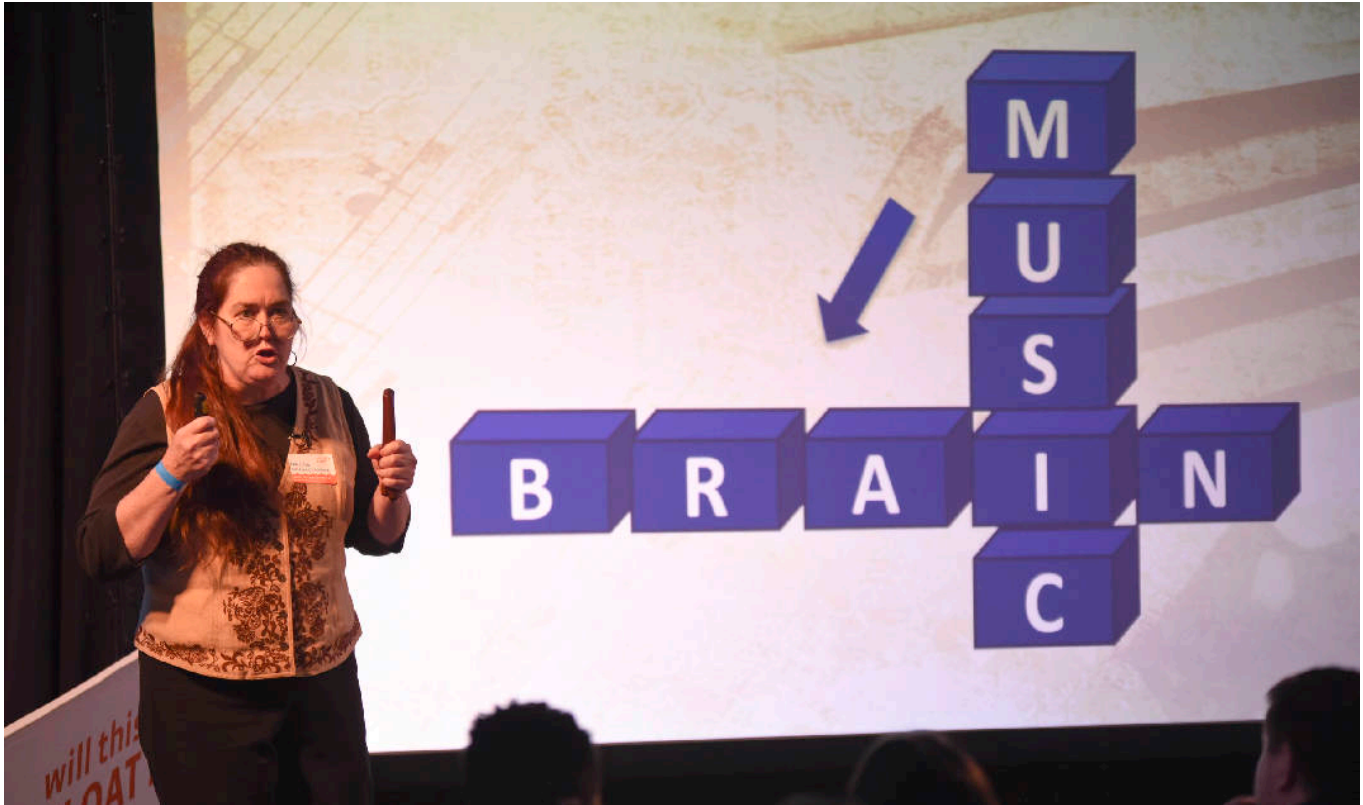


# Music therapy software hits high note with investors

December 9th, 2016 | by [Dave Flessner](#) | in Business Around the Region | Read Time: 3 mins. |



Martha Summa-Chadwick is the first place winner after pitching her Music Therapy Gateway in Communications, Inc. effort. Seven entrepreneurs pitched their business ideas during Thursday's Will This Float competition at the Chattanooga Zoo.

Photo by Tim Barber /Times Free Press.



Jack Studer, left, executive director of the Company...

Photo by [Tim Barber](#) /Times Free Press.

### Will This Float winners

\* First Place: Music Therapy Gateway, a software music program to help those with speech, motor and cognition problems.

\* Second place: Allstar Technologies, a training system that uses a string of flashing lights to help pace runners.

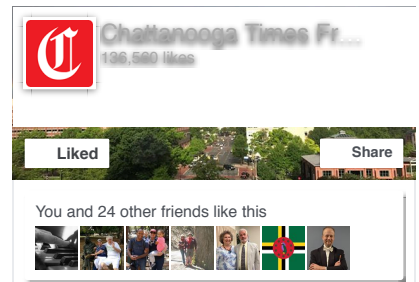
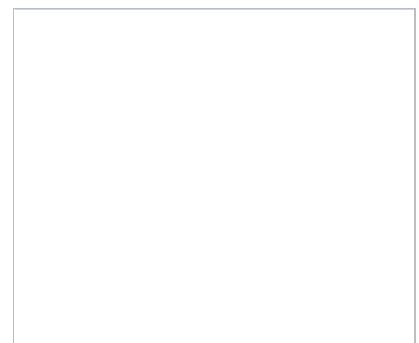
As a classical pianist, Martha Summa- Chadwick has long known the power of music to change people's lives.

Working with computer engineers at UTC in 2009, Summa-Chadwick combined her musical skill with her computer programming skills to develop a prototype software program that uses songs to help those with attention control problems to focus and develop language and other skills..

"By taking music, we can actually improve attention control in the brain," she said Thursday night in pitching her idea about how to help those facing problems from strokes, accidents or learning disabilities. "We have the possibility of really helping humanity."

Summa-Chadwick's nonprofit venture, known as Music Therapy Gateway, got its own help Thursday night when the idea was picked as the best among seven competitors in this year's annual "Will This Float" event at the Chattanooga Zoo.

A three-judge panel praised the music therapy idea and chose Summa-Chadwick's pitch as the winner of a \$3,000 cash prize, plus donated legal, accounting and



\* People's choice award: Arrival Events, an alternative to traditional funerals to provide creative, celebrations in nontraditional venues and formats of those who died.

office space from local businesses.

The selection should help propel the prototype that was largely developed seven years ago but is yet to be commercialized or developed for widespread use, Summa-Chadwick said.

"Music can help people do non-musical tasks at a much greater pace and with more focus and fun," she said.

Music Therapy Gateway developers hope to use the winnings to help develop computer apps to turn mobile phones into individualized teaching instruments and allow speech therapists and other health care providers new ways to reach and teach individuals with attention, language and attention disorders. Summa-Chadwick said she has not set the price for the new software, but she is committed to keeping it affordable to reach as many people as possible.

Music therapists often provide needed learning assistance, but there are only 26 licensed music therapists in Tennessee and there are currently none in Chattanooga, Summa-Chadwick said.

Music Therapy Gateway was the only nonprofit among those pitching new business ideas at Thursday night's event, which was organized by the Company Lab to help turn more promising ideas into viable businesses.

The judges awarded a secondplace \$1,000 prize to Allstar Technologies, an athletic training lighting system that utilizes LED lights on a track to provide a customizable plan for runners.

Dan Basler, a Lookout Valley Middle School physical education and wellness instructor, developed Allstar Technology over the past couple of years using strings of light connected with a computer to vary the pace at which the LED lights go on to match what speed runners may try to reach.

"As a teacher, I look for ways to motivate my students to work harder and have a little fun at the same time — and that's where his idea came from," Basler said. "When testing students, they do better if they are running against somebody or some thing that is pushing them to run faster."

By increasing the speed of the lights and having runners match the speed at which the lights go on, runners can be trained to go faster, Basler said.

Basler said he hopes to soon get his business idea off the drawing board, although he said he still needs work on programming the computer apps and marketing the business idea to prospective users.

During Thursday's pitch, more than 100 people gathered in a heated tent at the Chattanooga Zoo also got their chance to pick their favorite business plan from ideas ranging from vending machine toys for children to prepaid ridership plans to reduce drunk driving among college students.

The People's Choice award, along with \$500, was presented to Tara Viland for her idea of arranging celebrations, instead of traditional funerals, to mark the death of loved ones.

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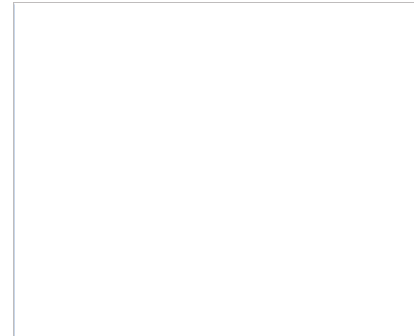


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