Public Testimony for Music Haven Funding

Hello! I’m Jayleen, age 15 and in 7th grade. I’ve been attending Music Haven for 2 years now. I love the program. I love my teachers and peers. They’ve helped not just me but my family as well. That’s the truth for many of us through this pandemic. At music haven we found another family. People who genuinely care about not only growing our musical abilities but that also contribute to our lives.

More than 80 people submitted testimony in support of Music Haven at the public hearing of the state General Assembly’s Appropriations Committee. To everyone who took the time to speak up for Music Haven in February, THANK YOU!

In addition, many sent emails or signed up to testify. This handwritten letter of support (above) from Music Haven violinist Jayleen, was sent to us during the hearing, and was read into the record by our Executive Director during her testimony. We are so proud of the dozens of students and parents who took the time to tell their stories and voice their support of Music Haven. Our supporters throughout the state—including so many of you—made sure our voices were heard, and we expect to see this mistake corrected and our state funding restored.

Welcome to Music Haven Parent, Nickia Corley, to our Board of Directors

Nickia is the Program Coordinator at Yale School of Medicine’s Office of Global Health Education, where she plays an active role in helping maintain multi-lateral relationships around the world. Her community engagement began with her work as a program manager with the City of New Haven’s Construction Workforce Initiative program, helping underrepresented minorities gain access to jobs in the construction industry and local labor unions. Her advocacy and volunteering have grown out of a personal desire to aid the homeless and to promote local nonprofit organizations in the community. She is the proud parent of Music Haven cellist, Shannell, who has been a Music Haven student since 2016.

“Music Haven has helped me grow as a person, both by building skills and character.”

- 6th Year Cellist, age 15

Left: Nickia Corley and her daughter Shannell
Our alums reflected on all parts of the college experience, from choosing a school, to mental health resources, to making friends, to feeling free to make changes to your grand plan when your heart or brain pulls you in a new direction.

Noel is majoring in Political Science at University of Connecticut, Robert is majoring Viola Performance and Computer Science at Western Connecticut State University, and Cristofer is majoring in Violin Performance and Education at University of Connecticut.

Other panels have covered topics such as financial aid and completing the FAFSA, exploring mental health resources, and an alumni-led discussion about the experience of being a person of color on a college campus, led by Music Haven alumni Jeanna’e Moore (SCSU), Jordan Brown (UConn), and Giovana Harris (UConn).

Our High School students love seeing their college-aged mentors, and our Alumni know they are still a part of the Music Haven family!

Meditation at Music Haven

This year has been a challenging year for all - we have been supporting our students holistically with meditation and more. Here is a glimpse into one of our sessions:


We were getting oriented to meditation in our first of ten weekly sessions with Jasmine Johnson, Co-Founder of Black Zen, a movement created to remove any and all social and financial barriers that restrict black and brown communities from discovering the benefits of meditation.

She continued, "Just like when you first started your instrument, you had to take time, and keep practicing and practicing. Because there's so much always going on, sometimes it can be really hard for us to just pause for a second and say... I'm trying to concentrate right now. How can I calm down just a little bit?"

Jasmine also introduced us to the idea that meditation practice can help us focus on the things we can change, and manage our reactions to the things we can't. "Whenever somebody says something about us that we don't like, or something happens, or we get a grade that we didn't agree with, there's always a way to react to it. And a positive reaction is to check in with ourselves, breathe, and calm it all down."

We completed our first thirty seconds of silent meditation. Jasmine asked if it felt long. Musician Leo volunteered that it felt short, and musician Nia agreed.

"Of course you're good at concentration because you play instruments!" Jasmine applauded. As the weeks go on, we'll continue to practice, go deeper, and continue our journey to find our "Self 2.0" through meditation.
Donor Spotlight - Bernard and Laura

“We are monthly donors because we’ve been absolutely enchanted by Music Haven since discovering them five years ago. We see how the gifted musicians, educators and staff have built an inclusive community that celebrates all the wonders that music brings to our lives. We see how the students develop as musicians through Music Haven and how their families are such a vital part of their growth and development. Well, we just can’t imagine a more supportive and life-changing place than Music Haven. It is such a pleasure to be part of this nurturing, musical family!”

Monthly donors help keep our program going. Please sign up on our website or email lygiaemusichavenct.org for more details.

Winter Success

Closing out 2020, our December virtual Winter Performance Party was a huge success! Typically, this event is held at a local public school auditorium and packed to capacity with parents, teachers, family members and friends of the students. The event usually closes with an all-program musical composition in which all 80+ students come together, regardless of level, to play a piece together. This year, we used technology to our advantage, and were able to host this event to audience members near and far, including some friends and relatives in other states, who logged in to cheer our students on. It was our first all-program virtual event which highlighted all of the studios in our program. Read more in the Arts Paper (www.newhavenarts.org). These two sisters (pictured to the left) will be featured in our upcoming March HSQ concert.

Musical Math

Each week, our violists bring tremendous energy, commitment, and lots of smiles.

The game “Musical Math” is a class favorite. It helps students learn about note values as they turn them into equations and add them up. (One of the hardest things to remember is that rests have value too!) In addition to our music studies, we always take time to engage socially as though we were hanging out at Music Haven in person. We start each class with a check-in where each student is invited to share anything that’s particularly exciting or disappointing for them right now. We also have frequent animal visitors. In the picture to the right, you’ll find Carlos’ cat and Valerie’s dog (Cody) and bird (Princess)—all frequent visitors to our class.
Sisters Jocelyn, 16, and Yaki, 13
February HSQ Concert Student Performers

HSQ CHAMBER SERIES 2020-2021
LIVESTREAMED PERFORMANCES & DISCUSSIONS
The Haven String Quartet serves as Music Haven’s permanent quartet-in-residence and teaching faculty.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, March 20, 7:30pm - Virtual Concert and Q&A
Solo Spotlight featuring Philip Boulanger (cello) and Annalisa Boerner (viola). Program: Cello Suite No. 1 for in G Major, BWV 1007 (1717) by Johann Sebastian Bach; Perfect Storm for Solo Viola (2010) by Shulamit Ran; Metro Chabacano (1988) by Javier Alvarez

Saturday, May 22 - DETAILS TBA!
Featuring music of Bacewicz, Coleridge-Taylor, and Dvořák. We are hopeful that this concert will take place in person (outdoors) and also be presented online. You can stay up-to-date by signing up for our newsletter and checking our events calendar on our website, www.musichavenct.org, or by following @musichavenct on Facebook, Instagram, or twitter.