

DIRECTOR'S REPORT - ANNUAL MEETING - June 11, 2008 at 7:30 p.m.

Welcome to the Suzuki School of Newton's annual meeting. It gives me great pleasure to report to you, our parent members, and to the SSN Board of Directors the successes of this past year. It has been a remarkable year with much wonderful music making—from the hearts of your children. The December group concerts, and in particular the Spring Group Concert at Day Middle School in May were really musical highlights. We now have high school students capable of leading groups—and in May, there was a fabulous performance of the Bach Double Concerto with advanced students Rachel Glanz and Galen Chen leading the students while the faculty made up the orchestral accompaniment. We also had two other high school students, Nathaniel Herrmann and Amalia Lieberman, perform their own solo recitals—a true sign that our students not only do well, but also really stick with it. We have more and more advanced students and we hope to develop the programming to serve them. The Piano Department with over 80 students, has two Piano galas in January and May featuring the piano group classes and like the string galas, it is a great opportunity for students and parents to experience the broad level of the school. Our faculty including Tung Pham, our operations manager, performed an outstanding Chamber music Gala on Mother's Day. None of you should miss this event, for our faculty are very talented musicians. Solos, Graduation concerts and chamber music groups now abound and we had our community outreach performances at the Harvest Fair, Boylston Place retirement facility, Perkins school for the Blind, and Citibank-Newton Centre. With this musical success, comes the support from you, the parents, who made it all possible. Furthermore, thanks to your generosity, our growing school which was in need of another piano, now has one. And YOU did it! We raised \$5,260 to purchase a Boston upright and it is now located in Room 202 on the second floor.

It is hard for me to believe, but this has been my tenth year as Director of the Suzuki School of Newton. For some of the newer families who do not know the history of the school, SSN was founded in 1986 by Gwendoline Thornblade at a time when music program cutbacks in public schools created a critical community need. Growing from 60 students in violin, viola, and Solfege (Music Lab), we have just under 300 students. This past year for me, has been dominated by developing a strategic plan with the SSN Board and also creating a vision for our next ten years. The fall semester, while full of wonderful events, was shadowed with the uncertainty of whether our lease would be renewed here at 225 Nevada Street, which we call the "Newton Cultural Center." This is the reality the school has faced my entire ten years as director. We have moved from location to location every three or four years. We remain a strong organization with the strength of our faculty, but this instability of location drains the energy that could drive the school to even higher expectations and better service to our families. We wish to increase our outreach to seniors –We are currently in discussion with Evans Park retirement facilities that have several locations in Newton. We hope for greater student diversity by continuing to build upon our scholarship fund. We appeal to

you, if you are able, to make an additional donation to this fund as we seek to help families who simply cannot afford music lessons at all. And for me, I have a vision for a Suzuki preschool with an integrated arts curriculum where children may realize their full potential through a daily music program when they are very young. I wish to see the opportunity to create a positive musical learning environment for preschool age children that embodies the Suzuki approach to learning and provides this during the best part of a young child's day--the morning hours when they are fresh and rested and able to learn and do at their most productive work.

So, we invite you—the parent members of our organization—to help us to vision for the future and ensure that the school may always thrive. Your volunteer time and energy is so greatly appreciated, and it is this, with the faculty, that truly make our school what it is. Not the walls where we are contained. You can help us by volunteering an hour here or there, joining our new School Parent/Faculty/Board council or even joining the Board of Directors. You may simply send me an email or call and I will be happy to speak with you.

We wish to recognize at this point in time, the changing of SSN Board leadership as Dr. Jean Kasmer, board member for eight years and SSN President for three years finishes her term as President. Through her guidance, the scholarship fund has continued to serve an ever-growing number of needy students and she has led our 88 Keys campaign. Thank you, Jean, for all your time in chairing our board meetings, serving as advisor and mediator, working on our scholarship committee and most of all sharing your warmth as a human being in keeping the Suzuki School of Newton strong.

I wish to also thank two other outgoing board members. Ellen Metzger has been our SSN Clerk, keeping minutes and handling documents for the school, and she and her family have all been active students, participants and supporters of the Suzuki School of Newton. Also, I wish to recognize Jay Rosenberg, who is now completing his tenure on the SSN Board as faculty representative. An experienced board member as a founding musician of Voice of the Turtle, he has served on the SSN Board since before I became director, and he saw the school through its three different directors. Thank you, Jean, Ellen and Jay for your service to the Suzuki School of Newton.

I wish to thank the SSN Board of Directors for their generosity, as well as Citibank, M Steinert and Sons, Johnson String Instruments and Eastman Strings that have made our James Thornblade Memorial Scholarship Fund able to serve a growing number of students. With \$15,000 in need-based financial assistance this year, and an estimated \$20,000 next year, the generosity of our community to help support this fund is so greatly appreciated. Through the two outstanding concerts we had this year with Boston Chamber Music Society and the fall Artist Concert Series performance with Luci Lin, Owen Young and Sergey Schepkin in November, we build upon the education of our students through listening to superb music as well as support a very meaningful cause.

We continue to believe that all children can learn---our mission to instill a love and respect for music to enrich our students throughout their lives is a purpose we are constantly re-examining. We must work hard with keeping our balanced budget, look to creative ways to strengthen our faculty and keep them as enthusiastic teachers. We desire a community that cares, shares in the beauty of music and believes that the struggles we face are really just opportunities for us to grow as human beings. We face enormous challenges in our lives, but the energy we put into our children in helping them grow and feel the beauty of music, will strengthen their ability to be future leaders in a better world than we have today.

I want to thank you all for making my job a meaningful and wonderful community to work in.

Thank you!