



Dorothy Gerber *Strings Program*

Dr. David Reimer, Director

Parent Handbook

2019

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From the Director

Welcome to another year of musical growth with the Dorothy Gerber Strings Program! We are pleased to offer an excellent and affordable opportunity for your child, whether you live in Charlevoix, Emmet or Antrim County.

Whether your student is about to play an instrument for the first time or has been studying for years, there is a place for them in the DGSP. We have a variety of program options, which will be highlighted in this handbook. If you would like further advice on the best fit for your child, I would be happy to talk with you further.

The benefits of learning an instrument are incredible, as you can see from the article on page four. The friends that a student makes playing music in a group, the intellectual challenge and development they experience, the increased ability to express themselves and the increased appreciation for art are only some of the benefits. The primary challenge for students and parents is perseverance through inevitable periods when music study does not feel as fun. Every musician knows those times when they got discouraged or felt like something else would be more exciting, but musicians will tell you how grateful they are that someone helped them persevere. From a different perspective, the story I hear most from adults is how they regret that they quit playing their instrument when they were young. Every student is capable of learning to play well and, while I am confident that you will experience challenges, I also trust you will experience the joys and benefits.

One of the times you will see the DGSP at its best is our Spring Concert! It is the expectation that every student performs in this exciting concert at the Great Lakes Center for the Arts. You will see the combined classes and students from throughout the region, playing wonderful music together as they demonstrate the growth of a year of study. The concert is “collage-style,” so the audience hears students and The Cummings Quartet perform in solos, small ensembles, larger ensembles and the entire program playing together (100+ students)! This is the time when students experience - in a profound way - how they are part of something bigger and more extensive than they realize. A student from Pellston may sit with a student from Beaver Island, playing the same music together. It is a deeply moving experience that I hope you will experience next May!

For the 2019/2020 school year, I am excited about the new collaboration with the Great Lakes Center for the Arts as well as the arrival of two new full-time teachers, Iuliia Fetysenko and Connor Dorsey. They join excellent teachers on our team like Elizabeth Bert, Cheryl Zetterholm, Peter Tolias, Beth Deininger and many more. We are committed to providing outstanding artist-teachers in an exceptional program for your student and we are passionate about their success.

Thank you,

Dr. Reimer

Director, DGSP

10 Benefits of Children Learning a Musical Instrument

By [Erika Montgomery](#) | August 25, 2016

1. Increases Memory Skills

Learning an instrument teaches a child how to create, store and retrieve memories more effectively...like a total workout for the brain.

2. Teaches Perseverance and Creates a Sense of Achievement

Learning to play an instrument takes a lot of time, patience and practice. During music lessons, a teacher will set short term and long-term goals. As the child reaches their goals, they will feel a sense of achievement and pride.

3. Improves Coordination

Playing an instrument requires the brain to work at advanced speeds. Reading music is converted in the brain to the physical motion of playing the instrument. Those who play instruments have improved hand eye coordination over those who do not.

4. Improves Math Skills

Playing an instrument may seem like a creative act, but there are many parallels to math. Music and math are highly intertwined. By understanding beat, rhythm and scales, children are learning how to divide, create fractions and recognize patterns. "It seems that music wires a child's brain to help him better understand other areas of math," says Lynn Kleiner, founder of Music Rhapsody in Redondo Beach, CA to [Parents](#) online.

5. Improves Reading and Comprehension Skills

Learning and playing music requires constant reading and understanding. Children and teens need to identify a note on the page and recognize which note (pitch) to play on their instrument, how long to hold it, what finger to use and how loudly to play it. They also need to identify if the note should be played short and crisp, or smooth and connected to the next note. Learning to read and comprehend music can even help in reading and understanding literature in school classes.

6. Creates Responsibility

Most instruments require some kind of maintenance or upkeep. This can be anything from oiling to tuning to cleaning. Encouraging children to stay on top of regular instrument maintenance creates a level of responsibility for them. When they are responsible for something, they are more likely to take care of it themselves without a parent having to remind them.

7. Exposes the Student to Culture and History

Music theory has a deep history and can be taught as part of musical instruction. Music is most often a reflection of the culture and era it was composed in. Exposing a child to multiple

types of musical genres will allow them to have a glimpse into the past. Understanding the origins of music, can give children a deeper understanding of what they are playing, and they may become more attached to it.

8. Nurtures Self-Expressions

Children learning to play an instrument are able to find themselves creatively. In fact, one of the amazing benefits of music is the ability for children to express themselves.

9. Improves Listening Skills

Playing an instrument requires children listen carefully to an array of different things. They not only need to listen to instructions from their teacher, they need to listen for rhythm, pitch and speed. This concentration will improve their skills in music and in life.

10. Improves Social Skills

When engaged in a group setting, this requires children and teens to work together to collaborate on a specific sound or song. Interacting with other kids will give them an opportunity to make friends...and relate to their classmates.

General Information

The Dorothy Gerber Strings Program is a privately funded organization that provides a valuable resource to the Charlevoix/Emmet/Antrim County region – education in the bowed string instruments (violin, viola, cello, bass). The primary resource that is made possible by the funding of the Gerber family is a team of highly qualified teachers. This includes three full-time artists who moved to the area in order to fulfill the DGSP mission, as well as several other part-time teachers. This team includes several with graduate degrees in the stringed instruments from highly reputable colleges, universities and conservatories. Many also perform extensively in the area, including the Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra and the Traverse Symphony Orchestra. These teachers are assigned to a variety of locations in the region, teaching classroom and/or private lessons. Your student has the opportunity study with one of these teachers and to join thousands over the past two decades who have participated in this program and learned to play an instrument, to play music, and to make new friends in the process! Please look over the following details so that you are better prepared to support your child's participation in the Dorothy Gerber Strings Program.

Programs

- **School-based strings classes:** Students learn to play an instrument in a group setting at a local school. These are held twice a week in ten locations throughout the school year. Students must be in 4th grade or above to participate in the classes and may continue until they graduate from high school. The classes are free, though there is typically a cost for renting an instrument. See page 10.
- **Traditional Private Lessons:** Students learn to play an instrument in a one-on-one setting with a master teacher. Lessons are offered once every week and are available in five locations. There is a fee for lessons and families would need to get an instrument for the student to use. Scholarship assistance is available for lessons and rentals, as needed. Students may be as young as 2nd grade for traditional method lessons and may study through their senior year in high school. See page 13.
- **Suzuki Program:** This method is famous for being effective in training very young children how to play a stringed instrument. Students may begin as young as 4 years old. The Suzuki Method requires a significant commitment from a parent, including attendance and participation in lessons as well as daily support at home. There is a fee for Suzuki lessons and families would need to get an instrument for their student to use. Scholarship assistance is available, as needed. See page 14.
- **Dorothy Gerber Youth Orchestra:** This opportunity is for students who are advanced and want to participate with other students in an orchestra setting. The DGYO meets once a week in Charlevoix but welcomes advanced students from throughout the region. There is no cost to participate in the DGYO and there is no age restriction, though prospective students must demonstrate a sufficient skill level to director Dr. Reimer. See page 15.
- **Summer Programs:** The DGSP offers three different camp options and a Summer School of Music for students who wish to maintain or expand their skills during the summer months. All summer programs include a fee for participation, though scholarship assistance is available, as needed. See page 16.

Instruments

- **Renting versus buying:** Families are encouraged to rent an instrument rather than buy, especially if the student is not yet ready for a full-sized instrument. Rental companies have a very reasonable rate and provide many services, including repairs, size increases (for when your student grows!), and accessories. If a family is interested in purchasing an instrument, we strongly recommend speaking with Dr. Reimer. Good instruments are expensive investments that are best purchased with professional assistance as there are many cheap options that turn out to be headaches for those who buy them (DANGER: do not buy an instrument online!). One purchasing option is to buy an inexpensive instrument from a former rental company, Northern Music Services. You can contact them at katie@northernmusicservices.com.
- **Rental Companies:** The DGSP is not an instrument rental company. We keep a small collection of instruments for a variety of purposes, but families should arrange for a rental through a rental company. If a family has difficulty navigating the rental process, please contact Dr. Reimer for assistance. The preferred rental company for the DGSP is Guarneri House, which has a satellite store in Petoskey (438 E. Lake Street). Please refer to the Guarneri House page in this handbook for further information. Marshall Music offers strings rentals out of Traverse City and SHAR is a well-known instrument provider in Ann Arbor.
- **Instrument and size:** Students are welcome to choose any of the four stringed instruments - the violin, viola, cello or bass. Families should consider the logistical challenges and added rental cost of the bigger instruments (cello, bass) before making a final decision. If a student has a strong desire to play one of the bigger instruments but the cost is prohibitive, scholarship assistance is available. There are many sizes of instruments to fit many sizes of students – the family should check with a DGSP teacher to determine which size is appropriate for the student at this time. If the family already owns an instrument, please show it to the DGSP teacher to determine if it is the appropriate size and if it is in suitable condition to be used for the class.
- **Instrument safety and care:** Stringed instruments are valuable and fragile. Students will learn about good instrument care as part of their classes. Parents also need to assist the student in taking good care of the instrument at home and when it is being transported. Stringed instruments are extremely sensitive to fluctuations in temperature and humidity, so they should not be kept in a cold or hot car, near a heating unit or drafty room in the house, or any other place that may cause the instrument to go out of tune or break. Instruments are easy to break, so it is important that they be put away in their cases when not being played. Instruments in a soft case (canvas) need to be kept out of home traffic routes and carefully moved so they do not bang into doorways or other obstacles. If an instrument is damaged, the parent should immediately contact the teacher and/or the rental company to determine how to fix it – a parent should never attempt to fix the instrument themselves.

More information

- **Registration:** For a student to participate in the DGSP, the parent needs to fill out the registration form, whether online or a paper copy. This provides the program with all the necessary information to communicate with the family throughout the year.
- **Participation:** The DGSP is based on the school calendar, so participation for the entire school year is strongly advised. Dropping out mid-year can put an entire class

in jeopardy and a short period of participation does not give a student enough experience to understand the rewards of learning an instrument, given the amount of time it takes to develop any level of proficiency.

- **Communication:** It is vital that the DGSP be able to reach parents to communicate details in a timely way throughout the year, including details about classes and concerts as well as class cancellations due to weather. The DGSP invites all parents to join the REMIND system for program alerts. Email is the preferred method for the DGSP to communicate more extensive content and to reach individual families regarding opportunities and concerns, so we request that a reliable, regularly checked email address be provided as part of the registration process. If your family does not use email or check it regularly, please identify the best way to contact you on the registration form. The DGSP also has a Facebook page and we encourage parents to “like” us so you can see the latest happenings in the DGSP family.
- **Practice:** Even the very best teacher cannot make a student improve – progress only takes place when a student consistently applies what they have learned by practicing at home. In programs where students are in music class five days a week (many public school strings programs), practice is still encouraged, but progress can happen because the student plays the instrument five days a week. In the DGSP, with classes only taking place twice a week and private lessons only once per week, practice is essential. Students are taught how to practice by the teachers and are encouraged to make it a daily habit. The annual practice challenge (February-March) is a required part of the program as students chart their practice time and parents turn the charts in to the DGSP. The exercise offers fun prizes and recognition for achievement while also providing the program with data on the “state of the program.”
- **Music:** The rental company often provides a music book at the start of the rental process. We recommend that a parent specify whether they are using an Essential Elements book for the classroom program or a Suzuki book for the Suzuki Program. Families with students taking private lessons or who have graduated to more advanced books in the classroom and Suzuki programs are responsible to purchase music as assigned by the teacher. Some options for ordering music include Performer’s Music (www.performersmusicchicago.com), J.W. Pepper (www.jwpepper.com), and SHAR (www.sharmusic.com).
- **Concerts:** Students are expected to participate in concerts scheduled for the program they are enrolled in, particularly the Spring Concert in May (planned for May 9, 2020). Performance is the end result of study and practice – like a final exam following a student’s classes and homework. Concerts not only benefit your student, but all of the other students as well. Much like a sports team needs all its players to be successful, a music team needs each of its members to give its best concert performance.
- **Cell Phones:** It is important to focus on music education during a class or lesson, so cell phone use is prohibited while a class or lesson is in session. This is true for students as well as teachers (with exceptions such as a teacher needing a phone as a clock or for a specific musical purpose such as use as a tuner or metronome).
- **Dress Code:** Students are expected to attend classes/lessons with clothing that is appropriate and respectful of an educational context. There are some items that are problematic for playing a stringed instrument – for example, earrings or necklaces that rattle on a violin or a hoody that bunches up on the shoulder/neck where the violin/viola sits. For performances, a DGSP t-shirt will often be required and will be provided by the DGSP. Parents will be instructed if the dress code will be more formal

(dark dress pants/skirts with nice shoes) or more casual (normal school clothes) for a given performance.

- **Pay it forward:** The DGSP continues to look for ways to reach more students in the region, which would require more teachers and therefore more financial support. Any donations to the program are greatly appreciated. Checks can be made out to the Great Lakes Center for the Arts, with DGSP in the memo line. Thank you!
- **Questions and Concerns:** Parents are encouraged to communicate with their student's DGSP teacher regarding questions and concerns. Parents are also welcome to contact Dr. Reimer regarding any questions or concerns about anything related to the program. Every student is unique, so we are committed to finding a good situation/solution for each one.

School-Based Strings Classes

The Dorothy Gerber Strings Program provides a traditional classroom option for learning stringed instruments throughout the region of Charlevoix, Emmet and Antrim counties. These classes take place two times each week throughout the school year in ten different locations: Beaver Island Community School, Boyne City Middle School, Boyne Falls Community School, Charlevoix Elementary School (also St. Mary Catholic School during the fall of 2019), East Jordan Elementary School, Ellsworth Community Schools, Harbor Light Christian School, Lakeland Elementary School (Elk Rapids), Pellston Elementary School and Petoskey Middle School.

Thanks to the generous funding of the Gerber family, there is no fee for these classes. The only cost is for instrument rental (see Guarneri House page in the appendix). If the cost of a rental is too great for a family to be able to participate, scholarship assistance may be discussed directly with Dr. Reimer.

A student must be in the 4th grade or older to be enrolled in a strings class. This age is based on the normal ability of a student to grasp concepts at school and be able to effectively take them home to practice, without relying on a parent. For younger students, it is very possible to learn an instrument, but it should be in a private lesson setting where a parent is more involved in the learning process.

Students may choose to learn the violin, viola, cello or bass. Each instrument has its own distinctive characteristics, so it is strongly encouraged that a student continue on the instrument they have chosen through the end of a school year. If a student wishes to change instruments between school years, they would be encouraged to either take private lessons over the summer to catch up to the level they had previously achieved on their former instrument or to enroll in the beginner class again for the new instrument.

Instrument study leads to performance, so the students in a strings class are expected to participate in performances by their class, including the May Concert that features the entire Dorothy Gerber Strings Program. Families are strongly encouraged to make a commitment to an entire school year, starting with the beginning of classes in September through the May concert and final classes at the end of May.

Parent Expectations

- **Registration:** Please register your student online or by sending in a completed registration form.
- **Instrument:** Students need an instrument for class, so parents must provide an appropriate instrument, preferably for the first day of class. Parents are encouraged to rent an instrument from Guarneri House (or another rental company) and make all arrangements with them prior to the start of class.
- **Encourage practice:** Learning a stringed instrument is a challenging (yet rewarding!) activity, so daily practice is very important. No child can be expected to have the discipline and motivation to independently practice each day, so it is the parent's responsibility to help the student develop these habits. Parents are encouraged to find a consistent time each day when practice is expected and to use their discretion in terms of incentivizing the student to practice.

- **Maintain communication:** Please sign up for the REMIND system of notification and provide an email address that is regularly checked. The DGSP needs to reach parents in a timely way when weather or illness causes the cancellation of a class.

Student Expectations

- **Attendance:** The student should attend every scheduled class and always bring the normal accessories needed for study – their instrument (including shoulder rest, bow, cello rock stop or whatever is normal for their instrument), music and a pencil. If it is necessary for a student to miss a class, the parent should notify the teacher and understand what assignments the student would miss so they can make them up at home, in the same way they would for a school class. If a student has a long-term schedule conflict with a class, the DGSP would like to help find a way for the student to participate while not hindering the development of the other students in the class (it is not fair to take class time to teach one student a skill that the rest of the class learned in the previous class). A solution could include the addition of a private lesson each week during the period of time in which the student is not able to attend both classes.
- **Behavior:** The DGSP employs excellent music teachers and expects that students will be respectful toward the teacher and follow the teacher's instructions. The DGSP cannot send a student to the principal's office and, especially after school, remove a student from the classroom, so we rely on the support of parents to reinforce appropriate behavior in class. A parent will be notified by the teacher or Dr. Reimer if a student is exhibiting consistently inappropriate behavior that will not be tolerated in our classes. In every case, we hope for a positive resolution that will allow the student to continue to study strings.
- **Instrument care:** Students will be instructed in good instrument care during their first week of classes but need to continue to exercise good judgement about preserving these valuable instruments.
- **Practice:** To make progress on a stringed instrument (and get the most satisfying results), it is important to play the instrument daily. Since class takes place two days each week, students should aspire to practice at least four other days each week (they can still practice on class days, too!). It is often advisable to set a consistent time in the family's schedule for practice. If a student does not understand what to practice or how to organize their practice time, they should ask their teacher or Dr. Reimer.
- **Performances:** The natural result of class and practice is performance. Musicians share the fruit of their efforts with audiences for the enjoyment of all. Performance is also a way to affirm a student, since they have made some level of progress since their last performance and this is something to be celebrated. Performances are also community efforts, and your student is a valuable member of a team. The DGSP expects students to participate in concerts scheduled for their classes as well as the whole-program concert in May.

Class Schedule

September 9 Intermediate and Advanced Levels Start
October 7 Beginning Level Starts
May 9 Spring Concert
May 29 Final Day

Beaver Island

Lessons and Classes on Tuesday evenings and Wednesday during school with Dr. Reimer

Boyne City (classes at Boyne City Middle School)

Beginner, T/Th, 3:30-4:20, Mr. Dorsey
Intermediate, T/Th, 4:30-5:20 Mr. Dorsey
Boyne City Junior Orchestra, T/Th, 3:30-4:20, Dr. Reimer

Boyne Falls

Beginner, M/W, TBD

Charlevoix

Beginner, M/W, 3:30-4:20, Mr. Dorsey (Charlevoix Elementary School)
Beginner, M/W, 3:30-4:20, Dr. Reimer (St. Mary School)
Intermediate, M/W, 4:30-5:20, Mr. Dorsey (Charlevoix Elementary School)

East Jordan (classes at East Jordan Elementary School)

Beginner, M/W, 3:15-4:00, Mrs. Deininger
Intermediate, M/W, 4:15-5:00, Mrs. Deininger

Elk Rapids (classes at Lakeland Elementary School)

Beginner, M/W, 4:00-4:45, Mr. Tolias
Intermediate, M/W, 4:50-5:35, Mr. Tolias

Ellsworth

Beginner, M/W, 11:00-11:50, Mr. Dorsey (Elementary School)
Intermediate, T/Th, 11:00-11:50, Mr. Dorsey (Elementary School)
Ellsworth Junior Ensemble, M/F, 11:00-11:50, Dr. Reimer (Upper School)

Harbor Light Christian School

Beginner, T/Th, 10:58-11:50, Dr. Reimer
Intermediate, T/Th, 10:02-10:54, Dr. Reimer

Pellston (Pellston Elementary School)

Beginner, T/Th, 11:30-12:15, Ms. Fetysenko
Intermediate, M/W, 11:30-12:15, Ms. Fetysenko

Petoskey (Petoskey Middle School)

Beginner, M/W, 3:30-4:20, Ms. Fetysenko
Intermediate, M/W, 4:30-5:20, Ms. Fetysenko

Traditional Private Lessons

Private lessons are the most efficient way to make progress on a stringed instrument. The expert DGSP instructors can address the specific strengths and weaknesses of an individual student and customize the lesson to that student's needs. Students can begin private lessons at any time of year, whether combined with other programs (class or Youth Orchestra) or as their primary form of study.

- **Schedule:** Lessons are scheduled once a week, for 30, 45 or 60 minutes. Beginning and younger students typically have shorter lessons, while older and more advanced students receive longer lessons. The cost of these lessons is \$25 (30 minutes), \$35 (45 minutes), \$50 (60 minutes). Scholarship assistance is available, if needed (please talk with Dr. Reimer).
- **Locations:** Lessons are available in Charlevoix (Christ Episcopal Church), Petoskey (Studio on 438 E. Lake Street), Boyne City (Boyne City Middle School), Elk Rapids (Lakeland Elementary School), and Beaver Island (BICS).
- **Teachers:** The DGSP has several highly qualified lesson teachers, though there are not teachers of every instrument at every location. Please speak with Dr. Reimer about your options.
- **Practice:** The teacher gives assignments at each lesson which the student should then practice for the other five or six days before the next lesson. Progress is accomplished by the combination of good teaching (teacher) and good practice (student)! If a student is consistently unprepared for their lesson, the teacher may speak with a parent about taking steps to ensure adequate practice.
- **Performance:** Private lesson students perform twice a year in recitals. These are performances in which student soloists perform with piano accompaniment. Students prepare their solos in lessons and then have the opportunity to demonstrate their progress in recitals for family and friends. Private lesson students are also expected to perform on the DGSP Spring Concert in May, as determined by their teacher and Dr. Reimer. A student may join an ensemble for the concert or have the opportunity to perform a solo or in a chamber ensemble.
- **Cancellation policy:** If a family has an unavoidable schedule conflict with their lesson time, it would be preferred that the teacher receive a week notice and there be an effort to reschedule the lesson. The minimum preferred notice would be 24 hours. There will be times when the teacher has a schedule conflict and the same standards apply to the teacher. If there is an emergency, please text the teacher as soon as possible to cancel your lesson.
- **Billing:** You will receive an invoice from the Great Lakes Center for the Arts on a monthly basis (usually within the first week of each month) and payment is expected within a week of that invoice. There are options to pay online or to mail a check. Payment should not be brought to the lesson.
- **Music:** Families are responsible to purchase the music that is assigned by the teacher. This often includes a scale book and a book or sheet music for solos. See options for purchasing music on page eight.

Suzuki Program Lessons

The Suzuki Method is incredibly successful, largely due to the essential role of a parent. Especially at the beginning, the teacher primarily trains the parent so that the parent can coach their child at home throughout the week. This requires training at the beginning of the lesson process as well as weekly attendance at lessons.

The DSGP Suzuki Program includes weekly private lessons as well as optional group lessons. Private lessons cost \$15 per half hour. Scholarship assistance can be requested from Dr. Reimer. Parents will receive an invoice at the start of each month for the prior month's lessons and can pay online or by mailing a check to the Great Lakes Center for the Arts. A parent may set up a lesson time by contacting Dr. Reimer.

Suzuki students participate in three performances each year, including fall and spring recitals in which they perform their solos with piano accompaniment and also in the whole program's Spring Concert.

If a family has an unavoidable schedule conflict with their lesson time, it would be preferred that the teacher receive a week notice and there be an effort to reschedule the lesson. The minimum preferred notice would be 24 hours. There will be times when the teacher has a schedule conflict and the same standards apply to the teacher. If there is an emergency, please text the teacher as soon as possible to cancel your lesson.

Expectations of Parents

- **Training:** It is important for the parent to receive training in the Suzuki Method, including the reading of the book *Nurtured by Love* by Dr. Suzuki and learning how to be a "Suzuki parent" from the teacher.
- **Listening:** The student should hear the recording of the music being studied on at least a daily basis. A parent is responsible to find a time each day when this can be done so that the student becomes familiar with the music.
- **Learning:** The parent is the initial student at lessons, learning how to hold the instrument and how to play the first songs in the book. This enables the parent to help the student at home the other six days of the week.
- **Practice coach:** Practice should be done daily, so it is essential that a parent set a time and location for practice as well as supervise practice. Every student below the age of 10 needs a parent to help organize the practice time and help develop good habits.
- **Registration:** Please register for Suzuki classes on the website.
- **Instrument:** Please arrange for the rental of an appropriate-sized instrument for your student.
- **Communication:** In order to provide vital information about the program and specific lessons, it is strongly recommended that parents sign up for the REMIND system and provide a reliable and regularly checked email address.
- **Music:** Parents should purchase a Suzuki Book 1 for the instrument their child is studying and also to access a recording of book 1.

Dorothy Gerber Youth Orchestra

The Dorothy Gerber Youth Orchestra is the most advanced ensemble in the program. The DGYO provides special opportunities to perform advanced music with other excellent students and to have extra opportunities to perform. It also requires a greater level of skill and commitment. DGYO members are strongly encouraged to also be taking private lessons, where they can develop more advanced skills and also receive help with the music the DGYO is preparing. Students are also expected to practice their parts at home so that the weekly rehearsal can be focused on coordinating the parts into a more melodious whole.

As with all of the DGSP programs, a parent should register the student for the program, ensure that they have an appropriate instrument, help motivate them to practice and get them consistently to rehearsals and concerts.

Expectations of Students

- **Practice:** More difficult music requires more consistent preparation at home. Students should aim for at least 30 minutes a day, six days a week.
- **Attendance:** Since the DGYO only meets once a week, consistent attendance is especially important. The DGYO meets on Mondays from 6:00-7:30 at the Charlevoix Elementary School.
- **Concerts:** The DGYO performs a variety of concerts each school year. Dr. Reimer will attempt to give generous notice to parents regarding upcoming opportunities.

Summer Programs

A break from playing the instrument can be a healthy thing, but two or three months away from an instrument will result in significant deterioration of skills. DGSP students are strongly encouraged to participate in at least one summer program so that they are better prepared for the start of a new school year.

Summer opportunities will be announced on the DGSP website before Spring Break and parents are encouraged to begin registering for their preferred options at that time.

The DGSP camps may change from year to year, but the 2018/2019 camps included a Fiddle Camp (with a final performance at the East Jordan Freedom Festival), the Cummings Chamber Music Camp (studying with The Cummings Quartet, the official professional ensemble of the DGSP) and a camp on Beaver Island (in collaboration with the summer music festival “Baroque on Beaver Island”).

The Summer School of Music and the camps all include tuition, but scholarship assistance is also available.

- The DGSP offers a variety of camps during the summer. Different camps have different emphases and different skill levels. Families are encouraged to talk with Dr. Reimer about camp options that would be the best fit for their student.
- There are a variety of other string camp options during the summer, including Blue Lake, Interlochen and the MASTA Camps.
- The DGSP Summer School of Music is primarily a private lesson option, where students can work with a DGSP instructor for as many weeks during the summer as can be mutually scheduled.

Appendix

Middle School Music and Theater Students Get Better Grades

New research presents the best evidence yet that taking arts classes benefits kids academically.

[Tom Jacobs](#)

Feb 12, 2019

Arts and music training has been shown to have academic benefits.

Does your middle schooler want to study music, theater, or dance? Do you fear it will be a distraction from academics and put their grades at risk?

A rigorously designed, [decade-long study](#) of more than 30,000 Florida students suggests the exact opposite is more likely.

It found students who took an elective arts class in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade had significantly higher grade point averages (GPAs), and better scores on standardized reading and math tests, than their peers who were not exposed to the arts. This held true after the researchers took into account "all the ways that students who did and did not take the arts in middle school were initially different."

While [much research](#) has suggested music and arts training confers academic benefits, the chicken-and-egg question has made definitive declarations difficult. At least one [major study](#) concluded music students do better at school largely because smarter, more capable kids are more likely to choose to study music.

The new study, in the journal *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, addresses that issue by following a large group of low-income students from kindergarten through eighth grade. This allowed the researchers to create a baseline level of each youngster's academic accomplishments and determine if arts classes boosted their achievement level.

The short answer is they did.

The [research team](#), led by George Mason University psychologist [Adam Winsler](#), focused on middle school, reasoning it is both a key period for brain development and "the first time students can choose to take full elective arts courses, and they can still enroll in these arts-related classes with limited skills."

Using data from the Miami School Readiness Project, the researchers tracked the progress of 31,322 ethnically diverse, primarily low-income students. They noted each child's level of school readiness at age four, including cognitive, language, and social skills, as well as their scores on standardized math and reading tests in fifth grade.

They then recorded whether the student had taken a dance, drama, music, and/or visual arts class in grades six, seven, or eight. Forty percent had done so; of those, 65 percent took such a class for only one year. Finally, the researchers looked at how those kids then did academically.

Not surprisingly, they found students who chose an arts elective "not only had better grades in elementary school," than their peers, "but also showed stronger social, behavioral, language, motor, and cognitive skills seven years earlier in preschool." This supports the aforementioned thesis that more capable kids are more likely to gravitate to the arts.

However, even after taking into account any advantages enjoyed by the arts students, the researchers found a clear pattern of positive results.

"Those who experienced arts electives in middle school went on to earn significantly higher GPAs and higher standardized math and reading scores, and were less likely to get suspended from school, compared to students who were not exposed to arts classes," they write. "These are meaningful, important, and ecologically valid measures of actual student performance."

Given these findings, access to arts education "can be seen as an issue of social justice," the researchers write. They note that, in their sample, black students were less likely than white or Latino students to enroll in an arts class, for reasons that are unclear but should be explored.

Winsler and his colleagues conclude that "we need to protect and enhance" kids' access to arts education. As [previous research](#) has shown, arts and music training can [sharpen developing brains](#), bolster creativity, and teach kids how to [work together to achieve a goal](#)—all of which contribute to successful outcomes, in school and beyond.



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Everyone knows that practice is the foundation of mastering an instrument. However, as a word, "practice" does not describe all of our activities. By understanding the different components of our program, your practice will always have purpose.

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"Concert"

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"Rehearsal"

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"Lesson"

Learning one-on-one guided by a master teacher

"Class"

Learning with your peers guided by an instructor

"Practice"

Focused playing that you do by yourself every day



Dorothy Gerber
Strings Program



PRACTICE RULES

- Write down the clock time that you practice (i.e. 7:30-8:00) and total minutes that you practice each day. If you practice more than once in a day (or take a break between two practice sessions), write your time as 7:30-8:00, 8:55-9:15.
- Practice is defined for *March Madness* as time spent alone playing your instrument. Lessons, classes and rehearsals do not count as practice. Listening to a recording or practicing your bow hold while watching TV may be good exercises, but are not considered practice for this challenge.
- Exercise good sportsmanship by keeping an accurate record of your practice time and have your parent/guardian sign at the bottom of the page.
- The official scoring for the *DGSP March Madness* combines total minutes practiced AND total days practiced. It is better to practice a little every day than a lot on one day.
- A parent is asked to send a photo of the practice log at the end of each week by text (616-828-8321) or email (daviddgstrings@gmail.com) so the student's score can be updated on the website. Deadlines are midnight on February 3, 10 and 17. The paper copy should be turned in, signed by a parent or guardian, at class the week of February 25

Visit the website to see who is leading the practice challenge at:
<https://www.gerberstrings.org/practice-challenge.html>

PRACTICE TIPS

- **Seek help.** Ask a teacher for help in how to practice and ask a parent for help in reminding you to get started each day.
- **Plan.** Find a good time in your schedule to practice every day.
- **Stretch.** Gently prepare your fingers, hands and arms to play.
- **Scale.** Play a scale to review good technique.
- **Technique.** Posture (feet, arms, hands, head), Left Hand (straight wrist, accurate and curved fingers), Right Hand (bow hold, wrist, elbow, shoulder), Special Skills (bow styles, vibrato, shifting).
- **Divide & Conquer.** Find sections of your piece that are challenging and practice the specific skill that needs improvement.
- **Repetition.** Build a new habit by repeating something correctly 10-20 times.
- **Note Reading.** Practice identifying note names and rhythms.
- **Perform.** When you perfect all the elements of the song, imagine you are performing in a concert or perform for your friends or family.





PRACTICE AWARDS

- **Advancement.** After four weeks, 32 students in each division (Junior Division includes Suzuki students and beginners, Senior Division includes intermediates and advanced) will advance to the next round, which will be held on March 4-9. Students who advanced to the Sweet Sixteen will be notified by March 11 and those who advanced to the Elite Eight will be notified by March 18. The entire challenge will be finished on March 22.
- **Final Four.** Students reaching the Final Four will receive championship rings and other prizes.
- **Elite Eight.** Students finishing #5-8 will receive the next level of prizes.
- **Sweet Sixteen.** Students finishing #9-16 will receive the next level of prizes.
- **All-tournament team.** Students who meet a minimum standard will receive recognition for their efforts.
- **Prizes.** Awards are still being finalized, but will include ski passes to Boyne Mountain, horse riding at Maple Ridge Iberians, scholarships to DGSP summer camps, tickets to the Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra, Kilwin's fudge, an airplane tour from Fresh Air Aviation, gift certificates to BC Lanes, gift certificates for pizza, etc.





Student Full Name: _____

Gender: Male _____ Female _____ T-Shirt Size _____

Primary Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Primary Parent or Guardian Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Primary Parent or Guardian Email Address: _____ @ _____

Primary Parent Cell: Number: () _____ - _____ Home/Work Number: () _____ - _____

Secondary Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Secondary Parent or Guardian Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Secondary Parent or Guardian Email Address _____ @ _____

Secondary Parent Cell: Number: () _____ - _____ Home/Work Number: () _____ - _____

Grade in School Fall 2019 _____

Location of Preferred Gerber Class: `

- Petoskey Charlevoix East Jordan Boyne City Beaver Island
 Boyne Falls Ellsworth Harbor Light Pellston
 Elk Rapids (Both Elementary Schools)

Please indicate areas of interest. Check all that apply.

- Strings Class in School Individual Lessons – Suzuki Method
 Individual Lessons Dorothy Gerber Youth Orchestra

Instrument of Choice: Violin Viola Cello Bass

Do you currently have an instrument: YES NO

If YES, do you rent or own? Rent Own Borrow

If Rent, from whom? _____

If you do not own or rent an instrument, would you be in need of assistance (SCHOLARSHIP) to obtain an instrument or private lessons? Yes No Maybe

I agree to let Dorothy Gerber Strings Program use photographs and videos taken during classes, lessons, and events for marketing and on the website for promotional purposes.

YES, I AGREE

NO, You may not use my child (name: _____) in photographs for marketing or promotion. Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____