

# NORTH VALLEY MUSIC SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18



# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD AND STAFF

**N**orth Valley Music School has been serving the community since 1997 by providing excellence in music education, appreciation and performance. From individual and group lessons provided by our dedicated and talented staff to concerts, and community outreach, NVMS is truly changing lives through music. It is established fact that music instruction has strong ties to success in various areas of academic and life-long learning experiences. Music students surpass their peers in areas of mathematics, engineering, leadership skills and language development.

We are so thankful for the support we're blessed to receive and would not be nearly as successful without this unbelievable community of generous donors, volunteers, Community Foundations, advisory committee, encouragers, followers, ambassadors, and enthusiastic students. Whitefish is truly a one of kind community in its generous support of all the non-profits that build unity to fill in the gaps for a better way of life and opportunity for so many. The Board and Staff at NVMS are dedicated to offering a high quality/affordable music instruction experience for our students from toddlers to mature adults. Scholarships are available so no child is turned away because of economic hardship.

We encourage everyone to join us in insuring the future of music education by sharing talents and treasures as well as pursuing your passion. We all need to be learning throughout our lives and music challenges our brains to stay active regardless of age. If you ever regretted not continuing your own music education, let me assure you it is not too late. Music fills the gaps when conversation stops.

## **Terry Nelson, NVMS Board President**

Change can be hard; change can be good. This fall I attended the National Guild for Community Arts Education Conference where there's a strong focus on change as we all strive to make the world a better place. From changing programing to better suit the needs of communities, changing staff structure to better suit the needs of organizations, changing how Board of Directors are selected to better suit constituencies, to the session that moved me the most, changing your *perspective* so you may clearly discern the essence of your organizational goals and why they are important. When seeking support, it is crucial we share our story and why we exist. Why give to music education when there are many who need food, shelter, and clothing? People should have their basic needs met AND the opportunity for music, art, dance and sports. Basic needs keep us alive while the arts help us *feel* alive. We are blessed to reside in an art-centric community where arts education is accessible and affordable. When you enter the warm, loving atmosphere of NVMS you will find people of all ages, different educational backgrounds, and all levels of socioeconomic standing giving and receiving music education.

I returned from the Guild conference with a sense of inspiration and motivation, with a fresh perspective on how music impacts our community, how I can help educate and inform people, bring our constituents together and continue to enrich the larger community through music education, appreciation and performance. I'd like to extend a formal invitation to share your voice and thoughts about how we, North Valley Music School can better serve YOU, our community. An invitation to come see our school and observe a class, partake in an Instrument Petting Zoo, attend a recital or faculty concert, or dust off that old stringed instrument and bring it to the Wednesday Acoustic Jam. These are all free events and programs afforded by gifts you share; your generosity pays the gift of music forward and we are grateful. Thank YOU for changing lives and our community through music.

## **Deidre Corson, Executive Director**

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### **Gifts and Pledges received Sept 1, 2017 through Aug 31, 2018**

**Disclaimer:** NVMS strives to accurately recognize and thank its generous contributors. If you discover an error in your listing or omission, please accept our apologies and kindly contact us to correct the error. Contact Deidre Corson at [deidre@northvalleymusicschool.org](mailto:deidre@northvalleymusicschool.org) or by calling 406-862-8074.

Cover Photo by Julie Lubick  
Location provided by Nancy Cawdrey Gallery  
NVMS Corporate Sponsor

# 2017-2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

Our school year kicked off with our Fall Faculty Concert at the Newly renovated LaSalle Grange Theatre. We have such a talented and diverse group of faculty here at NVMS!

Once again, private lesson students and the NVMS Glee Club performed at the Christmas Stroll and the Springs at Whitefish. Cross-generational Music Together classes were very popular at the Springs this year.

Gibson Acoustic in Bozeman, Montana, generously donated another guitar for our annual raffle raising \$17,200 to support NVMS' endowment fund to ensure longterm sustainability of our school.

Thanks to the Kramer Family Foundation, we opened a Scholarship endowment fund at Whitefish Community Foundation. The disbursements from this fund will support our scholarship program for years to come, may we continue to turn no student away for financial shortcomings.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Montana Music Event was a great success opening with local superstars and NVMS alumnus, Gimmic. The Event featured NVMS alumni Ethan Thompson with his popular band Ocean Park Standoff. Ethan made an appearance and played a moving rendition of John Lennon's "Imagine" at the Music Matters Luncheon.

Summer offered 14 music camps this past year! It was a notable Camp Festival Amadeus with guest artists including Alon Goldstein, Inbal Segev, Tim Fain, and Invoke String Quartet.

To finish the year off you all helped us reach and surpass our goals in the Great Fish Challenge! We are so proud to be the honored recipients of the Great Fish Award. Thank you to our wonderful community of supporters and friends!

## NVMS by the Numbers 2017-2018

Students enrolled in private lessons:

**208**

Students in group classes and ensembles:

**Over 200**

{Music Together 91, Music Lingua 8, Glee Club 54, Acoustic Jam 4+/week, Suzuki classes 12 & Adult classes}

Students in Summer camps:

**80**

Number of Faculty:

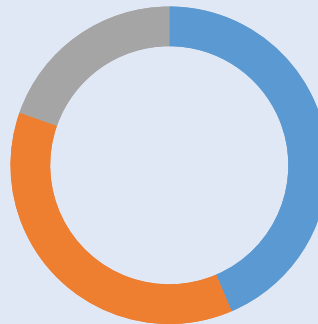
**16**

Staff:

**2**

## Annual Operating Budget \$261,140

### Annual Income 2017/18



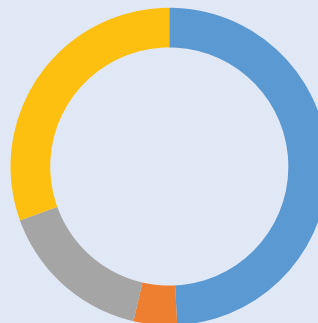
Restricted Income 80,367

Fundraising and Events 150,854

Programs 178,553

**TOTAL INCOME \$409,774**

### Annual Expenses 2017/18



General Operations 99,942

Restricted Expenses 51,981

Fundraising and Events 14,459

Programs 161,198

**TOTAL EXPENSE \$327,580**






**"My son loves music! We are so thankful for the North Valley Music School. It is such a blessing for Teak to be able to take piano lessons with Mrs. Jenny. She is very patient and you can tell she loves working with kids. Teak has learned so much in just the short time he has been a student at North Valley Music School."**

M.T., Scholarship family

## GIVING THE GIFT OF MUSIC: SCHOLARSHIPS



**A**ll children should have the opportunity to benefit from the power of music. Scholarships can make that a reality. NVMS is proud to turn no student away for financial reasons thanks to the generosity of several foundations and granting organizations (Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation, Soroptimist International of Whitefish, Blake Reese Memorial Fund), corporate partners, and private donors. In the past 5 years, NVMS has awarded 117 individual scholarships totaling over \$50,000. From NVMS supporter, Sherry Lesar "It's clear that the Music School is succeeding in its mission—the showcased talent was amazing. The singing was so moving that it gave me chills and the young lady who has been on scholarship was exactly the right person to speak to the (Music Matters Luncheon) group. She is a testament to why it's important to 'give back' when and how you're able. She showed exactly what a scholarship can do to completely change a life for the better. Scholarships, in raw business terms - show a clear rate of return on investment. Our young people are our investment in the future, and if they do not have opportunities to excel, to become strong and confident in their abilities or have no dreams or goals to work toward it will be a bleak future for all of us. She will be very successful in life—no matter what direction she chooses to go in because she has passion, confidence, discipline and the understanding that people want her to succeed. As we discussed yesterday—'no child should be turned away'. I firmly believe that. Without a scholarship program, her life, as well as others who've benefited from this program, might be very much different today. **To give people opportunity is to give them hope.** To give them hope builds self-esteem and the courage to take on the challenges that will inevitably come their way."

Thanks to all who have given and continue to give the gift of music.

**The generous donations from the community have provided my children, and so many more students, throughout the Valley with an incredible opportunity to participate in Glee Choir and private music instruction through the scholarship program. These activities greatly enrich their lives and allow them to take part in making and enjoy music—a gift that will last their lifetime! Thank you so much for your support, we are so grateful!**

The Rogers Family

**Thanks for all you do, I really can't adequately express to you how much I admire you and appreciate your support. Thank you for making NVMS a place where my kids can have lessons, I can teach, and my family can be part of the music community here in the Valley—it truly blesses our lives.**

NVMS parent

## VOICES FROM THE PAST – JENANNE SOLBERG

I established a connection with the North Valley Music School as soon as I came to town. I had come from a 23 year-long career in Billings teaching a large private studio of piano, violin and viola students, as well as being the band, choir and orchestra director at Billings Central High School. I was eager to get that band-wagon rolling up here, and NVMS was the place for me to do it! What a BLESSING it was to not have umpty-nine students traipsing in and out of my house day after day! What a JOY it was to not have to track down payments for lessons, cancel this or that, re-schedule this or that! How MAGNIFICENT it was to not have to worry about finding recital places, scheduling piano tuning or repairs, supplying every pencil, Kleenex



Jenanne Solberg

and roll of TP for 40 kids to use each week! Years passed, more and more students came, the school district supported the establishment of a brand new orchestra program, starting from the ground up, and we began to see a real and lively interest in taking music lessons from youngsters and their families throughout the community. Top-tier faculty folks were hired to teach every age and ability level and you all can see where our little NVMS has come to today.

NVMS is a crown jewel in our community. It is a centerpiece of our downtown happenings. It is an identity unto itself – a magnet which draws families in and forges connections, student to student, student to parent, teacher to family members, and students and faculty members to the whole community. It is a pillar of support, honing skills for kids participating in their school music groups, refining skills for students wishing to take that next step auditioning for college or community symphony membership, and preparing a society of humans who KNOW they are

connected through the language of music. And it is a home for so many, who seek that place where they can speak, using their instruments and voices in harmony. This is so very important, and its importance is magnified daily in our world now.

Though I have ‘retired’ from teaching private studio lessons, my commitment to the work of NVMS, and in particular, Camp Festival Amadeus and our partnership with the Glacier Symphony, remains strong. It is my mission to send students from my school classes for more focused instruction. It is my job to help train up the next generation of composers, performers, conductors, community and music teachers and leaders. But it is mostly my job to encourage humanity, compassion, camaraderie, appreciation, persistence and resilience through the study of music of all kinds. This is the heart of it, and I know it is in the hearts of our faculty, staff, board members and community supporters.

*Jenanne Solberg, NVMS faculty emeritus has been involved with the music school since 2002.*

**“Music is not only an art or a part of education; it is something that can be taken anywhere and used in anything (even algebra!) Music is something that will be with me for the rest of my life and will always be, for me, a source of pride, enjoyment, relaxation, and many happy memories.”**

M.D., NVMS scholarship recipient



## FACULTY HIGHLIGHT– DON REES

I became a teacher at the North Valley Music School in the Fall of 2002 via a very circuitous route. I had just retired from a twenty-seven-year career as a Missoula Smokejumper and then Flathead Hotshot Crew Foreman and later Superintendent with the U.S. Forest Service on the Flathead National Forest and was still young enough to want to continue working. I had obtained an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the Federal Government to certify trainees once they completed the Wildland Fire Suppression Courses I was allowed to teach, based upon my current qualifications as a trainer in my previous career. I then accepted a job as a Training Coordinator for those courses at Flathead Community College as part of their Work Force Management Department in Continuing Ed. I also maintained a position with the State of Montana as a Safety Officer on the Northern Rockies Incident Management Team. So how did I get here?



Don teaching at the NVMS

I've always had a love of guitar and banjo music since grade school. I took private guitar lessons until my junior year in high school and helped form a “garage band”.

I sold all my electric guitar equipment when I went to college at Old Dominion University in Virginia and bought my first quality acoustic guitar. In college I studied Business Management and enrolled in Music Theory classes. I took private folk guitar lessons and learned how to fingerpick. I set out to learn every Paul Simon song I could. Folk music was very popular during the Vietnam era and I loved the sound of good guitar playing and also started listening to flatpick guitar playing by Norman Blake and Doc Watson. After graduating, I took my guitar and drove to California to pursue my other passion of surfing. My guitar was always there with me when I got to my apartment. I also had been carrying around banjo music I heard in Virginia in my head, so I decided to take banjo lessons as well. I would take off and head to the mountains near Julian and Mt Laguna as well as the desert to the east and camp and bring my instruments. In 1975 I put in a seasonal application to the Forest Service and that changed my direction completely. I loved living in the woods in Northern California where I was hired and playing my guitar and banjo with the locals up in Shasta Lake in the tavern after work.

Looking back...27 years went by very quickly. I had gotten hooked on fighting fires and the comradery with people doing hard work, I learned to embrace the challenge of parachuting into wilderness with just a couple of folks to put out a fire and hike out after camping and working for a few days. I came to Montana in 1980 from jumping in Oregon, to the Missoula Smokejumper Center, and never left. I came to the Flathead in 1986 as a jumper at a satellite base in Condon. I accepted the foreman position (promotion) on the Flathead Hotshot crew a year later and after 14 wonderful years with my “family”...my 19 “kids”, and having the honor of being the Superintendent for six years which made it my program, I retired. Thanks to Jenny Wickland and her husband Ryan (also former crew member) I took the suggestion of also applying to the North Valley Music School. I am eternally grateful to Jen and Ryan as well as Kathy Neff (for giving me a chance). I stopped firefighting and training to fully devote myself to teaching music in 2009. It has been such a reward for me to see the results of passing on what I know musically to young people. I have always had music as my old friends in the form of my guitar and banjo throughout my travels and I hope never to lose them. If I can inspire a few people to have that same passion...then my life is successful.

*Don Rees, is our longest serving NVMS faculty, teaching since 2002 .*

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT – NAOMI BARNES

### Why I give:

Having grown up in a musical household, where my mom was the church organist for 60 years, and my dad, a founding member of the Butte Symphony still playing French horn at age 92, and my three older sisters and I learning piano and various stringed instruments, it was natural that I would introduce my own children to music. The timing could not have been better as the North Valley Music School was forming, established by my friend and fellow Glacier Symphony musician Betsy Kohnstamm and local piano teacher Betty Lou Wambeke.

My daughter Breanna was a student at NVMS from the very beginning, learning the Suzuki method on both piano and violin, followed by my second daughter Brittany two years later. Although small and running on a shoestring budget, the school provided many opportunities for my daughters and other students to thrive musically. I myself benefited from learning the Suzuki method along with them, as well as taking harp lessons. The teachers were dedicated and offered many performance opportunities, large and small. Our youngest daughter Bethany fell right in line when she was old enough too.



Naomi Barnes with her daughters

Lessons and summer camps have led to school orchestra, playing in church, participating in multiple music festivals, as well as playing in the Glacier Symphony. Last summer Breanna, Brittany and I all played in the Festival Amadeus Orchestra while Bethany participated in the accompanying NVMS camp, and this summer we all played harp quartets together at church multiple times—how's that for a family affair! And finally, Breanna and Brittany have played in their college symphonies, which included multiple trips, including a trip to Ireland for Brittany. Playing in college has also provided scholarships—my investment finally paid off! But the monetary gain was miniscule compared to what our family gained from taking lessons and participating in the programs at NVMS.

### That's why I give.

“Why did I wait so long to become a participant?”  
– Karl Cozad, Past Board President



## ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT – ETHAN THOMPSON

### From Dan Thompson

I've had a song in my head for the past several hours. To some that might be frustrating depending on the song; however, this song is from Rogers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music*.

*“Do a deer a female deer, Re a drop of golden sun, Mi a name I call myself, Fa a long long way to run...”*

If you're older than 20 there's a great chance you can finish the song and that is one of the fantastic things about music. It has a direct connection to our brain and we have an ability to memorize not only a tune but a lot of lyrics as well. Even more amazing is that music can cross boundaries between age, class, race, and nationalities of people. It is the most unifying tool that brings people together and helps them have a wonderfully good time.

We introduced music to our children when they were young: piano, voice, choir, band, and musical theater. If it was associated with music they were encouraged, and maybe pushed, a little anyway. It is my fervent belief that music training is one of the reasons they excelled in their education. The North Valley Music School had a big part in that training with great instructors that really cared about our kids. They kept in contact with some of their teachers for years after leaving NVMS. Not only for help with projects, but because they were friends and they wanted to stay associated with their music teachers.

Music builds nerve connections and pathway synapses in the brain like nothing else. I have three living examples that had almost straight A's in school. Okay maybe I'm bragging, heck yes I'm bragging, and also very thankful to the wonderful music community we have been privileged to be associated with in Whitefish, Montana.

*Dan Thompson is the father of the local super-star Ethan Thompson who headlined the 2018 Montana Music Event with his band Ocean Park Standoff.*



Ethan Thompson performs the hit “Good News” at the Montana Music Event

“Regular engagement with music can exert lasting effects on brain function, on brain malleability throughout life.”

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2017-18 DONORS, SPONSORS AND FRIENDS.

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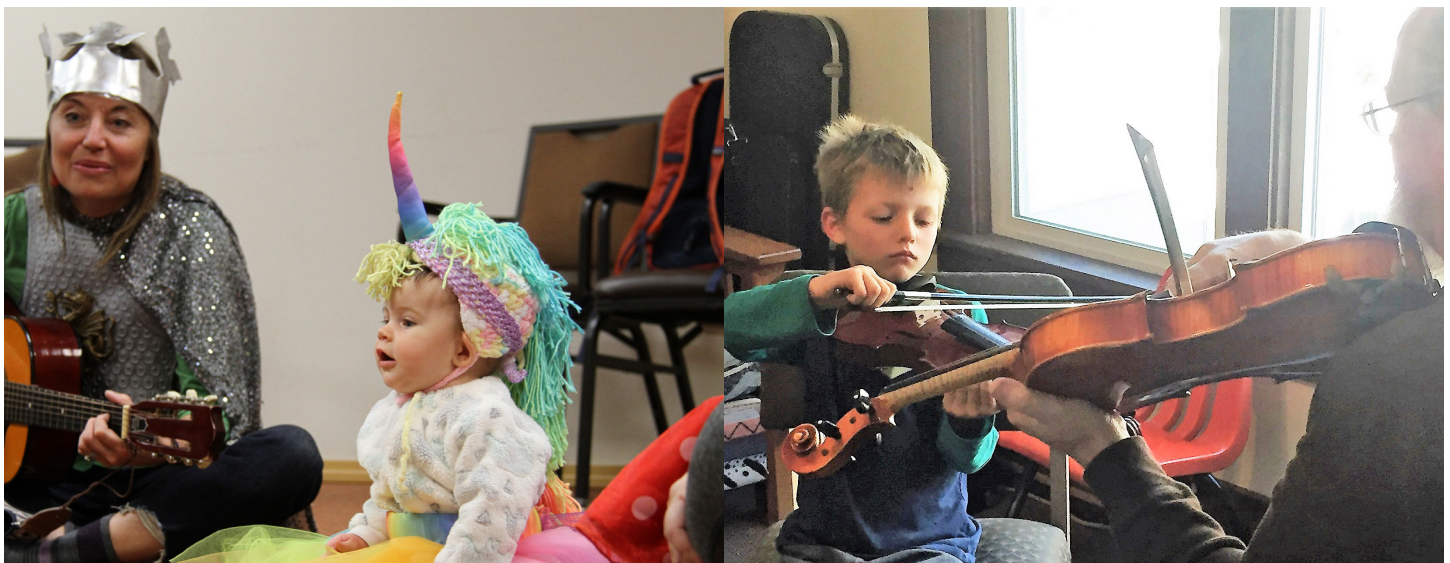
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Music together at The Springs assisted Living facility

Christian Johnson inspiring a young student



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Camp Festival Amadeus performance



The Glee Club performing at the Whitefish Christmas Stroll



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 Whitefish Community Foundation  
 Ryan and Jennifer Wickland  
 Judy and David William  
 Doug and Bet Wise

## 2017-18 Board of Directors

Karl Cozad, President  
 Terry Nelson, Vice President  
 Kay Burg, Secretary  
 Katie Morgan, Treasurer  
 John Browning  
 Matthew Bussard  
 Caiti Carpenter  
 David Hunt  
 Stephanie Joseph  
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 Christine Rossi  
 Eric Schmidt  
 Ann Schoonover

## 2017-18 Advisory Committee

John Kramer, Co Chair  
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 Ruth Ackroyd  
 Lin Akey  
 Ross Anderson  
 Cameron Blake  
 Paul Conrad  
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 Heather Davis-Schmidt  
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 Wyatt Frampton  
 Kathy Friedman  
 Jim Kenyon  
 Betsy Kohnstamm

## Kristin Marott

Carolyn Pittman  
 Scott Ringer  
 Doug Reed  
 Alan Satterlee  
 Toby Scott  
 Doug Wise

## Administration

Deidre Corson, Executive Director  
 Jennifer Wickland, Office Manager  
 Kelsey Schmid-Sommer, Administrator

## Faculty

Tina Bertram, piano and banjo  
 Cindy Browne, violin  
 Griffin Browne, cello

Diane Dickerson, piano, flute and harp  
 Judy Duxtater, piano and Music Together  
 Amy Hamond, violin  
 Christian Johnson, guitar, fiddle, mandolin,  
 electric bass  
 Dan Kohnstamm, piano  
 Karen Pogorzelski, Glee Club  
 Jeremy Quick, guitar  
 Don Rees, guitar and banjo  
 Sandra Vasquez, Music Lingua  
 Jennifer Wickland, piano

## Founders

Betty Lou Wambeke  
 Betsy Kohnstamm