



*Nutrition for the Mind*



## 2013 Annual Report



Music for Life, PO Box 1141, Springfield VA 22151  
[www.musicforlife.org](http://www.musicforlife.org)





## Providing Opportunity

## Who we are

Music for Life serves Washington DC and the neighboring counties in Virginia and Maryland. We provide an after-school music and mentoring program for youth living under adverse circumstances - poverty, dysfunctional families and challenged neighborhoods. Financial reality has resulted in fewer opportunities for those with limited means to participate in a quality music program at school. At the same time the fastest growing segment of our population is youth being born into poverty; the school dropout rate for these youth, particularly among minorities is high. We believe every child should have the opportunity to benefit from a quality music program.

## What we do

Music for Life goes into the communities where these youth reside and sets up its music program; free to all who qualify. Research has shown a strong correlation between music education and a person's success in life. Youth involved in quality music programs tend to do better in school; score higher on standardized tests; be less inclined to engage in risky behavior; and be more inclined to take advantage of opportunities made available to them. In addition to its educational value, learning music is also a release for stressful emotions that can't otherwise be expressed. Music is particularly effective in today's diverse society because it appeals to youth of any age, gender, race; religion or cultural background; there are no stereotypes associated with who can learn to play.



## Understanding the benefits of a music program

## Why it's important

Youth born into poverty or with limited opportunities are affected both physically and mentally. Without intervention today these youth will become society's burden tomorrow. Our music program teaches discipline, builds self esteem and develops self confidence. Our mentors provide these youth the skills and guidance necessary to overcome the limitations inherent to the environment into which they were born and become successful in life.

We are a community based program because bringing solutions into the communities where our student's reside is the most effective way to create lasting change. Providing programs in communities doesn't just benefit the people who participate in them; it also helps develop a sense of pride and ownership in the community itself.



## Kids with nowhere to go, end up ... going nowhere

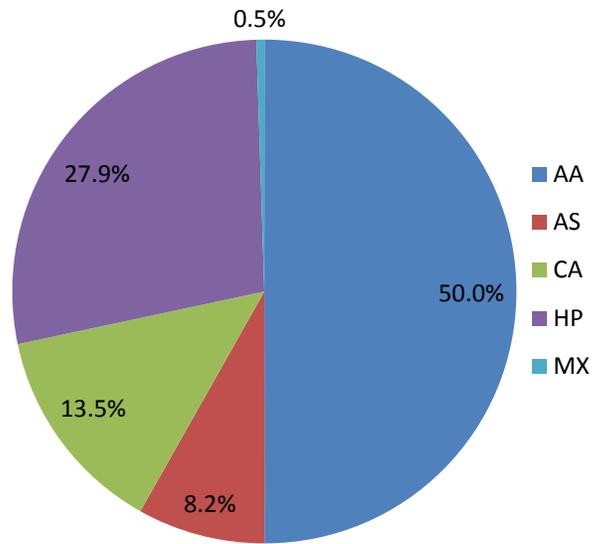
Our staff began volunteering with after school music programs in the metropolitan Washington DC area in 2006; the number served has grown substantially each year since. In 2013 we formed Music for Life; we served 579 youth in 2013. While we continue to improve ourselves, we're most proud of the results we're achieving.

Assimilating the diversity in our society is a major concern and one of the goals of our program. Music embraces our diversity; its appeal easily crosses gender, age, race, national origin, religion and physical attributes boundaries. Our program is attracting that diversity and our students are developing important social skills as they learn together in our diverse classrooms.

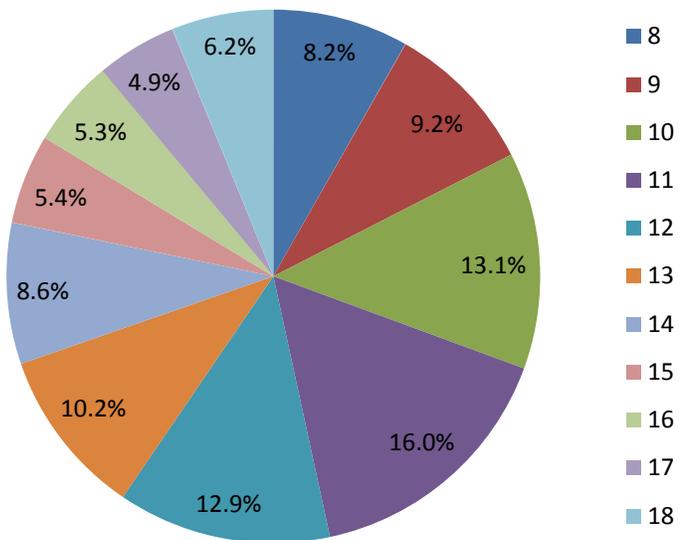
Our racial diversity reflects the low income population distribution in the communities we serve.

Our age diversity is approximately a 50/50 split between middle and high school age students.

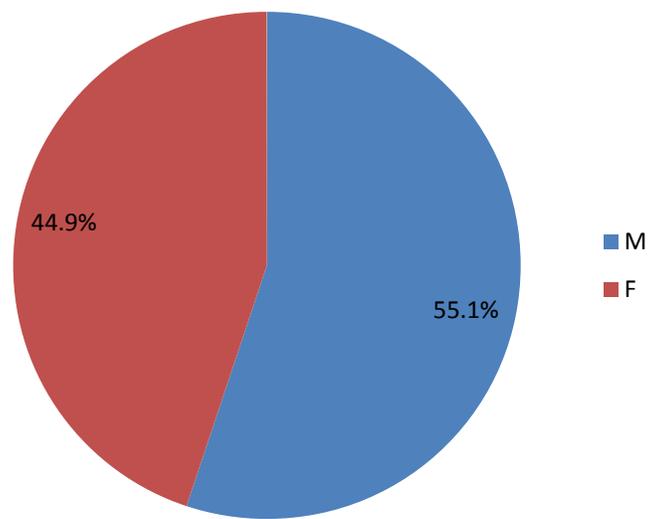
Our gender diversity is slightly more males than females.



**Racial Diversity**



**Age Diversity**



**Gender Diversity**

Building the confidence and self esteem of the youth we serve is a major goal of our program. Research has shown that youth who feel good about themselves and experience success are much more likely to avoid risky behavior, stay in school, make good decisions and succeed in life.



Our students learn the discipline required to play an instrument; they're taught basic guitar skills, basic music theory and how to read music; they experience positive relationship/role-modeling with adults and older youth. These are the disciplines and interpersonal experiences are common to all other academic and work initiatives. These positive experiences improve their academic performance; inspire them to engage in more of the opportunities available to them; and removes those factors that lead them toward participating in risky behaviors.

## Building Confidence



Sustained participation by youth enrolled in our program strengthens their relationships with other youth, especially youth from different ethnic/social/racial backgrounds. Music is enjoyed by everyone and can be performed by anyone regardless of their gender, race, religion, national origin, intellectual accomplishments or physical size. With music serving as the common interest that brought them together, our students engage one another; they learn more about what they have in common; and they gain understanding of their differences.

## Developing Understanding



Parents and teachers often tell us that their child's/student's academic performance has improved as a result of their participation in our program. While music is an art form it is also mathematically based and thus also exercises the part of the brain that is used for math and science; it truly is nutrition for the mind. When children are able to indulge their passion, in our case music, it lifts their spirits and makes it easier for them to focus on other tasks which are important but perhaps less interesting to them.

## Improving Academics

## President's Message



Our rebranding in 2013 did not affect our performance. We continued improving our curriculum and expanding while containing equipment cost per student. In 2013 we introduced Djembe drumming into some classes and we initiated an effort to add electric and bass guitar instruction for advanced students. We also established partnerships with other music organizations wherein we provide them equipment so they can accommodate low income/at-risk students in their programs. The net result was to increase the number of youth served from 280 in 2012 to 579 in 2013.



We continue to move teaching locations as necessary to stay near the youth demographic we serve. By partnering with other organizations versus owning our facilities we have the flexibility to relocate when the demographics in a community change. We are also expanding the demographic we serve to include opportunity youth - 16 to 24 year olds out of school and work - as well as other underserved populations that could benefit from a music program.



In 2013 we initiated the Emily White Guitar Program at Youth for Tomorrow in Prince William County; this expanded partnership permitted them to go from a weekly guitar class to a daily guitar program for all their new students. We provided guitars to Bishop O'Connell High School in Arlington and nine Salvation Army locations in the DC area so they could expand their music programs to include low income youth who did not have instruments. We also donated guitars to the DC nonprofit Hungry for Music for distribution to low income youth with music teachers but no instruments in areas outside of the DC area. We participated in several community events over the year; the Tinner Hill and Columbia Pike Blues Festivals, Del Ray Music Festival, H-Street Festival, Takoma Park Street Fair and Takoma Park Alternative Gift Fair. We are members of United way and participated in the CFC and World Bank Community Connections Campaigns.



The outlook for 2014 and beyond remains challenging. The general consensus is that political wrangling, slow economic growth and tightening school budgets will continue to increase the demand for quality after-school services. Concurrently, there is the expectation that nonprofit funding will not keep pace with that increased demand. We are well positioned and prepared to meet the challenge. The positive benefits of our music program coupled with our cost efficiency make us one of the best investment values for effectively addressing the challenges so many of today's youth face. We will continue to collaborate with Government agencies, other nonprofits and the business community to ensure that our music program addresses as much of the need as possible in a cost efficient and responsible manner.



We are grateful to all of those associated with us. Our volunteers, their dedication and hard work is responsible for our success; and our sponsors and donors, their support makes our program possible. Thank you.



## Overview

From 2006 - 2009 our staff operated as a Guitars not Guns affiliate. In 2010 we incorporated as GnG NCA but continued doing business as Guitars not Guns. In 2013 our affiliation with Guitars not Guns ended; we became the independent non-profit Music for Life.

For comparison, the following is a summary of our staff's financial performance since 2006.

	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
2006 <sup>1</sup>	\$19,318	\$ 8,009
2007 <sup>1</sup>	\$26,514	\$11,853
2008 <sup>1</sup>	\$31,699	\$33,388 <sup>2</sup>
2009 <sup>1</sup>	\$37,385	\$20,286
2010 <sup>3</sup>	\$44,426	\$17,329
2011 <sup>3</sup>	\$47,871	\$25,468
2012 <sup>3</sup>	\$33,026	\$22,024
2013 <sup>3</sup>	\$63,529	\$37,665

<sup>1</sup> Reported in Guitars not Guns finances

<sup>2</sup> Includes \$20,000 Capacity building grant

<sup>3</sup> Reported in GnG NCA finances

## Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2013

Unaudited

Cash	
Unrestricted	\$ 80,966
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 3,038
Pledges Receivable	\$ 500
Grants Receivable	\$ 0
Inventories for Sale	\$ 8,286
Inventories for Use	\$ 37,348
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$130,168</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$130,168</b>

## Revenues & Expenses

Period ended December 31, 2013

Unaudited

### Revenues:

Contributions	\$19,538
Grants	\$19,000
Product Sales	\$ 585
Raffles	\$ 1,662
Federated Campaigns	\$15,580
In-Kind Donations	\$ 7,164

**Total Revenues**

**\$63,529**

### Expenses:

Guitars & Accessories	\$21,173
Training & Teaching Supplies	\$ 3,420
Fed & State Fees	\$ 142
Professional Fees	\$ 4,768
Teacher Insurance	\$ 2,264
Information Technology	\$ 1,437
Advertising & Promotion	\$ 2,652
Office Supplies	\$ 1,809

**Total Expenses**

**\$37,665**

**Change in Net Assets**

**\$25,864**

## Music for Life Board & Advisors

Skip Chaples

*Chairman*

Betsy Stone

*VP/Treasurer*

Gloria Dawson

*Secretary*

Jim Basara  
Vince Blessing  
Cheri Brown  
Frank Darling  
Diane Ditzler  
Irvin Kalugdan  
Glen McCarthy  
Dixie Mitchell

## Income Uses

Program	\$29,357	77.9%	
Administration	\$ 5,656	15.0%	\$4,468 for audit & insurance
Fundraising	\$ 2,652	7.1%	\$1,183 one time rebranding

To ensure long term sustainability Music for Life retains a two year operating expense reserve as a hedge against economic uncertainty.