

W H I T E F I S H M O N T A N A

# NORTH VALLEY MUSIC SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

LISTEN.  
LEARN.  
INSPIRE.  
SUPPORT.





## FROM THE BOARD AND STAFF

Dear friends of North Valley Music School,

For the past year, our North Valley Music School family has come together to support the biggest initiative of our 25-year history — building a new and improved music school. The idea to create a new campus has been brewing for more than a decade, and thanks to our dedicated supporters and community partners, this dream soon will become a reality.



As we celebrate 25 years of bringing the gift of music to our students, this year is pivotal in our history. I can't think of a better time not only to begin our construction project but also to launch a public fundraising effort and capital campaign, BE INSTRUMENTAL.

Ambitious projects like these do not evolve by accident, and we are grateful for the extraordinary generosity of the supporters who already have pledged more than \$3 million. Additionally, thanks to Project Whitefish Kids and the City of Whitefish, NVMS secured donated land adjacent to Smith Fields. This is an incredible location that allows for the coordination of music lessons with sports activities, and provides easy access for students, faculty, staff, and parents. The new campus will be a safe, inclusive space with ample parking and inviting community areas.

NVMS has stood the test of time for 25 years due to strong community support and dedicated leadership. Everyone connected to NVMS has always shown unwavering resilience and creativity when faced with challenges. As a result, NVMS has been able to significantly expand class offerings and provide financial assistance when needed. Grants, donations, outreach programs, and concerts have allowed us to serve the needs of all our students, including underserved communities in our area. As our communities continue to grow, the needs are greater than ever before.

Your support in 2023 will enable us to create a world-class musical environment and allow us to continue serving Flathead Valley for many more years to come. Please donate if you can. Any amount is appreciated. Please also be sure to tell your friends and family about NVMS! We are committed to providing the kind of musical opportunities that enrich each of us.

**Christine Rossi, NVMS Board President**

Dear NVMS Family,



There are so many things to celebrate at North Valley Music School as we close out the 2021-22 program year and one of the biggest is the kick-off of our 25th Anniversary! I was not a part of the humble beginnings of our local nonprofit community music school, founded by Betsy Kohnstamm and Betty Lou Wambeke in 1997, but I am honored to be a part of it today! As I reflect on the Music School's history, I realize that I am entering my own anniversary of 10 years with NVMS. A decade of being committed to a mission that has driven me my entire life. Changing lives through music.

I am inspired by our driven and hard-working students, awestruck by our talented and dedicated faculty, comforted and supported by the knowledgeable staff, and moved by the commitment of our donors, supporters, and partners who subscribe to changing the world through music and music education.

10 years, 25 years, and now we plan for the next 50 as we kick off our "Be Instrumental!" capital campaign to build a beautiful and musical new facility and campus. These milestones speak volumes to the longevity of our organization. Amongst our faculty and staff, we have over 200 years of dedication to NVMS. I can't count the amount between all our students and those that have gone on to do music in life. The impact is immense and magical. We indeed have so much to celebrate! Happy Anniversary North Valley Music School!

**Gratefully and Musically Yours,**  
**Deidre Corson, NVMS Executive Director**

## 2021-2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

North Valley Music School kicked off the year with another robust fundraising effort centered around Whitefish Community Foundation's Great Fish Community Challenge. We were honored to receive over \$100,000 in donations from over 200 donors, making it the most successful year of the campaign yet. Bravo! We are beyond grateful and moved at the support for music education.

NVMS started the 2021/2022 program year with an expansion of the Instrument Lending Library. Thanks to a grant from the Kramer Family Foundation, NVMS expanded its inventory by purchasing four keyboards and twelve new violins. With this innovative instrument program, NVMS is able to help students who face an often overlooked barrier to music education: the lack of an instrument.

In-person recitals started back up at the school for the fall. Winter saw the Glee Club delighting the community again as they performed at the Kalispell Art Walk and the Whitefish Christmas Stroll. NVMS added three new faculty to meet the growing demand for music education. Eunhwa "Katie" Park for piano, and Chloe Cheff for violin, and D'andre Conant, our first intern for piano, were all welcomed to the teaching roster of the music school in December.

NVMS launched a new American Indian Music Scholarship. A new pathway to music education, NVMS now earmarks \$1000 annually to qualifying high-school graduates and college students who are pursuing degrees in music in Montana. We continued offering our free Veterans Learn To Play Guitar classes in partnership

with the Veterans Upward Bound Program and the Kalispell Vet Center.

In the Spring, we were honored to be voted "Best Music Program" in the Best of Whitefish awards. NVMS also received honorable mentions in the Favorite Non-profit and Favorite Extracurricular Activity categories. Thank you!

Summer was a blast with several music camps including Junior Learn to Play Ukulele, a new Music Tech Camp, and an ever-growing Camp Festival Amadeus. Gibson Acoustic in Bozeman generously donated another guitar for our annual raffle, raising almost \$5000 to support the NVMS endowment fund. A new, free Bluegrass Fiddle Jam was added to the program calendar as a great compliment to our free Acoustic Jam.

### NVMS by the Numbers 2021-2022

Total registered students:

560

Private lessons throughout the year:

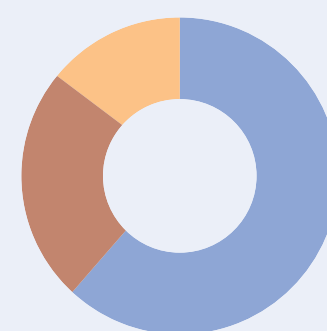
381

Group classes and ensembles:

179

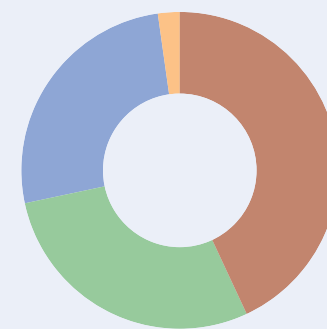
Scholarships awarded:

\$18,000 to  
33 Students



### Annual Operating Budget \$421,432

ANNUAL INCOME	2021/22
Restricted Income	738,602
Fundraising and Events	176,360
Programs	287,750
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME</b>	<b>1,202,712</b>



ANNUAL EXPENSE	2021/22
Restricted (includes Capital campaign)	158,991
Fundraising and Events	11,991
Programs	259,712
General Operations	171,933
<b>TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>602,627</b>



## SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

When our daughter left Pennsylvania for Montana we thought the long hard winters would drive her home. Instead, she made her home here and we followed several decades later. The many musical offerings in the Flathead, especially North Valley Music School, were the best surprise of our move West.

We brought our instruments. Arnold had a violin that he played briefly as a child. Christian Johnson repaired his violin, capping it off with a mini concert. It is now part of the NVMS rental program. I brought a guitar, untouched for almost 40 years. After attending a group guitar class, I began private instruction.

There is evidence that the many benefits of music instruction are not limited to the young. A correlation is noted between music playing and improved fine motor skills, enhanced memory, and other cognitive benefits. Indeed, music instruction has been called a cognitive workout. We are pleased to support North Valley Music School where there are truly musical opportunities for all ages.

– Karen and Arnold Larsen

*NVMS Supporters*



### LEAVE A LEGACY

JOIN THE NVMS FOUNDERS CIRCLE

The Founders Circle is a special group of leading supporters who believe in music and its transformative powers. Members pledge annual gifts starting at \$1000 for three years. Such dedication allows NVMS to ensure vital music education and appreciation for our community.

Giving tiers and member benefits are available. Celebrate our upcoming 25th Anniversary by pledging to join today!



## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT – DIANE DICKERSON

Diane Dickerson

While studying harp in college at NTSU in Denton, TX, I started playing in “show” orchestras for visiting entertainers. After college I added occasional symphony work. At the same time, I honed my skills at playing “pop” music for events. My first steady job was playing in the French restaurant at the Anatole Hotel. During that five year period, I mastered pop music on the harp. I was one of the first harpists to do this professionally. I attribute this ability to my excellent piano teacher, who taught me the skills of piano plus the underlying structure of the music.

While on the restaurant job, I connected with a big company that hired me to travel to resorts around the US and Canada to entertain for their big business banquets. After leaving the restaurant, I continued to play events at the Anatole and around the D/FW Metroplex. I continued on the same path when I moved in with my widowed mom in Tulsa, OK. After the tragedy of 9/11, the economy changed. The big fancy jobs disappeared. I played small events and weddings.

With three other harp teachers in Tulsa, I decided to be adventurous and find a new place to live. My fun mom jumped right in with me to move to Montana. In Whitefish, NVMS had just added a piano program and I began teaching a few piano lessons(2006). Soon my first harp student popped up. While harp student numbers have varied each year (the most being 8), piano students continue to team. I've been lucky to see some of my students from elementary school through high school. I strive to teach them how to understand their music so they can enjoy it for a lifetime, just as my teacher did for me. The challenge is always how to impart knowledge and skill in a fun way...



**In short, Harp playing gave me a ride on a huge ego trip!  
I got to dress up like a princess. Go beautiful places to show off.  
Sing!!! And feel special. And feel satisfied with my accomplishments.  
Now, I'm sooooo happy to be about sharing and caring about my students.**





## FAMILY/MUSICIAN SPOTLIGHT: HOGE FAMILY

### A Life Filled with Music

When my twin daughters turned five I began to think about signing them up for music lessons. Having spent a couple of years at Music Together with them when they were toddlers, I was familiar with North Valley Music School and looked forward to joining the school and introducing the girls to an instrument. We had attended the NVMS instrument petting zoo a couple of times and I knew the girls were curious about playing music and ready to get started. After a few months of searching and some creative financing, we purchased a piano and I thought we were finally ready to go.



After letting them explore the piano at home for a bit, I told Lily and Freya we would start music lessons.

“Oh, good,” they said. “We want to play VIOLIN!”

**“BUT WE JUST BOUGHT A PIANO,”  
MY HUSBAND INSISTED.**

“Best laid plans...” I replied. The girls knew I had played violin when I was young. They obviously wanted to take after Mom. What parent could resist that?

So we started over, applying for an NVMS scholarship and renting two tiny violins from the school.

Fast forward seven years, endless rounds of Twinkle, Twinkle and countless hours of practice and North Valley Music School is an integral part of our lives. We’ve grown close to our teachers after so many years together, watching the girls’ talents develop. These relationships provided invaluable continuity and nurturing during the disruptions of covid and our family’s transition into homeschooling. Attending recitals, watching fellow students grow up and build their musical skills, and now being able to give back to NVMS through performance and donation gives us a wonderfully grounding sense of community. We love North Valley Music School and hope to help it flourish for years to come.

– Shannon Hoge



**“Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul.”**

– Plato

## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS: CAMP FESTIVAL AMADEUS, MUSIC & NATURE DAY CAMP



Camp Festival Amadeus, established in 2008 by Artistic Director, Jenanne Solberg, is a chamber orchestra music camp for intermediate to advanced string students entering 7th through 12th grades. The Camp is held simultaneously with the Glacier Symphony & Chorale’s Festival Amadeus.

Each day, campers participate in orchestra sessions, small ensembles, sectionals and elective classes. Camp faculty is comprised of Festival musicians. Campers attend workshops and interactive presentations with the Festival’s guest musicians and attend Festival concerts each evening. There is an opportunity for additional private lessons, too. Fun camp activities include a student honor’s recital, a Whitefish lake picnic outing, and a main Friday activity such as rafting or water slides. On Friday afternoon, the camp culminates with a free student concert.



**“CFA was the highlight of my summer!!”**

–CFA Camper

CFA is supported by our Corporate Partners, the Montana Arts Council, and the Great Fish Community Challenge.

### Be Wild. Have Fun. Make Music.

For most, summer means no school, no homework, a time for swimming, hiking and fun in the sun. For some adventurous, musical kids in Montana, summer also means music camp!



Music and Nature Day Camp is a unique experience created in partnership with North Valley Music School and Ravenwood Outdoor Learning Center. This yearly tradition combines two wonderful essential pathways to fun and play: music and nature. Here, creativity abounds, and the birds aren’t the only ones making songs out in the Montana forests during summer.

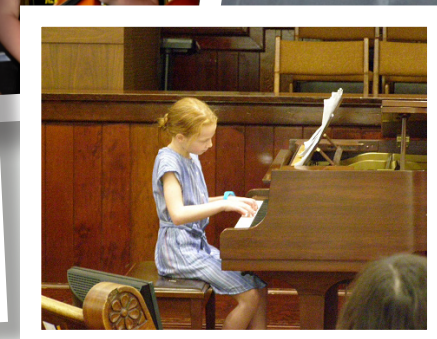
Built on the routines of a nature connection Ravenwood is known for, the camp also infuses North Valley Music School’s high-level music instruction each day. There are three music sections to choose from: strings, percussion and ukulele. Young musicians enjoy group activities, games, songs, crafts, wilderness skills, stories and nature connection time. There are also breakout times for music creation, plus preparation for a final concert for friends and families to attend at the end of the week.

“Thanks again for offering such a great program for our kids and all the hard work that goes into it,” an anonymous parent shared. “Not only does this benefit our community, it benefits the world when children have these opportunities and foundation. I am so grateful.”





NVMS is a leader in music education and excellence, providing high-quality music instruction and seeking innovative ways to make music education a part of everyday lives with the belief that everyone has the potential to experience, enjoy, create, and develop a lasting love of music. Started with a conversation in the Whitefish Post Office in the fall of 1997 between Betty Lou Wambeke and Betsy Kohnstamm, North Valley Music School enriches our Montana communities through music education, appreciation, and performance by offering musical opportunities for all ages. Thank you for all the music and stay tuned for more.



# "Be Instrumental"

Support the capital campaign to build a new music school in 2023.

**Our long-established community music school is in need of a new home and we are ready to turn our dream into reality. We have the building design, the property, and the approval of the City. With \$3.9 million raised, we are more than halfway to our goal of \$6.5 million and will break ground next year.**

Help us reach our goal by donating or making a pledge.

**Questions? Contact Terry Nelson at: 406-253-9154**

Learn more at:



[www.nvms.me](http://www.nvms.me)



## EVENT SPOTLIGHTS

### Montana Music Event

In the summer of 2021, North Valley Music School hosted its fifth annual Montana Music Event, an important fundraiser for NVMS. To refresh and re-envision the event after the pandemic, NVMS themed the event ‘Locals on the Lake’ and took the music outside to Stillwater Landing.

The MME showcased over 20 talented local musicians and NVMS student alumni. The family-friendly evening included free face-painting, hula hoops, food trucks, shaved ice, craft beer, and small batch sangria. A new pre-show element was also added: a VIP Social was offered to guests wanting to elevate their experience. Thank you to everyone who attended to raise money for music education.



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### Winter Carnival Parade

Whitefish Winter Carnival celebrated its 62nd anniversary in February 2022. The Carnival Parade returned to the streets of Whitefish after a pandemic-induced hiatus in 2021 and the theme for the year was “80’s Rewind: Totally Rad.”

NVMS themed its float after “Rock Me Amadeus,” the #1 hit song in 1985. Weaving in decorative elements from the 1980’s, the 1880’s, and all the way back to Bach’s era in the 1680’s...the float featured a harpsichord, a young Mozart, a Falco-inspired Amadeus, and fun, contemporary 80’s colors and fashion.

It was a blast to stroll the streets with our neighbors and friends and happily, the music school received the Prince Frey’s Award for “Best Youth Float.” Thank you to everyone who dressed up, decorated, and cheered us on!



### Music and Mental Health Panel

For Mental Health Awareness Month, North Valley Music School and the Nate Chute Foundation co-hosted a Music & Mental Health Panel to explore the relationship between music and wellness. The event was free and open to the public thanks to a grant from Humanities Montana.

Moderated by the Nate Chute Foundation, the panelists discussed how music and mental health are correlated and explored music’s unique ability to unify people in difficult times.

Panelists included Board-Certified Music Therapist Kirsten Allen, musician and educator Brett Holmquist, mother and advocate Nancy Thompson, and musician and student Emily Freudenberger, also a former NVMS music student.

“Music and mental health have touched us all,” said Jessica Shaw, NVMS Director of Opportunity. “We want our community to be connected, supported and empowered, with more insights and resources in their toolbox.”



“Music brings us pleasure and releases our suffering. It can calm us down and pump us up. It helps us manage pain, run faster, sleep better and be more productive.”

– Alex Doman, Entrepreneur & music producer

To watch an incredible PSA on resilience and music, please visit:





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List includes all donors participating in all fundraising efforts including annual appeal, Great Fish, and more. Capital Campaign donors are in bold. Disclaimer: NVMS strives to accurately recognize and thank all its generous contributors. If you discover an error, please accept our apologies and kindly email us at info@northvalleymusicschool.org or call 406-862-8074.





NORTH VALLEY

# MUSIC SCHOOL



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