



*Nutrition for the Mind
and Soul*



2017 Annual Report



PROUD MEMBER OF
United Way
United Way
of the National Capital Area
Member #9319

Music for Life, PO Box 1141, Springfield VA 22151
www.musicforlife.org


Member #40878

President's Message



2017 was significant for us in that we successfully followed through on milestones achieved in 2016. The Fairfax County Consolidate Community Funding Pool option for a second year was exercised; our Band & Orchestra Program operated at four middle schools and one high school; the relational database to store our student and performance measurement data was completed; and the STEM Guitar Program at Mount Vernon High School was completed. The STEM Guitar Program class was filmed and featured in an education segment on ABC. Collectively these achievements made it possible for us to further enhance our programs and better serve our clients.

We are a prevention program serving low income middle and high school age youth. We help them stay on track as they progress through puberty and those difficult teen years. Young children rarely realize the economic and social challenges they'll face growing up in a low income family; that awareness develops during their middle and high school years. Without age appropriate programs to support them through this difficult phase of development much of what they may have gained in early childhood programs can be lost; they can be overwhelmed by their challenges, lose faith in their ability to overcome them, and end up perpetuating the circumstances into which they were born.

We help these low income youth overcome their barriers so they can achieve an independent life style. This means providing them programs they cannot otherwise afford as well as access to opportunities from which they're precluded. We use music to achieve our purpose because of its inherent value and widespread appeal to youth. Our goal is to help disadvantaged youth become successful; if they become musicians in the process that's a bonus.

We continually advocate for music education programs with emphasis on their value as an educational tool. We address two general misconceptions. The first is that music education programs are to promote the arts; the academic and social benefits realized are just by-products. That is why they are usually the first program to be cut when money is an issue. Research shows that the academic and social benefits derived are essential to a youth's development and that music can be a primary source of those benefits. The second is the perception that school music programs are free; that was true in prior years when many of today's adults were in school but not today. Public schools have instituted fees and conditions to participate; most recommend students take private lessons to become proficient. These factors make it cost prohibitive for low income youth to participate and/or do well in the school's programs.

Our 2017 revenue continued the upward trend we've enjoyed since our beginning in 2006. We protect ourselves against revenue swings by maintaining a healthy operating reserve thus ensuring that revenue fluctuations or cash flow issues do not impact our ability to deliver our programs.

Music for Life values those who financially support us; it our foremost obligation to use their support wisely as part of a viable and lasting solution. We continually look for ways to improve our programs and the way in which they are delivered. We are an outspoken advocate for putting more emphasis on prevention. Serving needs and solving problems are separate issues that should not be confused. Programs providing services to people in need are not the same as programs that prevent that person from needing those services; both are necessary. To this end we will continue to actively participate in open dialog about needs and solutions with government, the private sector, the nonprofit community, donors and the people we serve.

Shyly Charles

Year in Review



2017 was another busy year. During the first few months we received continuing grants from Fairfax County, United Way and Kiwanis as well as a first time grant from the D'Addario Foundation. We conducted our first STEM Guitar class in Fairfax County and set up a second class in Manassas. We operated our Band & Orchestra program at four middle schools and one high school. We received a pro-bono grant from Paul Hastings LLC to develop an Employee Handbook for us and started using the performance measurement database program developed for us by Deloitte Consulting.



Our After-School Guitar Program continued to excel throughout our service area in 2017. We continued our partnership with other music organizations wherein we provide them instruments so they can accommodate their low income students. We also facilitated an introduction to music event for NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) at a DC middle school.



We firmly established our Band & Orchestra Program in Fairfax County. Low income youth are increasingly unable to participate in their school's program because of the cost. Our program supports them by providing supplemental lessons and help with fees. We also began approaching schools in Arlington, Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties.



Twenty-eight students participated in our first STEM Guitar Program at Mount Vernon High School in Fairfax County. The program was included in their a STEM Design class. Students learned the math and physics associated with the design and operation of an electric guitar. They then built their own instrument. We are continuing our dialog with other schools in Fairfax County as well as in Arlington and Prince William Counties.



Engaging the nonprofit community and developing relationships with professional organizations in the field continued as an essential aspect of our success. Through our membership in United Way and collaboration with other Government and nonprofit organizations we stay current on regional needs; gain valuable training on best practices; build relationships with partnering organizations; and find volunteers and sponsors. Through our relationships with national/international organizations like NAMM, GAMA and NAFME (National Association for Music Educators) we have access to their membership's expertise and support which we use to improve our curriculum and grow our program.





Providing Opportunity

Who we are

Music for Life serves Washington DC and the neighboring counties in Virginia and Maryland. We provide music education and mentoring program for youth living under adverse circumstances - poverty, dysfunctional families and challenged neighborhoods. Studies show that those with limited means are less likely to succeed; they have fewer opportunities; family and friends have limited ability to support them. Yet the fastest growing segment of our population is youth in poverty; the school dropout rate for these youth, particularly minorities is high. We believe every child should have equal opportunity to succeed; we help them by leveling the playing field.

What we do

Music for Life provides free music education programs to youth, and some adults, who otherwise cannot afford them. Music is particularly effective in our diverse society because it appeals to any age, gender, race, religion or cultural background; there are no stereotypes associated with who can learn to play. Research shows a strong correlation between music education and a person's success in life. Those involved in quality programs tend to do better in school; score higher on standardized tests; be less inclined to engage in risky behavior; and be more socially adept. Learning music is also a release for stressful emotions that can't otherwise be expressed. We also provide career and life mentoring by giving them access to experienced, successful adults who can share their perspective.



Understanding the benefits of a music program



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

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 education programs teach discipline, build self esteem, develop self confidence and social skills. 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 community based; bringing quality programs into the communities where our student's reside is the most effective way to improve the community and reduce risky behavior. We provide students, their family and friends something tangible in their community around which they can develop a sense of pride and ownership.

Building confidence, self esteem and social skills in 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.



Building Confidence

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 disciplines and interpersonal experiences common to any academic or career path one may choose. These positive experiences improve their academic performance; inspire them to engage in the opportunities available to them; and removes those barriers that lead them toward participating in risky behaviors.



Developing Understanding

Sustained participation in our program strengthens our student's relationships with other youth, especially those from different ethnic, social or 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.



Improving Academics

Parents and teachers tell us that their child's/student's academic performance has improved as a result of their participation in our programs. 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.

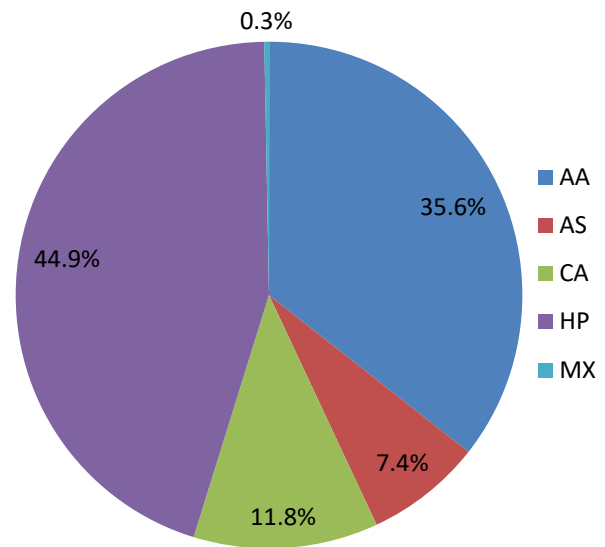
We began volunteering with after school music programs in the metropolitan Washington DC area in 2006; the number served has grown substantially each year since. We incorporated in 2010 and became Music for Life in 2013. We strive to improve ourselves each year and are most proud of the results we're achieving.

Assimilating the diversity in our society is a major challenge 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 classrooms.

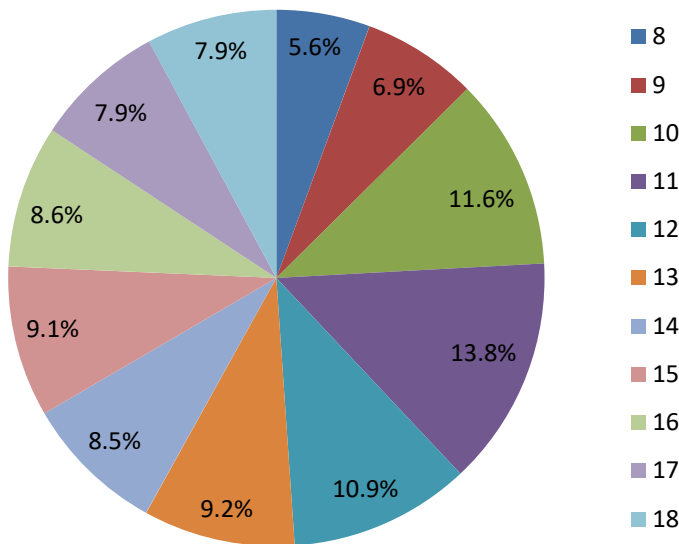
Our racial diversity reflects the low income population distribution in the communities we serve. The percentage of Hispanic youth served continues to increase.

Our age diversity is approximately a 40/60 split between middle and high school age students. The percentage of high school youth served continues to increase.

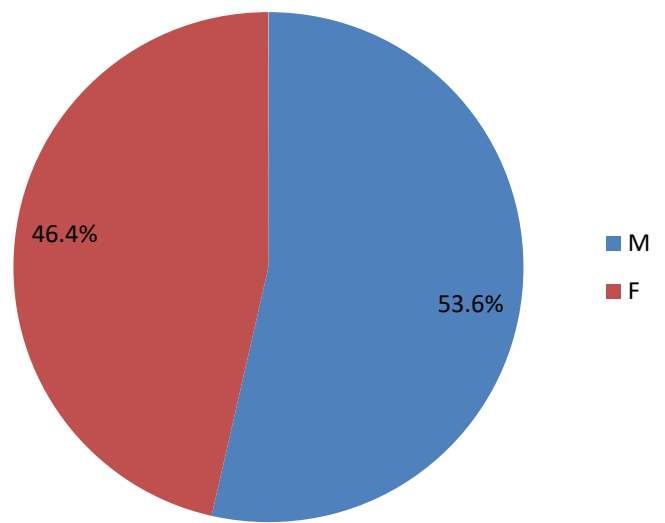
Our gender diversity is slightly more males than females.



Racial Diversity



Age Diversity



Gender Diversity

Overview

Prior year financial data, audit reports and Annual Reports are posted on our website. Annual audits are usually completed by September of the following year.

Following is a summary of our recent financial performance.

	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
2012	\$ 33,026	\$ 22,024
2013	\$ 63,529	\$ 37,665
2014	\$ 81,113	\$ 27,340
2015	\$ 37,923	\$ 23,390
2016	\$206,625	\$176,347
2017	\$162,187	\$159,241

Revenue & Expense Notes

Revenue decline from 2016 to 2017 reflects decline in In-Kind Donations.

Expenses for guitars & accessories and teaching supplies includes the addition of the STEM Guitar Program.

Expenses for Salary & Wages reflects the hire of our first full time employee effective August 1, 2016.

Revenue from Contributions and Federated Campaigns continued to rise; all other revenue and expense categories are in line with prior years.

Music for Life Officers & Board

Skip Chaples
President
Richard Weinberg
Treasurer
Cheri Brown
Secretary

Jim Basara
Vince Blessing
Frank Darling
Diane Ditzler
Irvin Kalugdan
Glen McCarthy
Dixie Mitchell
Curtis Schehr

Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2017

Unaudited

Cash	
Unrestricted	\$152,501
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 17,863
Pledges Receivable	\$ 2,071
Grants Receivable	\$ 17,852
Inventories for Sale	\$ 8,422
Inventories for Use	\$ 34,579
Total Assets	\$233,288
Total Liabilities	\$ 7,497
Net Assets	\$225,791

Revenues & Expenses

Period ended December 31, 2017

Unaudited

Revenues:

Contributions	\$ 34,702
Released from restriction	\$ 51,603
Product Sales	\$ 485
Raffles	\$ 902
Federated Campaigns	\$ 17,936
In-Kind Donations	\$ 56,559

Total Revenues \$162,187

Expenses:

Guitars & Accessories	\$ 11,887
Training & Teaching Supplies	\$ 6,153
Salary & Wages	\$ 55,651
Occupancy	\$ 4,097
Fed & State Fees	\$ 425
Professional Fees	\$ 73,138
Teacher Insurance	\$ 3,018
Information Technology	\$ 433
Advertising & Promotion	\$ 2,869
Office Supplies	\$ 1,570

Total Expenses \$159,241

Change in Net Assets \$ 2,946

Income Uses

Program	\$150,957	94.8%
Administration	\$ 5,115	3.2%
Fundraising	\$ 3,169	2.0%

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