

Suzuki Association of Indiana News
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Editor: Emily J. Thompson

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Letter from the Editor

Dear SAI members,

By now, most of us have been teaching for a month or more of fall semester lessons. I love that every new school year brings the excitement of new students and new growth in my continuing students—physically, developmentally, and musically. I also have a new sense every year of how my experience makes me a better teacher and how much I enjoy the process of bringing up new students.

This fall, I am excited about my new role as a Suzuki parent! My 4- and 6-year-old sons have had their violins since early toddlerhood, but this is the first year that we have enrolled them in lessons with another Suzuki teacher besides ourselves. Their environment has prepared them well, but they are still starting from the beginning, cardboard violins and all. I have never realized how exciting it is to go to lessons, take notes, and guide their daily practice. I want to encourage each of you that what you do in lessons makes a positive difference in the daily life of a family. As a Suzuki parent, I am incredibly thrilled to be there to encourage and applaud every single curled pinky and bent thumb.

Our purpose as members of the Suzuki Association of Indiana is to network, share ideas and opportunities, and to support each other as teachers. Belonging to the Suzuki Association (SAA and SAI) gives us many resources. It also gives us the credibility of the high standards of excellence and ethics as professional teachers in the Suzuki philosophy. In this year's newsletter, I want to bring out the best in each of us as we share our experience and values. Please write and tell me how you are benefiting from the newsletter, what I can do to improve, and how you can contribute through ideas and new articles! Contributions to the SAI News do not have to be long—you can send a paragraph or two about your recent events, something that is working for you, or how you face a specific challenge you encounter with your students. Your work matters to all of us. ~ *Emily Thompson*

Email update from the SAA office

This letter, dated September 23, is a response to an inquiry from Liz Efrogmson-Brooks about our pending SAA affiliate chapter status.

Elizabeth (et all),

Thank you for your email, and I apologize for my delayed response, as our office has been closed for the past couple of weeks due to damage from the recent Colorado flooding. I will need to double-check our records once we are able to be back in the office, but I believe that we did not receive any objections from the membership about your application and will be able to proceed with your approval.

When we are able to return to the office, I will prepare the necessary paperwork to finalize the Chapter Affiliation agreements, and we will formally introduce you as our newest Chapter.

Thank you for your patience, and I will be in touch with you soon!

All the Best,

Whitney Kelley
Staff Assistant for Institutes, Chapter Affiliates, and Training Registration
Suzuki Association of the Americas

Celebrating Suzuki's Birthday with SAI Play-ins

Members of the SAI have scheduled play-ins for the week of Dr. Suzuki's birthday (October 17, 1898), and all teachers and students are invited to come together in one of these three locations. It's not too late to join the party—just contact the person listed for your location for repertoire lists. Any and all students and their families are welcome to come, play, and celebrate with receptions afterward!

Central Indiana: Sunday, October 13, 3:00 p.m. (Doors open at 2:45.)
Ji-Eun Lee Music Academy, 10029 E. 126th St, Suite D, Fishers IN 46038
Email: j2chrisman@comcast.net

Southern Indiana: Tuesday, October 15, 6:00-6:30 p.m.
University of Evansville, Evansville, IN
Email: mm9@evansville.edu

Northern Indiana: Sunday, October 13, 3:00 p.m.
Waterford at Edison Lakes Retirement Home, 1025 Park Pl, Mishawaka, IN
Email: joycedavis2@comcast.net

Suzuki Principles in Action

The Indianapolis Suzuki Academy will host “Suzuki Principles in Action” (SPA) on March 28-29, 2014! Nancy Jackson, Assistant Director of the Western Springs School of Talent Education in Chicago, will be our Facilitator.

You can find out more about SPA, and specifically register for this course offering, by following this link: <http://suzukiassociation.org/spa/signup/32358/>.

SAI Online Resources and Contributions

The Suzuki Association of Indiana now has an online folder of documents for our members to access at any time. These documents include an up-to-date membership directory, complete archives of the SAI Newsletter, and other files being shared by our members.

The program we are using for this online folder is called Dropbox. Dropbox is a free service to upload, save, and share files online that can be synced with your own computer for easy access to these files at any time. You can upload submissions to the email newsletter as well, which I will then move to my editing folder.

I’ve sent the link to all the current members that are in my email list. If you haven’t received it, or need me to send it again, let me know. Once you set it up, you will be automatically getting in the most up-to-date documents for our membership as soon as they come in. You will be able to access information without constantly searching through your inbox, and you will be able to share your own documents to the membership. Finally, you will be able to read any number of attachments and flyers that I may have received with the newsletter articles. ~Emily Thompson

Raise your ability with a piece you can play

Sarah Pearce is a graduate of the University of Evansville, where she trained with Carol Dallinger. She now teaches violin at the University of Evansville Suzuki Program.

One of our traditions in the University of Evansville Suzuki Program is to set aside one week every spring for review. During each student’s lesson we hear as many review pieces as we have time for. Students know it’s coming, as the teachers send out reminders at the beginning of the semester. We make the week fun by hanging balloons and streamers in the waiting area. We put the names of each piece on slips of paper, place them in a bucket, and then draw one out; or the student, parent, and I take turns picking which pieces the student will play. We play duets or use SmartMusic. This year one of my students said something that made me think...and keep thinking for weeks to come.

Her review week lesson started as normal—tuning, warm-up—and then as she picked her first piece out of the bucket she said: “Ms. Sarah, I love review week. It’s my favorite week of the whole year.” I asked what made it her favorite week and she replied: “Because I already know everything. I don’t have to learn anything new today.”

“Wow”, I thought. “What a statement for this twelve-year-old to make.” Outwardly I just smiled and said “I’m glad you enjoy this week.” As her lesson continued I kept her words in mind. She played with such ease, such confidence, such ability. Whether it was Seitz 5.3 or *Go Tell Aunt Rhody*, she owned each piece. This twelve-year-old and her mom make a really great team. They practice almost every day, listen regularly, and make review a part of each practice. They have trained themselves to expect excellence with each piece they learn.

“I already know everything.” Those words kept revolving in my mind. I think sometimes as a teacher, I forget how much students don’t know—it’s not that they’re not smart, it’s just that they’re inexperienced. They go to school each day and learn ‘new things’. They’re constantly having life experiences that are teaching them—cooking, tying their shoes, addition and subtraction, etc. How comforting it must have been for my twelve-year-old student to have spent 45 minutes playing pieces she knew. She was right—she didn’t have to learn anything new that day, but she will take that experience with her. It will give her confidence in the future to know that she can play those pieces and not only play them, but play them to the best of her ability. That is such an important skill to learn: not just how to do something, but how to do something to the best of your ability. Dr. Suzuki understood. “Raise your ability with a piece you can play,” he said. The easier a skill is, the easier it is to add one building block, and then another and another to that skill already in place.

Sometimes it’s a hard balance to maintain—knowing how to give enough to each student without rushing them, or withstanding pressure from those parents who want to move on to the next piece as soon as possible. But what is more important—getting to Book 4 by the time you’re 10, or playing Gossec *Gavotte* to the best of your ability? Is it really so important to ‘finish the books’, or is it the journey that really matters? I know the answers to these questions. It is my job as a teacher to communicate these answers to my families and to teach according to this philosophy.

Connect with the SAI

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