

Music as Motivation

For years, music has been used as a kind of therapy for children with autism, positively influencing behavior by helping them calm down, focus, feel comfortable with their surroundings, and just have a good time. And for two stay-at-home moms, **Michele Purcell**, a singer-songwriter and mother of two children with autism, and **Barbara Fine Buxbaum**, a writer, former marketing director, and mother of two children, the therapeutic possibilities are music to their ears.

The pair met when Michele placed an ad on Craig's List for a lyricist to help her make music that would inspire her two sons to complete everyday tasks. The result is a special CD full of upbeat songs about daily routines—getting up, brushing teeth, bathtime, and bedtime. The CD, *Songs for Your Busy Day*, was released in December. The catchy tunes and simple lyrics seem to really work. Michele uses the CD as a tool to stimulate and encourage her two boys, ages 5 and 8, through their daily activities.

“The boys respond to music. It helps to focus them and calm them down. They like the repetition,” said Barbara.

The upbeat melodies aren't just designed for special needs children, Buxbaum says. “Our friends' kids love listening to it in the car,” she explains. “The music has a kind of pop sound.”

The CD can be found on amazon.com, cdbaby.com or on the duo's website, musicbymommies.com for a suggested retail price of \$13.99. Some local shops in Buxbaum's hometown of Chappaqua carry the CD as well.

Plans for a follow-up album are in the works, and this time the musical motivators will focus their talents on writing about emotions and manners for children. The pair also plans to hold concerts throughout Westchester this spring.

— By Jennifer Basso