

NORTH VALLEY MUSIC SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



FROM THE BOARD AND STAFF

Dear Friends of North Valley Music School,

Almost 25 years ago our founders, Betty Lou Wambeke and Betsy Kohnstamm, envisioned bringing a community music school to Whitefish. Their friendship and the community relationships they formed were pivotal in turning their dream into a successful reality. Today, relationships continue to be at the core of everything we do at NVMS. Although we lost Betty Lou earlier this year, the legacy she and Betsy created provides NVMS students with an opportunity to create, learn and connect in ways that are both imaginative and impactful.



As we approach our silver anniversary, we look forward to celebrating the values and traditions established by our founders. Currently we provide affordable music instruction to over 500 students a year through lessons, group classes, ensembles, and summer camps. We are grateful and humbled those numbers keep growing. NVMS operates two satellite locations in the rural communities of Eureka and West Kootenai. Through the passionate and purposeful efforts of our Executive Director, our dedicated instructors, donors, staff, students, Board, and Advisory members, we continue to strengthen community ties. We partner with Glacier Symphony and Choral, Ravenwood Outdoor Learning Center, Whitefish Schools, Project Whitefish Kids, and the City of Whitefish. Together, we are changing lives and our community through music.

Friends, we are embarking upon an ambitious capital campaign to develop a new campus. NVMS is bursting at the seams in our current home on Spokane Avenue. A larger space will preserve the legacy of our founders and ensure that NVMS can continue to serve our growing community. The new school will be safe, inclusive, and provide an accessible environment for all. Relationships will be instrumental in the success of this much-needed campus. We value the relationship we have with you and every member of our community. Watch for more information regarding this important campaign in the coming months and thank you for supporting North Valley Music School.

Christine Rossi, NVMS Board President

Dear NVMS Family,

Since I first stepped foot into the world of North Valley Music School, nine memorable years ago, the Board has been talking about a new, all-inclusive facility with safer access and sufficient parking, to house the magic of our organization. For years the conversation consisted of conceptual drawings, potential building sites around the town, feasibility studies, and hours of conversation filled with big dreams.



When I started my role as Executive Director in 2016, I placed the most recent site plan on my office window with a cut-out that says, "DREAM BIG!" I've always believed it's a good idea to aim high and shoot for the moon, beyond what you might think you can achieve. The worst that can happen is you fall short and land among the stars. I have struggled with failure for much of my life and it's taken years to realize not reaching your goal does not mean failure. In fact, I realized it keeps me striving forward, working harder, and believing I can achieve more in life. As a musician I know perfection is practically impossible but, I can aim for it! The drive bears a strong work ethic, the shortcomings make me human.

Dreams are becoming a reality for NVMS. The hope is to launch our public capital campaign in the next few months and break ground in the spring so NVMS students and the public can enter their new community music school in the Fall of 2023. Our dreams are lofty but, as we recently heard from Jo Jo in the ATP performance of Suessical, "anything's possible," especially if we do this together.

Thank you for all your support, not just this past year, but for the past twenty-four years of musical enrichment.

Deidre Corson, Executive Director

2020-2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

What an epic year!

NVMS reopened its doors to students last summer with both online and in-person lessons available to students of all ages. While group class attendance was intentionally kept low for public safety, private music lessons saw a significant increase in demand. NVMS hit decade-high numbers with almost 400 private students enrolled!

In addition to the Eureka satellite at the Creative Arts Center, NVMS opened up a new satellite in Rexford at the West Kootenai Community Church. Over 30 students had access to piano lessons in the very rural northwest Montana.

In October, we celebrated success in the Whitefish Community Foundation's Great Fish Community Challenge record-breaking campaign which helped NVMS raise \$90,000. Thank you to all our donors and our community

for supporting music education, appreciation, and performance!

In November, we celebrated World Kindness Day by bringing random acts of kindness to our neighbors. Amidst a challenging 2020, NVMS wanted to bring the healing power of music to essential workers who were working tirelessly for our community. To show our gratitude, NVMS Executive Director composed an original piece entitled "For You" and performed it live for the staff of the Flathead City County Health Department. Check it out on our YouTube Channel.

Most of our events and recitals were offered online and in-person. NVMS continued the Pandemic Porch Performance (PPP Series), an online concert series showcasing students, teachers, and friends of NVMS, reaching thousands of people through social media and YouTube.

Spring of '21 brought a breath of fresh warm air to NVMS as the Glee Club reunited and summer camps filled. NVMS hired a new marketing and events staff member.

THE 5TH ANNUAL MONTANA MUSIC EVENT, LOCALS ON THE LAKE, WAS A GREAT SUCCESS WITH LIVE MUSIC FROM OVER 20 LOCAL MUSICIANS,

summer fare from food trucks, local beer/wine, and a family-friendly atmosphere. Although inclement weather shut it down a bit early, NVMS provided our community with a very memorable music event.

NVMS by the Numbers 2020-2021

Total registered students:

525

Private lessons throughout the year:

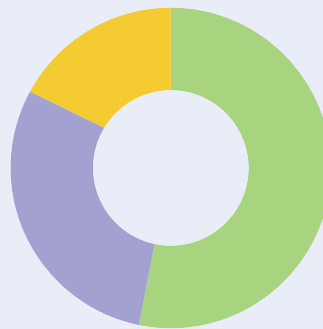
397

Group classes and ensembles:

128

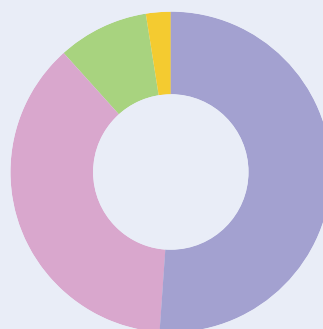
Scholarships awarded:

**\$21,880 to
39 Students**



Annual Operating Budget \$344,606

ANNUAL INCOME		2020/21
Restricted Income	456,250	
Fundraising and Events	150,982	
Programs	249,471	
TOTAL ANNUAL INCOME	856,703	



ANNUAL EXPENSE		2020/21
Restricted Expense	34,881	
Fundraising and Events	9,703	
Programs	199,981	
General Operations	144,625	
TOTAL ANNUAL EXPENSE	389,190	

FROM OUR SUPPORTERS

My husband and I moved to the Valley in 2004. We are both music lovers and were thrilled to discover not only a fine symphony but also a wonderful music school. Before long I was elected as a member of the NVMS Board and became very familiar with what the school offered the community, not just music lessons on string instruments, piano, and voice for all ages but also group classes, free programs, scholarships, and many life lessons. Bill and I decided to take piano lessons from talented and committed teachers, and later I took voice lessons from an expert teacher. These lessons helped me gain poise and confidence in my singing and in my personal life, gifts for which I am grateful.

Today, NVMS is growing by leaps and bounds! The school looks ahead to building a new facility to meet several musical and community needs such as offering more programs and instruments on a safe and inclusive campus. NVMS is a great asset to the community and offers not only rich musical opportunities but also experiences that build character and self-assurance.

– Kay & Bill Burg



FROM OUR STUDENTS

Reece Connors, cellist and bagpiper for Camp Festival Amadeus

As a proud cellist since the fourth grade, the passion and glory of music has been one of the greatest parts of my life, and fewer places have I savored it more than at Camp Festival Amadeus. As one who has attended the camp every year since 2017 (with an exception to 2020 during COVID), it has been a privilege to be given such an amazing opportunity to better understand my capabilities, both as a musician and as a human being.



To begin, in recalling my first year attending the festival camp, it would be foolish to say that I was anything less than terrified of taking part in this, an event that, at the time, I had never partook in before. In being witness to the seemingly insurmountable amount of talent of High Schoolers within the camp, intimidation was one element that never failed to present itself. But it was here that I was told a certain phrase by an instructor that I so desperately needed to hear. “You can do it too, Reece.” Though of course these words were not a magic formula, they inspired me to keep working, to keep practicing, and to never accept my musicianship as inferior to another, simply out of an incident that I had no control over. One does not do well through what they are simply given, but through what they themselves are willing to achieve.

In addition, no better way have I been helped by CFA than by being granted the ability to understand the most positive and admirable quality of humanity, which is our ability to overcome challenges through our ability to celebrate, no matter the circumstances. Through laughter, fun, challenge, and emotion, we are able to better live our lives, and help others to better live theirs. With this, no greater purpose can be found. In fact, it is this very purpose that can be described in one word. Music.

Did you know NVMS has an Instrument Lending Library?

With this instrument program, NVMS is able to help students who face an often overlooked barrier to music education: the lack of an instrument.

Current inventory includes seventeen violins, nine keyboards, a drum set, two cellos, and some band instruments. Thanks to a grant from the Kramer Family Foundation, NVMS was able to expand their inventory in the summer of 2021 by purchasing four Yamaha P45 keyboards.

The instrument lending program serves between 20-35 students a year. Instruments are available on a first-come, first-served basis and can be rented for \$10 a month. Scholarship recipients are offered instruments free of charge.

“When I knew I wanted to take music lessons, it was a significant financial decision,” says Sarah Mayal. “I craved music and was passionate enough to make my budget work to take the lessons, but it still didn’t seem possible because I couldn’t afford a violin. Thankfully, NVMS had their lending library and was able to bridge the gap.”

Thank you to everyone who has financially supported the Instrument Lending Library. If you would like to contribute to the success of this accessibility project and help restore or replace instruments in our inventory that are aging, please contact Deidre Corson at deidre@northvalleymusicschool.org



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT – RACHEL WAMBEKE

RACHEL WAMBEKE, INSTRUCTOR AT NVMS

North Valley Music School is proud to announce that Rachel Wambeke was recognized as one of the Flathead's "40 Under 40," an award given by the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce. Over 100 nominations of young professionals were submitted. Winners were selected by a panel of judges based on the nominees' professional success, unique talents, achievements, community involvement, and more.

"Rachel is a true example of Music incorporating itself into Life," says NVMS Executive Director, Deidre Corson. She started piano lessons with her grandmother Betty Lou (co-founder of NVMS) at 3 years old, started violin at age 6, and during her high school years, played regularly in the Glacier Symphony. Rachel received her B.A. in Music Education at Montana State University where she performed in the Symphony, Chorale, and the Montanans, a 16-piece vocal ensemble. In 2019, Rachel joined the NVMS faculty providing the music instruction she once received in violin, piano, and voice. "She's kind, generous, and beloved by her students," Corson says. "Rachel is a prime example of what can happen when one is exposed to music at a young age and encouraged on a musical career path. We are so happy she was professionally recognized in this way."



Rachel Wambeke teaches piano and keyboards to students of all ages

"I am so honored by this award! It has been such a pleasure working for the school my grandmother, Betty Lou Wambeke, founded in 1997," Rachel said. "The North Valley Music School was a Godsend job! Not only was I working during a global crisis, I was thriving. I want to thank my wonderful family and friends at NVMS for nominating me and being the most wonderful people to work with! I love you guys! I am very excited to continue online teaching. I'm so glad I can keep up the connections I've made with my precious students and coworkers at NVMS."

This fall Rachel is attending Regent University in Virginia to complete her Master's in Fine Arts and Acting. She will continue offering online lessons for NVMS.

Congrats, Rachel!

"One of the most beautiful things we can give our child is music education."

Gloria Estefan



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: JESSICA SHAW

JESSICA SHAW, DIRECTOR OF OPPORTUNITY

To help NVMS identify, create, and implement plans to expand our mission objectives, we are pleased to announce the hiring of nonprofit strategist Jessica Shaw as the school's new Director of Opportunity.



Jessica brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and a passion for music to NVMS.

Jessica has experience in fundraising, messaging, and partnerships and has served international, national, and regional nonprofits.

“I did not grow up around music education and, for that reason, I value the access that NVMS provides,” says Shaw. “Over time, seeking out performance and music history has colored my world. Music unites people, defines communities, and NVMS does meaningful, essential work. I’m proud to be part of the team.”

In the 2020/2021 school year, Shaw initiated and managed several campaigns including virtual Pandemic Porch Performances, World Kindness Day, Quarter Notes, and the “Let’s Play” enrollment initiative. She also helped NVMS increase enrollment, their Day of Giving results by 47%, and their Great Fish Community Challenge results by 38%. She also curates a robust social media content calendar and looks forward to creating more collaborations in the community.

“I am so inspired by the caliber of the school’s supporters, students, and faculty,” says Shaw. “They are the real superstars. I look forward to meeting everyone as we approach NVMS’s 25th Anniversary and to the milestones that we will create together in the future.”

Email Jessica at events@northvalleymusicschool.org

“Everything is communication,” says Shaw. “And everything’s an opportunity. The same is true about music. It always has something to say and it always has the potential to change lives.”

In the Director of Opportunity role, Shaw will be responsible for the Marketing and Development departments. Whether it is an opportunity to be on the radio, raise money to fund a scholarship, or share a song to dive deeper into our human experience, Shaw is quick to see, capture, and create these moments.

Shaw graduated from Missouri State, moved to Austin, and then to Montana in 2016. She shares her passion for music and the outdoors with her husband John, her horse Cotton, and their dog, Bella.

Shaw first started working with the school part time in 2020 and accepted an offer to transition to salary in 2021. A certified grant writer,



Shaw led the NVMS awareness effort for the 2021 Great Fish Challenge

Producer \$25,000+

Kramer Family Fund
Whitefish Community Foundation

Director \$10,000+

Montana Arts Council
State of Montana

Conductor \$5,000+

Blake Reese Memorial Fund**
Cadeau Foundation
Charles Schwab
Glacier Bank
John Kramer & Jon McBride*
Williams Family Foundation

Virtuoso \$2500+

AGL Foundation
First Interstate Bank Foundation
Kris & Laurie Fuehrer
June Jackson
Herb Kameon Memorial Fund
Nancy & Jesse Thompson**
Whitefish Credit Union
Doug & Bet Wise

Rockstar \$1000+

Lin & Kathy Akey
Angora Ridge Foundation
Anonymous
Summerfield & Julie Baldrige
Sharlot Battin
Donald & Darlene Bestwick
Cameron Blake & Sandy Gray*
Kirk Bryan
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Betsy & Dan Kohnstamm*
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Tom & Teresa Quinn
River Design Group
Ann Steck

Robert & Karen Sweetapple
Tamarack Foundation
Benjamin & Kathrine Ward

Music Makers \$500+

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Bill & Betsy Bayne
John Browning
Giuseppe Caltabiano
Paul Conrad & Ellie Johnson
Mark & Lynnette Donaldson
David Gordon
Joseph & Katy Krezowski
Pat LaTourelle
James Lockwood
Steve Lull & Meg Wolfe
Nancy Lundgren
Chuck Martin
Bruce & Melinda Morison
Laurel Parratt
Ross & Coco Pickert
Eric Schmidt & Deven Robinson
Toby Scott
Lucy Smith
Dick & Jane Solberg
Randy & Phyllis Sprunger
Stephen & Linda Wendfelt

NVMS Fans \$5+

Kevin & Christine Abel
Charles & Susan Abell
Ruth & David Ackroyd
Bill & Olga Adams
Eryn & Embrie Anderson
Sandy & Ross Anderson
Anonymous (24)* + ++
Shelly Arbuckle
Jennifer Asebrook
& Richard Menicke
Frank & Naomi Barnes
John & Mary Ellen Barr
Patricia Bartoskewitz
Carla Belski
Cynthia & Cody Benkelman
Michael Bennett &
MerryLynn Southers
Christina Bertram

Bonnie & Richard Billuni
Suzanne Blake
Lindsay & Karen Blanton
Summer Boggess
JaNell Boss
Virginia & James Bowland
Ralph & Stephanie Boyer
Gretchen & Alice Boyer
Barbara & Scott Brant
Jennifer Bresee
Rebecca Broussard
Natalie Bryant
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Christine Dye
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Amy Eller
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 Katie Williams
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Honor & Tribute Gifts

* In Memory
 of Betty Lou Wambeke
 ** In Memory of Blake Reese
 ***In Memory of Wendy Mae Conn
 ****In Memory of Ed Morris
 + In Honor of John Kramer
 & Jon McBride
 ++In Honor of David Rice

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 Whitefish Animal Hospital



Scan this code to donate today. Thank you.

Gifts and Pledges received September 1, 2020 through October 7, 2021

Disclaimer: Disclaimer: NVMS strives to accurately recognize and thank all its generous contributors. If you discover an error, please accept our apologies and kindly email us at info@northvalleymusicschool.org or call 406-862-8074.

IN MEMORY OF BETTY LOU WAMBEKE

So many have left a musical legacy: Mozart, Beethoven, Lennon, Presley, Hendrix... the list goes on and on. These artists have touched millions of lives through their music, creativity and ingenuity, and they will continue to influence and inspire many more into the future. Similarly, many have left a legacy through their teachings: Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, King, Mandela... again, an endless list. The lessons get shared and passed on from generation to generation.

We recently lost a music educator who touched so many lives and certainly left a legacy.

Betty Lou co-founded North Valley Music School and created a space for any age, any ability, any student that desires it, the gift of music education. Betty Lou Wambeke placed thousands of little fingers on the ivory keys. She shared the gift of music throughout her life with her family and to her students.

Her legacy lives on through the children that have grown into adults and continue to play, through her daughter, Jenny Wickland, and her granddaughter, Rachel Wambeke, both teachers at NVMS, who continue to pass on the gift of music to future generations.

Thank you, Betty Lou.



VOLUNTEERS, STAFF AND FACULTY

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LEAVE A LEGACY

JOIN THE NVMS FOUNDERS CIRCLE

The Founders Circle is a special group of leading supporters who believe in music and its transformative powers. Members pledge annual gifts starting at \$1000 for three years. Such dedication allows NVMS to ensure vital music education and appreciation for our community.

Giving tiers and member benefits are available. Celebrate our upcoming 25th Anniversary by pledging to join today!





CHANGING LIVES THROUGH MUSIC