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Musical Minds

In August of 2007, the St. Joseph Music Foundation, a 501(c)(3) corporation started a program of collecting and distributing instruments for children in our area titled "Musical Minds". In addition to supplying the instruments, we also provide lessons for those children.

As the student grows in confidence and mastery, they will want to demonstrate their accomplishments publicly. These performances can demonstrate to parents, peers, and the community the instruction students have received in the music program. The Foundation provides a small, safe and comfortable setting so that students may play for family and friends and focus on the performance. As the student grows and becomes more confident, the opportunity to perform for larger audiences is available.

The St. Joseph Music Foundation is accepting musical instruments of all kinds. Please contact us if you have an instrument you wish to donate or if you would like to help with monetary donations. If you are a teacher interested in helping, please contact us for details.

If you prefer, you can sponsor a student.

For a calendar year: \$ 800.00

For a school year: \$ 535.00

For a semester: \$ 267.00

For two weeks: \$ 35.00

The Foundation is accepting monetary donations in person, through the website and through US Mail. You can drop by any Regular Meeting of the Foundation. Meeting dates, time and location are listed on the website. The website address is <http://www.StJosephMusicFoundation.org>. If you prefer to donate online, you will find the "Donate" button on several pages on the website. The US Mail address is at the end of this document.

It is a proven fact that participation in music programs helps in the development of children.

Music...

- develops skills needed by the 21st Century workforce: critical and analytical thinking, creative problem solving, effective communication, teamwork and more;
- keeps students engaged in school and less likely to drop out;
- improves the atmosphere for learning;
- helps students achieve in other academic subjects like math, science, and reading;
- helps communities share ideas and values among cultures and generations;
- is a disciplined human endeavor with intrinsic value to society;
- provides students with the opportunity to:
 1. express themselves in verbal and non-verbal ways;
 2. appreciate diverse perspectives, openness and flexibility in thinking;
 3. develop a high level of self-awareness and self-confidence;
 4. take risks and solve problems creatively;
 5. embrace a variety of unique ways to gain insights about cultural and historical issues;
 6. develop a rich and healthy sense of beauty and imagination.

(reprinted from “Keep Music Education Strong”, www.SupportMusic.com)

In searching such resources as the Internet, newspapers, trade magazines, medical magazines and family publications, it is easy to read, repeatedly, of the benefits of music education. Below are many quotes and a list of sources for more information. (*A huge “Thank you” to VHI – Save the Music for much of the additional information.*)

What follows is astounding especially in the face of music and arts programs being cut from our schools across the country.

The Personal and Academic Benefits to Students

Students at risk of not successfully completing their high school educations cite their participation in the arts as reasons for staying in school. Factors related to the arts that positively affected the motivation of these students included a supportive environment that promotes constructive acceptance of criticism and one where it is safe to take risks.

— *From The Role of the Fine and Performing Arts in High School Dropout Prevention, 2002; Barry, N., J. Taylor, and K. Walls*

Dr. James Catterall of UCLA has analyzed the school records of 25,000 students as they moved from grade 8 to grade 10. He found that students who studied music and the arts had higher grades, scored better on standardized tests, had better attendance records and were more active in community affairs than other students. He also found that students from poorer families who studied the arts improved overall school performance more rapidly than all

other students.

— *Catterall, UCLA, Fall 1997*

Second graders from a low income school in Los Angeles were given eight months of piano keyboard training, as well as time playing with newly designed music software. The result? These students, taking the Stanford 9 Math Test, went from scoring in the 30th to the 65th percentile. These second graders were performing sixth grade math. The critical point here is the students were not taught math using music...they were taught music. It was the process of learning music that helped improve their math skills.

—*From Neurological Research, March 15, 1999*

Students of lower socioeconomic status who took music lessons in grades 8–12 increased their math scores significantly as compared to non-music students. But just as important, reading, history, geography and even social skills soared by 40%.

—*From Nature, May 23, 1996; Gardiner, Fox, Jeffrey and Knowles*

A report released by the Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse found that students involved in courses beyond the required ‘basics’ were less likely to be involved with drugs. The study went on to show that ‘Secondary students who participated in Band or Orchestra reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances’ (Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana or any illicit drug).

— *From Houston Chronicle, January 11, 1998*

Learning in the arts nurtures motivation, including active engagement, disciplined and sustained attention, persistence and risk taking. It also increases attendance and educational aspirations.

— *From Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development, Arts Education Partnership, 2002*

Arts participation and SAT scores co-vary—that is, they tend to increase linearly: the more arts classes, the higher the scores. This relationship is illustrated in the 2005 results shown below. Notably, students who took four years of arts coursework outperformed their peers who had one half-year or less of arts coursework by 58 points on the verbal portion and 38 points on the math portion of the SAT.

VERBAL MATH

4+ years arts 534 540

4 years 543 541

3 years 514 516

2 years 508 517

1 year 501 515

1/2 year or less 485 502

Average for All SAT Test Takers 508 520

— *Source: 2005 College-Bound Seniors: Total Group Profile Report, The College Board, 2005*

The Benefits to the Brain: Cognitive Development

Stanford University research has found for the first time that musical training improves how the brain processes the spoken word, a finding that researchers say could lead to improving the reading ability of children who have dyslexia and other reading problems... ‘Especially for children ... who aren't good at rapid auditory processing and are high-risk for becoming poor readers, they may especially benefit from musical training.’

— *From “Playing music can be good for your brain,” SF Chronicle, November 17, 2005 (article on recent Stanford research study linking music and language)*

The musician is constantly adjusting decisions on tempo, tone, style, rhythm, phrasing, and feeling – training the brain to become incredibly good at organizing and conducting numerous activities at once. Dedicated practice of this orchestration can have a great payoff for lifelong attention skills, intelligence, and an ability for self-knowledge and expression.

— *From A User's Guide to the Brain, May 31, 2003; Ratey, John J., MD*

Learning and performing music actually exercise the brain – not merely by developing specific music skills, but also by strengthening the synapses between brain cells... What is important is not how well a student plays but rather the simultaneous engagement of senses, muscles, and intellect. Brain scans taken during musical performances show that virtually the entire cerebral cortex is active while musicians are playing. Can you think of better exercise for the mind/brain? In short, making music actively engages the brain synapses, and there is good reason to believe that it increases the brain's capacity by increasing the strengths of connections among neurons.

— *From “The Music in Our Minds,” Educational Leadership, Vol. 56, #3; Norman M. Weinberger*

Music enhances the process of learning. The systems it nourishes, which include our integrated sensory, attention, cognitive, emotional and motor capacities, are shown to be the driving forces behind all other learning.

— *From Empathy, Arts and Social Studies, 2000; Konrad, R.R.*

Taking piano lessons and solving math puzzles on a computer significantly improves specific math skills of elementary school children. Children given four months of piano keyboard training, as well as time playing with newly designed computer software, scored 27 percent higher on proportional math and fractions tests than other children.

— *From Neurological Research, March 15, 1999; Gordon Shaw, Ph.D, University of California, Irvine*

Researchers at the University of Munster in Germany reported their discovery that music lessons in childhood actually enlarge the brain. An area used to analyze the pitch of a musical note is enlarged 25% in musicians, compared to people who have never played an instrument. The findings suggest the area is enlarged through practice and experience. The earlier the musicians were when they started musical training, the bigger this area of the brain appears to be.

— *From Nature, April 23, 1998; Christian Pantev, et al*

Nowhere in the spectrum of arts learning effects on cognitive functioning are impacts more clear than in the rich archive of studies, many very recent, that show connections between music learning or musical experiences and fundamental cognitive capability called spatial reasoning. Music listening, learning to play piano and keyboards, and learning piano and voice all contribute to spatial reasoning... In the vast literature on spatial reasoning (about 3,000 studies in some bibliographies), it is clear that mathematical skills as well as language facility benefit directly from spatial reasoning.

— *James S. Catterall, UCLA, Fall 1997*

Music Education: How Schools Are Doing

The 1997 National Assessment of Educational Progress in arts education (visual art, music, theatre and dance) studied the general population of 8th graders across the country and found that students are not achieving at high levels in responding to, performing or creating works of art. However, NAEP found that students receiving classroom arts instruction outperformed other students and that instruction increased all of their arts abilities, including the ability to create works of quality that communicated complex ideas and feelings – a fundamental communication skill in contemporary society. Unfortunately, less than half of the nation’s 8th graders are being taught the arts...Even at schools where [music and art] courses are offered, not everyone takes part. Only one in four 8th graders reported being asked to sing or play a musical instrument at least once a week.

— *1997 National Assessment of Educational Progress in Arts Education*

22 percent of school districts reported reducing time for art and music “somewhat or to a great extent” to make time for reading and math.

— *From “From the Capital to the Classroom: Year 4 of the No Child Left Behind Act,” Center on Education Policy, March 2006*

With passage of a mill-levy in 1997, Adams 14 restored the arts, in fact making arts education central to the student (and parent) experience...student attendance, parent participation, and student achievement have soared: not one of the Adams 14 Schools has received an unsatisfactory rating on the state report cards.

— From *“Potent Partnerships: Community-based Resources for Arts Education,”* *The State Education Standard, Winter 2004; Gully Stanford*

With its many challenges and opportunities, [No Child Left Behind] dominates the state and local education landscape today. What the long-term effects of NCLB will be on funding and support for arts education in the schools remain unclear. So far, the results have been mixed. Schools in some states report the amount of instructional time devoted to reading, writing, math and science has increased, while for the arts it has declined.

— From *“Academic Atrophy: The Condition of the Liberal Arts in America’s Schools,”* *Council for Basic Education, 2004; von Zastrow, Claus with Helen Janc*

...while virtually every state has adopted standards in the arts, only a few have incorporated the subject into their state accountability systems...[this can cause some states to] choose to narrow the curriculum in order to reach higher student achievements in a few subjects [such as math and reading].

— From *“The Complete Curriculum: Ensuring a Place for the Arts and Foreign Languages in America’s Schools,”* *NASBE, October 2003*

Work Force Preparation for the 21st Century

Though it's crucial to invest in math, science and engineering, as the president outlined in his recent State of the Union address, there are other fields that hold more promise... Prefer a more artistic career? Our economy is poised to create new forms of entertainment, from rock 'n' roll and hip-hop to film and video games. Indeed, over the next 10 years, jobs in art, music, culture and entertainment will grow twice as many as jobs in engineering will.

— From *“A search for jobs in some of the wrong places,”* *USA Today, February 12, 2006; Richard Florida*

Of course, both the fundamentals and the more creative fields are crucial to our economic success. The basics are not enough, though. What we really need in order to prepare our children for the creative economy is a comprehensive education, something that takes them from aesthetics to algebra without pretending that the two are mutually exclusive. We need to see to it that, from an early age, our entire population is encouraged to develop its people skills with its multiplication tables and its creative and entrepreneurial potential with its reading abilities.

— From *The Flight of the Creative Class: The New Global Competition for Talent, 2005;* *Richard Florida*

What the American Public Thinks

A **2003 Gallup Poll** on Americans' attitudes toward music revealed the following:

- 78% of Americans feel learning a musical instrument helps students perform better in other subjects
- 96% of Americans believe participation in a school band is a good way for children to develop teamwork skills
- 88% of Americans believe participation in music helps teach children discipline
- 54% of American households reported having a least one musical instrument player, the highest figures since the study began in 1978
- 95% of Americans believe that music is a key component in a child's wellrounded education; three quarters of those surveyed feel that schools should mandate music education
- 71% of Americans surveyed believe that teenagers who play an instrument are less likely to have disciplinary problems

A May **2005 Harris Poll** on the attitudes of Americans toward arts education, revealed:

- 93% agree the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education for children, a 2% increase over 2001
- 86% agree an arts education encourages and assists in the improvement of a child's attitudes toward school
- 83% believe that arts education helps teach children to communicate effectively with adults and peers
- 79% agree incorporating the arts into education is the first step in adding back what's missing in public education today
- 54% rated the importance of arts education a "ten" on a scale of one to ten
- 79% believe that it's important enough for them to get personally involved in increasing the amount and quality of arts education

Sources for additional information

www.vh1savethemusic.com

www.menc.org

www.supportmusic.com

www.nammfoundation.org

www.artsusa.org

www.menc.org/publication/books/otl.html

www.musicachievementcouncil.com

www.StJosephMusicFoundation.org



St. Joseph Music Foundation

*Musical Minds*SM ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

(Please print clearly)

Name of parents: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Cell Phone Number(s): _____

Email: _____

Alternate Contact Information: _____

Name of children requesting instruments / lessons: _____

Age of children: _____

School attended: _____

Annual income (tax return or equivalent): _____

Mitigating factors (medical conditions, etc.): _____

List the instruments you would you like to apply for, in order of preference:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

By signing this agreement, I certify that the information I have given is true and correct. I understand that the instrument I receive through the “Musical Minds” program remains the property of the St. Joseph Music Foundation and must be attended to with daily care and proper maintenance. I agree to return the instrument to the Foundation, in good working order, within 5 days, once the student has finished with it.

I agree to accept the responsibility that the child attends musical lessons on a regular basis. I understand that the Foundation may communicate with the teacher at any time to check the progress of the student and the Foundation has the right to terminate this agreement and demand return of the instrument if the child is found to have failed the minimum lesson framework set down by the Foundation. This will be determined on a case by case basis and teacher input will be key.

I also understand that I have the option to return this instrument to the Foundation for a different instrument should my child decide they would like to try a different type of instrument, providing the Foundation has available instruments.

Signed:

Date:

If you have any questions, please contact us through the website, www.StJosephMusicFoundation.org or by phone at (816) 261-5917.

Return this form by email or U.S. mail to:

St. Joseph Music Foundation
620 Francis
Suite 219
St. Joseph, MO 64501

Do not write below this line. For SJMF use only.

Instrument type: _____ Instrument brand: _____

Model: _____ Serial number: _____

Accessories included: _____ Value: _____

Teacher: _____ Phone: _____

Date issued: _____ By: _____