

Parents as Partners Highlights – January 30, 2011

Here are some highlights of the Parents as Partners Videos. Check these out at least. Mary

Ed Sprunger, 1/27 – It is OK to Struggle Together

Ed Sprunger is a violin teacher trainer from St. Louis. He opens his very professional video with pictures of his home studio. He takes his dog out for a walk and encounters a woman walking her cute little dog. He and his dog step to the side to let her pass and his dog sits obediently. She tells her own dog that he is very bad because he doesn't obey like Ed's dog. Ed make the point that this woman thinks his dog is good and well behaved naturally because she doesn't know the hours he has spent carefully training his dog. It looks like magic to her when it is really hard work that has paid off. Children see the world this way also. They want accomplishments by wishing and magic, and don't see the hard work necessary for success. There is gratification in getting things by your own effort.

Children do have a magical world in some sense. Their parents take care of them and feed them. They don't have to work for it. As babies, crying is what initiates the process. Later, they revert to the crying stage when things get tough since that has worked in the past. They are trying to manage their environment as they know how.

Every child and parent encounters struggle in the process of learning. Younger children with less experience get frustrated easier. They don't understand the pleasure that comes from working for something. Parents need to break tasks into small steps. They need to play games to manage drudgery. They must wait for the skills to grow through practicing and repeating the steps.

Parents get frustrated as well. Parents get anxious and want to stop lessons because they are looking for a magical child that learns without any problem. They are also looking for a magical solution of just the right words or games to make everything easy. Sometimes the child is left to struggle alone. Here are some questions to ask to transform worry into solutions:

- a. Have we gone in small enough steps ? Have we done too much too soon? It is like trying to shove a whole apple into your child's mouth without taking bites or cutting it up.
- b. Have we worked with the child to get him to try his best every moment and repeat the skills with full effort?
- c. Have we done enough review? Parents often want the child to be challenged at every step, but the child will be challenged enough if he is mastering every skill.
- d. Success takes struggle and work. It is OK to struggle as long as the parent and child are struggling together. Acknowledge the struggle and work. Say, "I can see how hard this is for you." "I am sorry that I don't have a magic wand to make this easy."

e. Give the child choices: “Do you want to come back later?” (Then, do return later) “Do you want to play this 4 times or 6 times.” You get into dangerous territory if you start to negotiate and agree to 2 playings when it needs 6 playings.

f. Offer reflections about success, but not necessarily while the child is struggling. “Remember when you couldn’t do this?” “Wow, how did this become so easy?” Have a 30 second discussion about how it got easier because the child practiced it.

g. Offer cheerleading such as, “Hey, this is really coming along. You are almost there!”

h. If something doesn’t go well, say, “That didn’t turn out the way you wanted it to, but that is part of learning.” “The way you are going is right on target.”

i. Praise is wonderful, but is like sunshine. Too much is overwhelming.

j. Stickers, money, candy don’t address the struggle. When you pay for practice the parent has purchased playing. Ed doesn’t recommend it.

k. Sometimes you need to drop the particular struggle and give it to the teacher who doesn’t have the same parent-child relationship with the child. The child sometimes feels he has lost a parent and gained a violin teacher for a parent.

l. You can’t practice for the child. Struggle together and work through to success and achievement.

Ed tells the story of a rat who, when placed in a pool of water struggles for about 20 minutes, gives up and drowns. If the rat is rescued after 10 minutes and allowed to rest, the next time he is placed in the pool, he will struggle much longer because he now has hope. We want to give children hope and let them see how they will accomplish great things by continuing to work hard.

Susan Baer is a free-lance violinist and violin teacher. She currently divides her time between Lubbock, Texas, and Whidbey Island, Washington. In her four decades of experience with the Suzuki method, Susan has run a thriving private studio, co-founded a Suzuki school, organized workshops, taught in a long-term training program, and served on the Board of Directors of her local foundation. Susan is in high demand as a Suzuki clinician and registered SAA violin teacher trainer. She has served as area coordinator for four SAA conferences, has been published in the SAA journal, and is currently serving on the SAA Board of Directors. Dr. Baer holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree, a Master of Music degree in violin performance, and a Ph.D. in Fine Arts.

Children learn music like they learn language. They repeat words over and over to master them. Ability = knowledge + 10,000 repetitions. After completing mastery we can use the skills in context. Repeating a skill wraps the connections in the brain with myelin. The more we repeat, the better the connection.

1. Devise small practice units. They may not sound like the piece. Work on one problem at a time like the correct intonation, bowing, or string crossings.
2. Assess the quality of the repetitions with yes or no answers. Give the child responsibility to evaluate the quality.
3. Practice in a fun manner:
 - a. Roll dice – the number of dots is the number of repetitions to do
 - b. Draw numbers from a deck of cards for repetitions. You can manage the numbers on the cards.
 - c. Use cups and marbles. Transfer marbles from one cup to the other when your get “yes” for an answer. Try to fill the cup.

We are what we do repeatedly (Aristotle).

Susan Baer – Talent (not something we are born with!) - 1/27 - Books recommended by Susan Baer:

Recent Publications on Talent

Colvin, Geoff. *Talent is Overrated: What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else*. New York: Penguin, 2008.

Deliberate practice works. We need a challenge to get better. Repeat segments. We need feedback. Repetition may not always be fun, but it improves memory and creativity.

Coyle, Daniel. *The Talent Code: Greatness isn't Born. It's Grown. Here's How*. New York: Bantam, 2009.

If you do deep practice, it take 10,000 hours to master a skill. At 3 hours a day, this is 10 years. Each time we perform a task it reinforces the layers of myelin in the brain. Break skills into chunks. Play

many thoughtful repetitions. Continually stretch to reach beyond your ability. Everyone needs an ignition or person or event that stokes the activity and causes passion.

Dweck, Carol S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House, 2006.

If we believe in a fixed mindset, we believe that our talents and abilities are set in stone at birth. If we believe in a growth mindset, we believe that great abilities develop over time.

Dweck, Carol S. "Caution: Praise Can Be Dangerous." *American Educator: Spring 1999*.
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/cali/praisespring99.pdf

Making mistakes is a part of learning.

Gardner, Howard. *Five Minds for the Future*. Boston: Harvard Business School, 2006.

1. Disciplined mind – Become an expert in 1 discipline and put in your 10,000 hours.
2. Synthesizing Mind – So much information comes to us that we need to make sense of it all.
3. Creating Mind – Come up with original ideas or put together existing ideas in new ways.
4. Respectful Mind – Respect various cultures and differences in people
5. Ethical Mind – Think beyond yourself and toward the greater good. Develop personal values.

The Suzuki Method develops all these minds and teaches us to be leaders.

Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New York: Little, Brown, 2008.

Examines the lives of outstanding people.

Levitin, Daniel J. *This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession*. New York: Penguin, 2006.

Many parts of the brain are used in making music: aural, visual, kinesthetic, cognitive operations.

Pink, Daniel H. *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*. New York: Penguin, 2009.

A drive to live a life of purpose is more important than the biological drives. This is an intrinsic drive that is not helped by exterior motivators. Suggestions in developing this drive:

1. Give kids some degree of autonomy over how and when they practice.
2. Assign tasks that promote mastery by making them novel and engaging.
3. Make sure kids understand the purpose of tasks and know how it is relevant to the larger goal.
4. Ask kids for feedback on their own progress
5. Give kids an allowance and some chores, but don't combine them.

6. Offer praise for effort and strategy, but not for intelligence.
7. Make praise specific. Offer it in private and only when it is deserved.

Syed, Matthew. *Bounce: Mozart, Federer, Picasso, Beckham, and the Science of Success*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.

The psychology of performance success depends on 1. Deep breathing, 2. Self talk, 3. Inner faith. Prepare as if your performance means everything and play as if it means nothing.

Tharp, Twyla. *The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

Twyla is a Choreographer.

1. Over time discipline and hard work become a habit if they are exercised daily.
2. Destiny is a determined parent.
3. Who you are now and who you will be in 5 years depends on which books you read and which people you meet.

Tip: Peruse any of these books by going to <http://books.google.com>. Type the title of the book in the Search box.

1/31 – Lucy Shaw – Are We Having Fun Yet?

How to make home practices productive and fun:

1. Replicating the lessons and assignments. Be sure to know and understand what was done in the lesson. Take notes, but that may not be enough. Ask to try it out at the lesson so the child and parent can see what it feels like to do it at home. Use a movie camera and video the whole or portion of a lesson. This clarifies what is to be done so you can practice efficiently and the assignment is from the teacher, not the parent.
2. Learn how to communicate in a non-verbal way. An example of non-verbal communication is the Nike swoosh with the words “Just do it” beneath. People don’t like to be told that to do. Students can make themselves their own “Nike sign” to remind them of some “umbrella item” such as a bent thumb. Encourage students to think for themselves.
3. Use a deck of cards. Have numbers and colors. Can lay down a card every time the students plays something well, every a note rings in a tonalization, if the bow is straight, if the child’s eyes are on the bow etc. Can use cards A – 3 for each section of the piece. Pull out a card and the child plays that section. There will be 4 repetitions with the 4 suites. On longer pieces, use a card for each section. Put out cards A – 10 for dynamic levels. Put out cards A – 5 for “lanes” between the bridge and fingerboard to play in.

- 4 Ring a bell – Ring it if there is a problem. Let the child ring it if there is no problem.
5. Use pictures of Happy Face for something done well.
6. Use a stuffed animal to inspect the bow hand or position on the instrument.
7. The Value of Serendipity: The Parent is not making all the decisions on what is to be practiced. The child feels he has control over the practice. Use a plastic bag with phrased of what is to be practiced. Choose things from the bag such as ringing tone, bent thumb, tall back, highway, dynamics, articulation, vibrato, etc. For review, pick the name of review pieces out of the bag
8. Steps across the floor: For each good repetition, move forward across the floor one step. If both parent and child agree there was a problem, the child goes back 1 step. If there is disagreement, he stays put.
9. The parent has to do something for each good repetition such as 5 “crunches”. Can be anything.

2/3 – Kathy Lee - Why tone? – Tone heightens listening. Once this awareness is established, the student is ready to learn. We can use tone to teach all other aspects of the music. Tone is the reflection of the artist’s character.

2/3 Patty Erusha – Why Suzuki? – The method is very time consuming and expensive, but the payoff is great. It is a gift of music when the children are in the “sponge stage”. It breaks everything into small steps. It builds beautiful hearts, discipline, and perseverance and makes confident learners. It carries over into giving speeches and sports. Children build good friendships. The Suzuki Triangle is built on loving, positive encouragements.

2/3 Jennifer Burton & Nancy Jackson – Making Playing Easier

In Suzuki, we “Work hard to make it easier”. Suzuki teachings that are reflected in the books Outliers and Talent Code :

1. All children have talent
2. All children can achieve success.
3. Ability = knowledge + 10,000 repetitions
4. Review of previous material makes things stick like tree rings make a tree grow.
5. Success breeds success
6. Never hurry, never rest
7. Parental support is paramount

These ideas come from the Asian rice paddy culture where farmers work very hard all year long, not just seasonally.

Make Goal Cards – Fill out things you want to achieve in the next 3 months. Only 1 can be a piece. Ideas can be 1. Play with a straight bow; 2. Play with a ringing tone; 3. Master a 12 note per bow scale at 50 on the metronome.

Do Deep practice – This stimulates the myelin in the student's brain. 1. Seek out a struggle and break it into chunks. 2. Slow it down. 3. Repeat it. 4. Learn to feel it. 5. Crank up the tempo gradually on the metronome until the student can play it fast.

2/4 Edward Keitman – Listening

The traditional student has music outside himself on the paper. The Suzuki student has music inside from listening so much.

Different kinds of listening:

1. Passive listening – the music is in the background: You absorb tone and intonation. You should be able to sing the piece.
2. Parallel listening – Listening to future pieces such as Book 4 pieces while in Book 1 and other music. It can all be helpful, except Rap music which doesn't have tonality.
3. Active listening – Targeted listening to hear 1 aspect of the music such as slurs, form, repeats, articulation

Listening skills include

1. Being able to hear if the note is the same or different
2. When the notes are different, is the 2nd note higher or lower?
3. Understanding the logic of the instrument. On the piano, the higher notes are to the right, the lower notes are to the left. Strings are not so intuitive since we are crossing strings to get to higher notes.
4. Internalize the song
5. When these things are accomplished, the parent can give the students the freedom to use trial and error to explore the songs. After supervising review and preparatory exercises, let them explore playing the new piece (after starting them on the right note). Don't spoon-feed them the notes. Let them discover the notes.

The Listening loop: Get the concept in the brain, the actions in the body, analyze the sounds and adjust

2/7 Rebecca Martin (teacher), Cat Bendel, Jennifer Blakenship, Julie Stibbards (parents) - The Suzuki Triangle

This is a discussion between a teacher and some of the parents in her studio about things that were successful for them:

1. Consistency of Practice – Do it first thing in the morning if possible, or first thing after school, or first thing on weekends. After school, have a snack first.
2. Plateaus – What to do
 - a. Institutes are very inspirational. Students make good friends at Institutes.
 - b. Try pennies and dimes for motivation.
 - c. Give the child the power to run his own practice and own the process
 - d. Make lessons a special time for the child to be with the parent
 - e. Pick the name of songs from one jar and put them in another jar after playing
 - f. Use a sticker chart showing 100 days of practice. Go out for ice cream or bake a cake to celebrate when complete it.

These things aren't bribery, they are rewards for hard work. One parent gave her daughter "Vera the Mouse" books when she had finished a piece. Another idea is having a friend over to spend the night.

- g. Verbal rewards are good as well. See what the child does well and compliment them. This is an incentive. Make practice a happy time.

Judy Bossaut – Why not the Next Piece?

Judy has been a Violin Teacher Trainer for over 30 years. She helped start the Suzuki program in France and has taught in over 15 countries. Now lives in Texas.

1. Listen to the literature so you will learn it.
2. Review old pieces so you will improve the quality of the pieces
3. Parental involvement is very important for young children. Parental support is crucial for everyone.
4. Concentrate on one point at a time. This puts the skill in the "Default Memory" of the child and makes it permanent.
- 5. Listen daily; review daily; work on technique daily; reading readiness daily; work a little on the new piece. The other things are more important.**
6. Practice regularly and stop before a melt down. Finish on a high note.
7. Don't overwhelm the child with ½ done things. Figure out how to keep the child interested.

8. Sometimes it is important to move forward, but sometimes you can't move forward until the old things are mastered. Gauge the situation. We don't want the child to lose his enthusiasm.

9. Keep enthusiasm with previews of new piece. This makes learning the new piece easy. It is all about balance. Do your best at all times.

2/7 – Marilyn Kessler – The Value of Group Lessons

From the teachers perspective: group lesson help review to happen, helps students improve their playing and scaffold their learning, allows them to hear pieces at various levels, and exposes students to more advanced pieces.

From the parent's perspective: group lessons allow young children to see where they are going, and allow older students to give back and teach younger students. They reinforce learning, and allow kids to have fun together. They introduce new ideas in a safe way. Performance is not a big deal after spending time in group lessons.

2/7 Mark Bjork – Review, Revise, Refresh, Recycle and More

Review is often ignored, along with listening and tonalization, but is very important.

Review is the cement that holds the foundation together and gives confidence in playing.

Review is the difference between learning German in high school and never using it, and becoming fluent in the language. Fluency comes from repetition and review.

Review allows for future progress: you learn faster if you have a good foundation; after the notes are learned you can refine and use the language of music.

Refine and polish pieces to higher levels through self-evaluation.

Rules out mindless repetition, but even that is useful.

Retain – You develop a growing repertoire and develop a work habit.

Recover and recall previous pieces – It is very difficult and demoralizing to have to relearn an old piece that hasn't been reviewed constantly.

Revise: In Australia, teachers talk about "revising" instead of "reviewing".

Pieces in the repertoire are based on previous material: Recall and refurbish as preparation for new pieces

Recycle old pieces into new pieces

Reevaluate: Like a rat in a maze, you can go faster and faster if you do the maze over and over.

Review: Make it a habit that starts at the beginning

How to Review:

Book 1 – play everything in the book each day and at the lesson

Book 2 – play ½ Book 1 and ½ Book 2 every day

Book 3 – Play ½ Book 1, ½ Book 2, and ½ Book 3 every day

At Group – Do review every time. You can simply play through the pieces for fun

Have choices, but control choices. Always end a lesson or practice with a pleasant thing.

2/10 Carrie Reuning Hummel – Practice Talk

Carrie has been on all sides of the Suzuki Triangle and student, teacher and parent.

Student: Carrie's parents were Suzuki teachers and heard the Suzuki tour group in 1964 when they came to the US. They decided to start Carrie on violin at age 5. They did not know how to implement the program, so Carrie was the experiment. When Dr. Suzuki came to the US, Carrie was the student on the stage. He made her feel at home and comfortable. He saw her as the person she was. She played in David Einfeld's orchestra as a teen and felt he also valued her as a person. She went to Japan to study at age 15.

Teacher: After returning from Japan, Carrie began teaching Suzuki violin. She became a Teacher Trainer in her 20's.

Parent: Being a parent was the most difficult side of the Suzuki Triangle. She wanted to see her daughter as she really was. This was more difficult than being a teacher. We may have extra baggage as a parent and may crumble under the burden.

How can we be the best help for our kids?

1. See yourself as you are. Don't try to live through them. See your kid's gifts (passions) and talents (what they are good at).
2. Look at the temperaments of your child and yourself. If your child is intense and not adaptable, try to defuse that intensity. Turn away. Stay across the room. Each child is different and responds differently.
3. Each child is motivated by different things. Some children don't need external reasons to practice. Some do.
4. Be a support and foundation for your child. Be detached enough so your child can feel that their instrument is their own. The parent is a practice partner, not a home teacher. The child only needs one teacher. Let the child carry the instrument, rosin the bow, get ready on their own. Ask them what they need from you today. Ask question in a framework such as, "Do you need 10 or 15 times to play this well?" Ask, don't tell them to do things. Say, "Why don't you stop when it doesn't sound scratchy."

5. Try a “Practice tray” containing things that give the child choices
 - a. multi-sided dice
 - b. color swatches from a paint store to use to play a song like a color. Let the parent guess what color you are playing the song like.
 - c. texture swatches like velvet, corduroy, sandpaper.
 - d. jars containing pieces of paper listing creative ways to play such as “Stand on one foot,” “Play too fast”, “Play too slow”. A third jar can contain names of review pieces to play.
 - e. Cards from Apples to Apples game with adjectives like “fuzzy”, “melodramatic”
 - f. metronome to use to speed up or slow down a piece

We only have one job as parents: See the child as he or she is. Give them the journey of their instrument. Be there as a practice partner. A small succession of small steps leads to something huge.

2/10 Kathy Rawlings – Passages, A Candid Look at Suzuki Family Transitions

Kathy Rawlings is a Methodist Minister and Suzuki Violin Teacher. She attended her first Suzuki Institute completely unprepared. She came away respectful of the stages of learning and the Rites that students pass through. These Rites are cause for celebration. Rites are Goals in motion.

Preadolescence: Children are really disorganized with rapid and uneven growth. They try to meet the expectations of parents and friends. They should be treated with warmth and a sense of humor.

Middle Adolescence: Young people go ballistic over friends or pounds. They need to be treated with a counselor to help them learn to take charge of their lives.

Late Adolescence: Young people are facing important decisions about leaving home and impending independence. They need a sympathetic ear to figure out their futures.

In the Beginning: All sides of the Suzuki Triangle have expectations –

1. The child expects to have fun
2. The parent expects the child to do well
3. The Teacher expects to have a long and fulfilling relationship with the family

All sides can be frustrated with the experience. Children like to do well. They need recognition for a job well done, or at least the effort put in. When the parent or teacher expects perfection and is not able to accept less, this is the recipe for disaster. Lift up something that is good every day. Appreciate the journey, not the destination. How the child feels about himself is the important part. Give love and receive love.

Parents as Partners 3 Summary February 22, 2011

2/14 Teri Einfeldt – The Changing Face of the Parent: Teri has been teaching 38 years and is the current President of Suzuki Association of the Americas.

There is a direct correlation between parent education and success of a Suzuki Student. The Suzuki triangle is all important.

Teachers have a clear picture of the student as a future musician with good posture, tone, articulation, keeping a steady pulse and rhythm, and with good musicianship. Teachers need to share this personal picture of excellence with the parents. Both parents and teachers need to feel supported. Parents need to be able to share the detours they face in life.

The role of the parent is ever changing. That role is like the steps to riding a bicycle:

1. Tricycle stage: the child is supported by the Suzuki Triangle
2. Training wheel stage: The child gains some independence
3. The two wheeler stage: The parent runs behind, then lets go when the child is ready.

Parent Responsibilities at the various stages:

1. Tricycle stage:
 - a. In the Lesson: The parent needs to sit close and be involved, take notes, record the lesson in video, clarify questions, understand physical expectations, remain silent unless they have a positive input that is modeled after the teacher. More than 1 teacher at a time is very confusing for the child.
 - b. At Home: The parent should play the CD many times a day, be able to sing the pieces along with the child because she shows them so well, organize notes, spend the majority of time on review, tune the instrument, insist on working in sections of the piece, provide motivation for practice, point out small successes, play other classical music, give the child an opportunity to play for other people.
 - c. Other: The parent should read articles in the Suzuki Journal, organize Suzuki parent clubs, have an extra set of strings for the instrument, have multiple copies of the CD, seek out older students for babysitters and practice partners, sign up for workshops and institutes and give the child opportunities for motivation.
2. Training wheel stage (Book 4 level):
 - a. In the Lesson: The parent should sit close enough to be actively involved, have an additional copy of the music to mark spots for practice, remain silent unless they have positive comments.

b. At Home: The parent should help tune, play the CD and remind the child to listen, schedule practice, make sure the child reviews and does note reading (can be done without supervision), help with the new piece.

c. Other: The parent should be sure the child has a good instrument, lengthen the lesson time, provide additional music for listening, provide opportunities for the child to make friends and new experiences with music.

3. Two Wheeler Stage: a. At the Lesson: Ask the child if he wants you there. Parents are a great resource for note taking and making audio recording of the lesson.

b. At Home: The parent should still schedule practices, listen to the music the student is working on, listen to other classical music, talk about the lesson.

c. Other: The parent should meet deadlines and requirements for audition and camps, provide supplementary material that the teacher has requested (other books), encourage teens to be practice buddies, organize field trips the social outlets having to do with music, upgrade instruments.

Children should continue lessons through high school so they can use their music in college and life for their own enjoyment.

Success: Each child will understand the meaning of accomplishing goals, will have a vision of what he is capable of doing well, will be proud of his accomplishments, and will enjoy playing his instrument. Playing an instrument well promotes self-confidence and self-pride and leads to goal setting, problem solving, being able to work in a group and individually. He will have a beautiful heart and appreciation of the arts.

2/17 James Hutchins – 7 Guarantees for More Progress during Practice/ New Year's Resolutions

1. The Work Out: Pick one idea to work on such as intonation, posture, straight wrist, tone, vibrato etc. Set a time frame from 3 minutes to 15 minutes. For example, start with Twinkle Variations and play with excellent intonation through each Variation. If there is a problem, student or parent can stop the play and go back and make it right. If that piece is OK, go to the next one until all are played right up to the current piece. Stop at the end of the time frame and resume the next day with the same skill until the student has played all the pieces up to the current piece.

2. State Goals and Why: Let the student know why he is playing this piece, for example, "The reason we are playing this piece is to make your tone bigger so the people in the back of the auditorium can hear you."

3. Before practice, be sure to get the Busy Work out of the way. For instance, bathroom breaks, snacks etc. You will build a bond with your child. Discuss what you will do after practice,

before beginning. Don't spend time during practice on these things. Most kids are freshest in the morning or right after a snack after school.

4. Make it fun: a. Practice in different locations like bathrooms, bedrooms, outside etc. b. Put a piece in a puzzle when a certain number of pieces are played. c. Light a candle and blow it out at the end. d. Attend group lessons, e. Use Practice partners. f. Play the penny game – get a penny for each 3 pieces you play well. g. Ask other parents for suggestions.

5. Review – Every technique in Suzuki builds on a previous technique.

6. iPod theory – Each performance goes into the iPod of your brain. Listen to the correct ones, not the incorrect ones.

7. Practice makes permanent. Step forward for each correct playing, step backward for each incorrect playing. Try to get across the room.

2/17 Margaret Ferry – Balancing Busy Schedules – A mom of 7 Suzuki Students tells of 25 years of balancing their schedules

1. Find the most qualified teacher

2. Be organized and make sure your own schedule is manageable

3. Build a practice routine before or after school. May be different each day, but you need a plan. Every day adds up. Don't answer the phone. Give the child responsibility for certain spots in the piece to work on by himself and then report to you.

4. Only allow 1 other sport or outside activity per child so practicing can get done.

5. Create a musical community that will encourage the child. Make musical friends.

6. Praise the child's efforts daily

7. Respect other people's schedules in the family. Don't schedule things during meal times. Don't let the schedule be a burden.

8. Be realistic. Not every child will be a professional.

9. Learn to say "no" when you are asked to do things outside the family.

10. This is a precious opportunity to bond with your child.

2.21 Patricia Purcell – Why Classical Music?

Music enhances life. Celebrations are full of music. Movies use music. Primal emotions are at the center of music. Music is at the center of our beliefs and values. Classical music transcends

time, space and events. It is a community and consolation. Musical training changes the brain. It connects us to the human spirit.

2/21 Gail Lange Should I be Surprised? Each child learned many things in music lessons.

2/21 Teri Einfeldt – Time with Teri – Discussion of common problems from parents and teachers.

2/24 Carey Beth Hockett – cellist – Making Practice More Effective and More Fun

See www.corkybird.com for ideas

Instructions should be tailored to each student. Needs to know when he if finished with a practice.

1. Develop a system for recording the instructions on the music itself
2. Use technology to make learning easier: Record on a digital camera or smart phone
3. Keep track of repetitions in a way that helps everybody stay alert and engaged such a 100's Spiral, beads on a skewer, or build a tower of blocks.

2/24 William Star (one of the fathers of American Suzuki Method), Emily Anne Bowman (teacher for 30 years), Stacey Brady (parent of 3 and teacher), Amy Gesmer-Packman (13 year teacher).

- a. Engage young students by asking questions: Is your bow inside the bow tapes? What did you notice? Tell me if your finger is on the tape.
- b. Ask, "How is your practice going at home?" The parent can let students review pieces on their own, then ask "Did you work on dynamics?" A student needs a hands-on parent for a long time.
- c. Giving the child choices within structure helps him gain independence. "which Twinkle Variation do you want to start with?"
- d. Suggest to the students, "Tell your arm what to do."
- e. Have student correct something by having them push against your finger. Don't move them, have them move against you.
- f. Reward by responding positively
- g. Students gain ownership by having structure in their practice. The students need to know they should do all the parts of the practice even if the teacher doesn't always hear the scales.

h. The Middle School Child is resistant to the parent. Parent may need occasionally to step out of the lesson.

i. Have the student make a video of the piece at home.

j. Becoming more independent in practice transfers to everything in life.

1/24 Suzuki Memories: Diane Slone. Diane was a child growing up with Dr Suzuki as a teacher in Japan and at the U of Wisconsin in Madison. Dr Suzuki taught her as a child, an adolescent, a college student, and young teacher.

Dr. Suzuki was an open spirit and connected heart to heart. She always felt Dr Suzuki really knew her. She didn't feel he aged at all, even though he did. She felt Nurtured by Love.

He made sure everyone was balanced by having them stand on a foot chart, then jump and try to land just right on the chart.

Diane could tell from his face when the lemonade was just right and the playing was just right.

Dr Suzuki would get up at 3 am every day to work for 6 hours before beginning lessons at 9 am.

2/24 Elizabeth Stuen-Walker: Teacher Appreciation

What can parents do to help the teacher? Trust and respect them. The teacher trusts the parents to know their child best.

Parents can be prepared and make sure the child learns the new material, reviews the old material, is rested and ready for the lesson.

The door of communication should be open. Ask questions at the lesson.

2/21 Charles Krigbaum and Meg Lanfear – Oak Park School

www.oakparksuzukischool.com

Observation Week – the students and parents come and watch another lesson and fill out a Fantastic Treasure Hunt Survey as they observe. Tally Questions on the Survey:

1. How many times does the teacher say “Eyes on the bow”
2. How many times does she draw attention to the bow silently

3. How many times does she ask for a clear sound
4. How many times does the parent write in the Suzuki notebook
5. How many times does the teacher say “No”

It is not just your child who has these problems