



Changing Lives, One Song at a Time

# Symphony

Since 1989

## Maya's Music Therapy Fund Newsletter Spring/Summer 2025



### Maya's Update

Greetings, Friends. It's been a great year at Maya's so far. We had a wonderful and well-attended Spring Festival at the Ed Roberts Campus in Berkeley in March and are looking forward to our annual Garden Party on Saturday, September 20. Save the date!

I am pleased to report that Maya's attracts Mayas. Please join me in welcoming our newest board member Maya Maravilla, joining Maya Schollum who became a board member last year. As many of you know, Maya's has no paid staff, aside from our wonderful music therapists, so members of the Board of Directors fill the administrative and financial roles required in a small non-profit like ours on a volunteer basis.

On that theme I would like to thank Joanna Smith, who recently left the board, for the amazing job she did over the past two years as Executive Director, putting in long hours to help bring a new level of professionalism to Maya's operations. Thank you, Joanna, for a job well done!

We are consistently amazed by the support our community brings us. It has allowed us to provide continuous services to all of our clients, with all programs flourishing and allowing more to join. Thank you for helping Maya's to thrive. I look forward to celebrating with you the successes of Maya's via the accomplishments of our clients, which you can read about in this newsletter.

With gratitude,  
Joanna Cooper, Board Chair

### Our Values

Our mission is that Maya's Music Therapy Fund unlocks the potential and enriches the lives of people with developmental disabilities through music therapy.

Our vision is to empower people with developmental disabilities to increase autonomy, build community and expand artistic expression, while improving physical, social, and cognitive skills.

#### Commitment & Compassion

- We are committed to our clients and treat them with respect and kindness

#### Innovation

- Adaptation to change
- Technology
- Flexible approach

#### Communication

- Verbal and nonverbal expression
- Building of community

#### Creativity

- Artistic expression

#### Autonomy

- Increase independence
- Build self-esteem

#### Inclusivity

- All people with developmental disabilities are welcome

#### Affordability

- Low or no charge
- No one is turned away for lack of funds

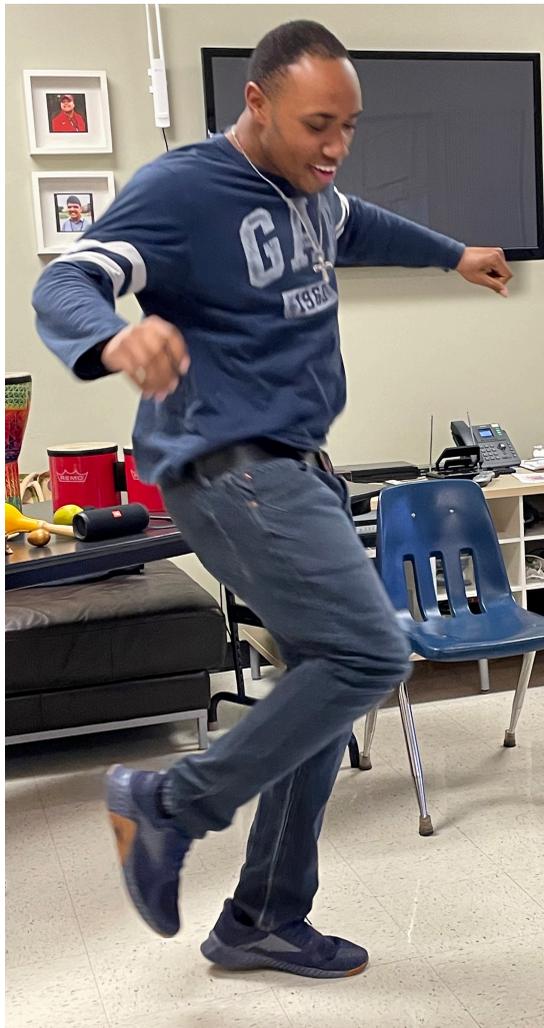
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- Joanna Cooper, MD, Chairperson
- Maya Maravilla
- Sandra Martin-Dent
- Stephen Pollack
- Heather Rosnow
- Maya Schollum
- Phyllis van Kranenburgh
- Carl Whitaker
- Yichen Zheng

Leah Luchansky, Board Intern

### Music Therapists

- Rob Cheifetz, MA, MT-BC
- Titia Martin-Nagel, MT-BC



## *Meeting Clients Where They Are and Adapting Instruments to Meet Their Needs*

At Maya's, participants receive music therapy from our board certified music therapists Titia Martin and Rob Cheifetz. People new to Maya's sometimes ask about the difference between music lessons and music therapy. While both utilize music, they have different goals. Music lessons focus on teaching and developing musical skills like playing an instrument or reading music. Music therapy, on the other hand, uses music as a tool to address non-musical goals like improving communication, emotional regulation, or cognitive function.

Titia and Rob meet clients where they are, and learn how to interpret their personal (often non-verbal) language as a starting point in the music therapy process. Here are some of the adaptations our therapists have come up with to help clients make music and meet their therapy goals.

- Making it easier to hold instruments (shelf liner, Velcro, thickening handles by wrapping them)
- Providing different size picks and adapted mallets
- Providing a guitar strapped to or placed horizontally on a table
- Tuning guitars or ukuleles to a chord rather than the traditional tuning of the strings, and using a capo to play it in different keys
- Using apps such as PitchTime, allowing us to change a prerecorded song and play it in a different key or tempo, thus making it easier to play the chords along on a ukulele
- Using apps such as AUMI, allowing clients to make music by using the movements of their body to create music
- Using apps such as ChatterBoards to help clients tell us what their choice of music is, or their mood, or their immediate need
- Using illustrated song cards to help clients choose a song
- Using a sound/speech button so non-verbal clients can add a sound effect or a phrase to a song
- Using our hand gestures to help clients make binary choices

# Thank You to Our Donors

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*and his family*

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Valerie M. Lawson

*In honor of Amber*

Julie and Michael Steinbaugh

*In memory of Chloe Lipton*

Gretchen Wallacker

*In honor of Stephen Pollack*



## The Power of Music

By Leah Luchansky

I have attended every Maya's Spring Festival since I was around three years old. Each year, I am reminded of how powerful music is in bringing people together. It's remarkable to see how music therapy has the ability to transform Maya's participants and bring out hidden parts of them. It's so meaningful to witness the reactions of everyone on stage when the music begins. Whether it be their smiles, jumps of excitement, or playing of an instrument, I am inspired to continue my involvement with music because of its capability to heal and uplift people.

I most vividly remember watching one participant with a severe stutter and difficulty moving easily transform into an articulate and beautiful singer on stage who truly captured her audience. For other participants with difficulty speaking or controlling their bodies, it is amazing to witness how Titia and Rob's expertise, with details such as the arrangement of participants on stage and modified instruments, allows them to have greater mobility and increased self-confidence. Every year I am excited to return to the Festival and see how much each participant has grown.

## What families are saying about Maya's

"Music has become a routine/baseline activity in her life, and she always looks forward to it. I don't think I have ever heard frustration from her about her ability to perform music. MMTF has not only taught her music but also has given her a very positive attitude about her own abilities. She knows she can do it."

"Expressing themselves is easier through music sometimes, and MMTF provides that way for them."

"Making music with friends and music therapist is a great way for her to interact socially, as she is mostly nonverbal."

"Maya's brings music making to people with disabilities who would never be able to afford music therapy otherwise."



## Please Consider Donating Today!

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