

Singing Voices



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A NOTE FROM JULIE

Dear Families,

Welcome to the winter semester with Music Together of Monroe/Newtown. I hope you are enjoying the Bells Collection. Our newsletter is full of wonderful information so I hope you take advantage of browsing through it. Be sure to check our calendar for our Parent Workshop, Baby Workshop and the not to be missed "Family Jam". Our mission is to provide you and your children with a rich, nurturing music making environment filled with lots of community spirit. Don't be shy about singing and dancing... your child holds you in the highest regard and *you* are the most important person in their life. The Music Together staff is joyfully anticipating each and every class with your family!

In harmony,
Julie

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

WARM UP WITH THE BELLS COLLECTION!!!

THE FAMILY JAM IS BACK!!

Sunday, 3/1 from 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

Come join us for an afternoon of singing, dancing, and instrument play. Local area musicians will accompany us on Music Together family favorites!!

BABIES WORKSHOP

date and time TBA

For families with babies 8 months or younger
A hands-on workshop for infants (no older siblings please)
Come coo and snuggle with us as we guide you through a variety of ways to interact musically with your baby in a mixed-age setting

PARENT EDUCATION EVENT

NEXT SUNDAY! Sunday, 2/8 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Parent Education to help parents enhance and understand their child's musical development

*All special events will take place at Creative Music on Rte. 25 in Monroe unless otherwise indicated
RSVP is kindly requested for all events
Please call (203) 381-0335 for more information*



MAKING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR MUSIC TOGETHER EXPERIENCE

Bringing Harmony Home


Your songbook is a most valuable tool. Using your songbook can deepen your families' experience and education. If you have not looked through it let us point out a few things: 1) the first few pages explain the Music Together Philosophy as well as ways to enhance your experience with our program; 2) each song has a list of activities you can do at home; some are specifically directed to older children and infants; 3) songbook pictures and side bar pictures are great pre-literacy tools to expose your children to concepts of graphic identification and making up song stories about the pictures; 4) the songs themselves reveal patterns of notes that go up and down; 5) a glossary of terms we use in class and if you play guitar there is a reference chart of chords; 6) references and resources to wonderful reading material and 7) blank pages to write down musical memories for your family.

Here are a few activities you can do at home that are *not* listed in the book: 1) Sing the "Hello" song when you greet your child upon waking, picking up from childcare or returning home from work; 2) Sing the "Goodbye" song upon leaving your child for any period of time or sing for nap time; 3) Ask relatives to sing either song when trying to talk on the phone to young children...the "song conversation" is much more appealing to this age than just words! 4) For "Lukey's Boat" get a big box, paint it green with your child, put up a sheet for a sail and pretend, pretend, pretend!! 5) Take two sock and make kitty cat puppets for "Two Little Kitty Cats"; 6) Start a new tradition...a Lullabye Jar in your child's room. Write lullabies on a piece of paper and place into jar. Every evening you or your child can pick a lullabye to sing.

Let us know your ideas this semester...we would love to put them in our next newsletter!!! Remember, your teacher is always eager to share ideas for extension at home or for classroom management. Please take the time to speak with them to share your joys or concerns!



Teacher Spotlight: Denise del Monte



Denise is a wife, and mother of three boys. She has studied piano, clarinet, flute and voice and in her spare time she enjoys composing inspirational music. Denise has been teaching piano and music for over twenty years, which have included teaching music to preschoolers, junior high students and teaching piano lessons, ages four to adult. She is in her fourth year teaching MT which she really enjoys. Music is a gift and should be enjoyed by all; Denise feels it is wonderful to share the gift of music with children and their families.

Currently, Denise is working on an outreach called KEYS (Kids, Empowered by Your Support). KEYS was founded by Rob Silvan who's vision is to provide piano lessons, keyboards, and after school practice sessions for children in the Bridgeport Schools. Denise teaches twelve students and has set up after school practice sessions at two schools. She has found that working with these students is very inspiring and rewarding. Donations are welcomed and if you would like to contribute please make checks payable to KEYS. Please visit their website at <http://www.keysmusic.com>



The More We Get Together . . .



Last semester's parent education and family events were a real success! Below are the reactions of some of you who were able to attend. Be sure to mark your calendars for this semester's events because we'd love to see you there!

The Babies' Workshop

I thought the workshop was definitely worthwhile. When we listen to music, my attention naturally tends to be more on my older son Jack since he is more active and verbal than Juliette. So it was nice to focus on Juliette and how she responds to the music and movement, and also learn ways to involve both of them at home. Since it was a small group, Julie spent a lot of time talking to us, suggesting ways to interact with our babies, and pointing out things that I wouldn't have noticed on my own. She is so passionate about music and this program and I really enjoyed listening to the information she passed on.

~Danielle J.

The Parent Ed Workshop

I found the workshop to be very helpful and it showed how music is related to their development. We didn't have music like this growing up so I didn't really feel comfortable singing and wouldn't have known how to introduce music to my son, Nathan. There are things we're doing that you don't read about in the baby books; ways to interact with your child musically. But since we have been in the program, he is enjoying it and even taps his lap like we do during the "Hello" song when we play the CD in the car. And when I sing to him he sings back to me now.

~Maria B.

The Family Jam

Virgil, Nora (2.5) and I love coming to our usual Saturday morning class and singing and dancing with our cds, a cappella, or with my rusty piano skills at home but the Family Jam was a really special experience for us. Getting to make music with live musicians and both new families and familiar faces was an opportunity to make music as a community outside of our normal routines. We loved that not only were Music Together favorites from this semester and semesters past included, but that other songs we love from our day to day lives (like 'Twinkle Twinkle' and 'On Top of Spaghetti' to name a few) were part of the Family Jam. It was a great way to spend a Friday night and we can't wait for the next one!

~Krista W.

In terms of the Family Jam, I think it's fair to say that Nicole & I enjoyed it as much or more than even Bailey did! The Family Jam was a great way to end a stressful week by singing and dancing and sharing it with others from our class and different classes. We both walked out of it feeling much more relaxed than when we arrived. The Family Jam helped us get to know some of the other families from class that much better and it was a great way to open up and be yourself enjoying the company and the music. One thing that I know Nicole & I both talked about afterward was having the musical accompaniment and how much it added to the 'Jam' atmosphere. Bailey was just fascinated with the gentleman playing guitar! I think it's fair to say that, neither one of us knew quite what to expect walking in the door but, the Family Jam exceeded our expectations and we both walked out that night saying that we can't wait for the next one! Overall, we've loved the entire program and it's been amazing to watch Bailey each semester and how much she grows and relates to the music. The Family Jam only enhanced that for all of us.

~John C.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU - THE INTERVIEW SERIES, PART 1

LOOK WHO'S NEW TO MUSIC TOGETHER - Meet Beth and Sara. Beth first found out about Music Together when she and her daughter Sara (then 20 month old) visited our booth at the Monroe Apple Festival last September. Beth and Sara have now completed one semester with MT and are currently enjoying their second song collection. Elise contacted Beth recently to ask her some questions about her Music Together experience so far.

What drew you to Music Together? *Sara really enjoyed playing with the instruments at the booth at the Monroe Apple Festival. So I filled out a raffle ticket, and we were lucky enough to win. To be honest I was dreading it, since I can't sing very well and I knew this would be a place with a teacher with real talent. But everyone participates and Ms. Elise made me feel comfortable singing out loud no matter what my voice sounded like, and Sara just loves the music and wants to hear it all the time. We have fun in the classes.*

What would you say is your child's favorite type of music? *Sara loves the songs that she can get up and dance and jump around to.*

What is your child's favorite part of class? *Sara loves to play with the instruments, but she's also happy every time we dance around.*

What have you learned from Music Together? *It's nice that Ms. Elise explained why some songs seem so strange to us. When we first came upon those songs with "non-popular" beats I really didn't like them. But as we practiced them and they became more familiar they sounded less strange.*

Is there anything else you'd like to add? *Sara loves the Bongos collection. She insists we listen to the CD every time we are in the car. I truly believe that attending the Music Together classes has boosted her vocabulary and speaking skills. Within the first few weeks of classes she started speaking more clearly and singing along with the songs. Now she sings out loud with the CD, and often sings the songs to herself as she is playing or just before falling asleep. And it's not just the songs themselves, she practices the tones we do in class... the highs and lows, and she'll tap her head and sing a high sound and then tap her knees and sing a low sound. She already sounds like she has pitch control of her voice... and much better than my own.*

DID YOU KNOW?

Many of our Music Together moms and dads sing and play in local musical organizations. One such group, The Connecticut Master Chorale is an ensemble of 55 high-caliber singers directed by Tina Johns Heidrich. The Chorale performs three major concerts per year with orchestral accompaniment in the greater Danbury area. Music Together parent Chris Blake will be performing with The Connecticut Master Chorale on Sunday, March 8th, 3:00pm, at St Rose of Lima Church in Newtown CT. They will perform *Four American Folk Hymns* by Mack Wilburg and *Stabat Mater* by Karl Jenkins, a piece premiered in the US by CMC at New York's Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center recently. For more information you can visit the Chorale's website at <http://www.cmchorale.org/index.htm>.