



Newsletter of the MusicLink® Foundation

February 2024

Upbeats!



We begin the start of 2024 with a tribute to teachers who have reached the MusicLink Hall of Fame, recognizing their years of dedication to bring long term lessons and mentorship to students in need. We also applaud the many donors who support MusicLink each year in a variety of ways – from performance fundraising to ongoing support through monthly or annual donations. As of February 15, 2024, MusicLink has raised \$49,085 since the start of our fiscal year (July 1, 2023) thanks to our generous donors.

Fundraising Spotlights

Poolside Jazz Non-Profit performed at a popular neighborhood in San Diego called “Christmas Card Lane,” which is all lit up with holiday lights and more – all organized by the HOA. A homeowner invited us to play in his driveway with a sign seeking donations for youth access to musical performance. Poolside Jazz raised \$1,000 in one night, donating the proceeds

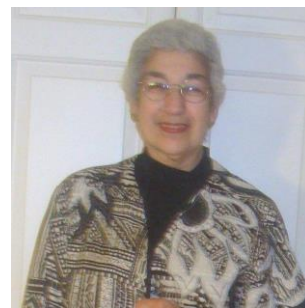
MusicLink Hall of Fame Teachers



MusicLink relies on the dedication and generosity of our MusicLink teachers who reach out to deserving students and share their love for music for many years through ongoing lessons. These teachers represent the finest examples of caring music teachers who truly make a difference in the lives of MusicLink students.

Teacher Laureate 20 Years

MusicLink is proud to honor two teachers who have reached this 20-year milestone.



of the event to the MusicLink Foundation. Organizer, Jeff Forrest said it was “fun partnering with you.” This amount is the second donation to MusicLink from this group and it is the perfect venue to feature performers sharing music with the community and helping MusicLink kids as well. THANKS!

The St. Paul Chapter of Mu Phi Epsilon holds a fundraising event every fall. This year the event raised \$800 for the MusicLink Foundation.

The Wichita East High School Tri M held a benefit concert with performances by the Wichita East Ensemble Club and 14 other groups performing. The concert was organized by Ethan Wessley, a MusicLink cello student. The event raised \$1,000 for the MusicLink Foundation.

Wichita East Ensemble Club



Thanks to All of our Donors

Applause to Bronze, Silver, Gold and Benefactor Levels

We are always astounded at the response of our MusicLink Annual Report, with contributions coming from across the country in amounts from \$10 to \$10,000! This year the MusicLink Foundation received seventeen Bronze level donations (\$250-\$999).

Our thanks to our Silver Donors (\$1,000-\$2,000)- Sanjit Mohapatra, Virginia Geoffrey & John Andelin, (VA) Martha Smith (FL), Richard Mattlin (MN) and the Severude Family Charitable Fund (MN). MusicLink Gold Donors (\$5,000) include Rosemary Christoff Dolan

Tamara Slobodkin, New York

Tamara Slobodkin grew up in New Haven, Connecticut, where she began studying piano at the age of 8. Her home was always filled with music, as she accompanied her mandolin-playing father and her saxophone-playing brother. She gave her first recital at age 10, and from then on followed her interest in music. She attended Oberlin College, and then moved to Ann Arbor, Michigan with her husband where she continued her piano studies.

Upon moving to Stony Brook, New York in the late 60s, she decided to follow her interest in Baroque music and studied harpsichord with Agi Jambor and obtained her first double manual harpsichord. In the early 70s, she was a member of the Long Island Ensemble players, who performed throughout Long Island, New York. She also opened her private piano studio, which she has maintained to this day. In the early 70s, she became a founding member of the North Shore Pro Musica, a varied ensemble group who performed throughout Long Island, New York, and Massachusetts, where she performed on both piano and harpsichord.

In the late 90s, she decided to curtail performance and focus more on teaching. Ms. Slobodkin became very interested in the work of Dorothy Taubman and Edna Golandsky and continues to use their approach to piano teaching and performance to this day.

With the start of the MusicLink program, Ms. Slobodkin was able to formalize her determination to provide instruction for students who were not able to pay for lessons. MusicLink provided the perfect medium, and she has always had at least 1 MusicLink student in her studio since its inception.

Denise Williams, Utah

(NY) who added this donation to the Endowment she established to honor her brother (see article in this issue).

The highest level of donation is Benefactor. This year's donation at this level includes \$10,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and \$15,000 from the Bill and Brigid Brakefield Foundation, (VA).

Recurring donations include monthly donations of \$200 from Neylan McBaine and the Duet organization.



Denise Williams studied at the Berlin Music Conservatory and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in piano pedagogy from Brigham Young University. She also earned a Master's degree from BYU in Humanities. She is a certified Kodaly teacher and is a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music (NCTM) with Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) and a member of Utah Music Teachers.

Her students have participated in National Piano Guild, Royal Conservatory of Music, Encore, Federation and MTNA events. Denise has taught piano professionally for more than 45 years in California, Berlin, Indonesia, and Utah, including BYU. She has lead community choirs, taught orchestra and band, accompanied musical groups, and played the organ for church services. She has taught children at school to sing, play recorders and develop general music skills.

Denise has been officially associated with MusicLink for more than 15 years and appreciates all who support professional teachers' efforts to provide music instruction for children in need. This is also one of her greatest joys. Denise is married to David and has six children and 22 exceptional grandchildren.

Zoe Malaiteke Preparing to Pay it Forward



We recently received the following letter from Nikoyo Iyamba, who originally nominated Zoe Malaiteke for MusicLink.

"I write this letter with tears of gratitude to all of you for your role in our village. There's an African proverb which states, "It takes a village to raise a child." Oumarou and Renate Malaiteke (Zoe's parents) and I would like to thank ALL of you for being part of Zoe's village as he continues in Zoe's Big Piano Adventures!

Four years ago, the Malaiteke family and I requested the help of the MusicLink Foundation to teach their son, Zoe how to play the piano. The purpose in learning piano was for Zoe to be able to serve in his small French-language congregation in Hyattsville, MD of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Right now, the congregation sings along to church hymns from piano recordings on a cell phone. I'm not complaining, at least we have that

Teacher of Distinction with Honors 15-20 Years

Teachers who have taught 15+ years through MusicLink are recognized as MusicLink Teachers of Distinction with Honors. We recognize and thank the following teacher, who has devoted all

but as you all know, having a pianist is always better.

After a couple of years of rough starts and stops, and ALL of your hard work, Zoe Chris Malaiteke debuted in church on Sunday, January 28th, a medley that he put together of a church hymn and a song that he's been working on. Zoe is now ready to start playing hymns for the congregation. We are all very proud of him and grateful for the hours that each of you (in your various roles) spent in getting Zoe to this point. I'm sure you're used to hearing success stories like this all of the time but this story means so much to me personally.

When he started, Zoe committed to helping his younger brother Hanameel learn to play the piano as well. Zoe has kept that commitment to helping his younger brother Hanameel learn piano

The MusicLink Foundation program with Joanne Haroutounian at the helm, along with ALL of you wonderful teachers, coordinators, and volunteers, who are involved in helping kids who otherwise would not have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument -- a HUGE thank you on behalf of the Oumarou and Renate Malaiteke and myself.

May God continue to bless ALL of you for all of your hard work with kids in communities that need the beauty and joy that LIVE music brings to our hearts and souls.

Please enjoy our friend 13-year-old Zoe's church debut: a medley of the Latter-day Saint hymn "I am A Child of God" and Yiruma's very popular "River Flows in You." And enjoy his personality with the little flourish at the end. "

Cheers to you all!
Nkoyo Iamb

Zoe's Debut

Click on image to see the video

of these years to help MusicLink students thrive through musical training.

Deborah Meier, Illinois



Deborah Meier has been teaching piano in Collinsville, IL for more than 45 years and has been active in the Illinois Music Teachers Association, along with having students participate in ISMTA piano exams, Guild Auditions and Mid-America Music Association Festivals. She has been serving as church organist for nearly 50 years after first being introduced to the organ when she was in junior high. Thankful for all the joy that music has brought to her life, she treasures the friendships she has made and the music-making she's enjoyed with her students.

Teacher of Distinction 10 - 14 Years

MusicLink Teachers of Distinction are those that are actively teaching now and have taught through MusicLink for ten to fourteen years. We recognize the service of the teachers in this category and show the total number of years and students taught.

- **Debra Chenoweth**, Minnesota – 10 years, 5 students
- **Marilyn Henry**, Minnesota - 10 years, 4 students



Grass Roots Grants Oregon MusicLink Project

Each year, the MusicLink Foundation provides Grass Roots for teachers and organizations that are expanding their MusicLink programs. The MusicLink Oregon MTA group was awarded a Grass Roots Grant to develop a short video to attract more students to the program. We thank board members, Kaleshia and Isaac Pendergrass who wrote, filmed and edited the video. Links to the English and Spanish versions of the video are at the button below.

[MusicLink videos](#)

In addition to developing the videos, the group held a MusicLink Benefit Recital and Master Class featuring Ines Irawati on January 27th that raised \$1,600. After the recital that featured Beethoven's *Waldstein Sonata* and Ravel's *La Valse*, three aspiring pianists enjoyed a master class with Ms. Irawati that included several MusicLink students. One MusicLink student, aged 17, gave a heartfelt speech about the many ways he benefited from his music lessons creating a "feel good" event for all.

Ines Irawati with student performers



Marilyn Henry

Hall of Fame 5 - 9 Years

MusicLink Teachers reach the MusicLink Hall of Fame when they have taught for five to nine years. We are honored to recognize six teachers for reaching this category - with our thanks for their dedication to teaching deserving students through MusicLink.

Laurie Bridwell-BoeDee, WI
Ashley Hodapp, MN
Tzipporah Johnson, MN
Laura Martinez, KS
Diana Mills, MN
Sarah Strickland, IN Y



In Memoriam Rosemary Christoff-Dolan

The MusicLink Foundation sends condolences to the family of Rosemary Christoff-Dolan of Wright NY. who passed away Sunday, January



7, 2024. Ms. Christoff-Dolan established an endowment fund for the MusicLink Foundation in honor of her brother, composer Gerald Christoff. She grew the endowment through annual donations that provided funding for New York MusicLink students for lessons, instruments and summer programs. We were privileged to work with her to bring opportunities and musical training to students in the New York area.

New MusicLink Teachers

The following 11 teachers joined MusicLink during the last four months, bringing the total of active teachers to 238 and overall teachers to 4,839.

Al: Beth Ryan; CA: Howard Richman; GA: Meredith Grant; IN: Brandon B.; MN : Tom Nord; NC: Jamie Wilken; OK: Boston Newton; TX: Rachel Hansbro; UT: Connie Cannon; WA: Brienne Morris, Jacob Rust

Did you know?

- The MusicLink Foundation will have a booth at the MTNA National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia from March 16 - 20, 2024.
- The MusicLink Foundation will debut its new website in a few months. Thanks for your suggestions as we modernize our online image.
- MusicLink offers teacher reimbursement grants up to \$200 for active teachers for materials and event fees for their students. The next deadlines are February 15 & June 15.

[About Us](#) | [How to Participate](#) | [How MusicLink Works](#) | [MusicLink Video](#)

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