

Sound Medicine

FAYETTEVILLE NATIVE USES MUSIC AS ALTERNATIVE REMEDY

By Kevin Kinder

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E.D. Laningham was in a rock band, so he knows how music makes others feel. He watched as fans danced in front of his band.

But he also knows something about music on a deeper level, too. His first day jobs were as an educator, and he worked with special needs children. In the course of his work, he would play music for those in his care, especially those with autism. Laningham, who also goes by Ed, would put a home speaker underneath a beanbag chair and allow the children to sit on it, soaking in the vibrations from the music below.

"I was very aware of how autistic children responded to sound," Laningham said. "I surely thought that I wasn't the only person noticing it."

He wasn't.

In Norway, a researcher by the name of Olav Skille was also working with autistic children. Skille's work, combined with that of other researchers, developed into a field called vibroacoustic therapy, which aims to reduce stress and muscle fatigue not only with special needs patients but for anyone experiencing pain.

Laningham has made it his career. He was trained in Santa Fe, N.M., and has purchased



Client Matt Courtney of Fayetteville settles in for a half-hour session as E.D. Laningham prepares his vibroacoustic equipment on Tuesday at White Lotus in Fayetteville.

a specialized table for vibroacoustic therapy, which he conducts from the White Lotus Salon in east Fayetteville. The bed is like a massage table, but is equipped with embedded speakers that pump in sounds of Laningham's choosing.

He believes he is one of only

three vibroacoustic therapists in the state and the only such practitioner in Northwest Arkansas.

An Education

Laningham got his collegiate degree in his hometown of

Fayetteville at the University of Arkansas. His degree is in education, and he spent several years teaching and working with special needs children.

He also started playing in local rock bands.