



News and Notes

June 2011

IN THIS ISSUE

News of the President and President-Elect

Passports

Emerging Pioneers
Vicky Suarez p. 2

Songworks in Instrumental Programs
Danielle K-Loehr p. 3
Jacie Sites p. 4

Conference Scenes
At the banquet p. 5
Continued p. 6

MEI Information
Purpose of MEI p. 7
MEI Officers p. 7
Board Members p. 7
Coordinators p. 7
Save the date p. 7
MEI Website p. 7
Submissions p. 7

News of the President and the President-Elect -- they are moving!



MEI President
Marilyn Winter

Marilyn is in the midst of moving from her home in Butte, MT to Phoenix, AZ. Her letters to you will resume in the fall.



President-Elect
Judy Fjell

President-Elect Judy, our Conference Planning Committee Chair, is moving from Big Timber to Helena, MT. Watch for her announcements about the 2012 Conference in her letter to you in the July issue.



Passports will be needed to enter Canada for the 2012 Conference in Vancouver, BC.

Check your passport expiration date now. Getting new or renewed passports may take several weeks.

Get your passports this summer!

Emerging Pioneers in Education

Eight young educators were recipients of the Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship for Emerging Pioneers in Education. In return for this recognition and financial assistance we requested feedback from our Emerging Pioneers about the 2011 Conference. In this issue and future issues, EPs will tell of the insights they gained from experiencing the principles and practices of the SongWorks approach at the conference and in their classrooms.



Vicky Suarez
Richardson, TX

Vicky graduated from The University of Texas at Arlington and was honored with scholarships from the Texas PTA and Texas Music Educators Association to pursue graduate study. After teaching elementary music in the Arlington schools for seven years, Vicky chose to stay home with her three children for 14 years and has just returned to teaching music (grades K-5) in Richardson, TX! Vicky is also passionate about volunteering as a breastfeeding counselor with La Leche League International.

I knew that attending the MEI Conference was going to be beneficial to me and to my teaching. I just did not realize how much I would gain, not only the wonderful ideas shared by other teachers, but also the feeling of confidence I gained in re-learning WHY this approach makes so much sense for me and my students. One of the ideas I really treasure is that when we keep the study of music musical, it is so much more fun to teach. At the conference, we were learning things to teach our students, but I was engaged as a learner as well, because the parts to study were MEANINGFUL. As a teacher who sees, like other music teachers, hundreds of students each week, teaching the same lessons more than once, it is very important to me that what I am teaching is not just meaningful for the students to study, but interesting for me to teach. I know that if I did not like the songs, games, and what is highlighted for study, I would not enjoy my work.

I came away from the conference again feeling as if I had “come home.” This approach fits me. My own creativity can flourish because I thoroughly understand and embrace the philosophy behind the activities. I can take any song and activity from another source and make it my own. I can find what’s important to share, while keeping it musical and meaningful for the students and for myself. Since returning from the conference, I

feel more energized in my teaching, more motivated to be present each moment, truly engaged in making musical moments for my students. THANK YOU for this priceless experience!!! §

SongWorks in Instrumental Programs

Danielle and Jacie share what transpired when pursuing grant assignment #2. "Within two months after returning from the MEI Conference, visit with at least one colleague about the SongWorks approach and its benefits for children."

Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to share with my supervisor, the executive director of Seattle Music Partners, some of the wonderful ideas that I had gained from the conference in February. We began brainstorming of how our program could be deeper and stronger in the school sites where we already have an after-school program for the upper elementary grades. We both quickly realized how beneficial it would be to the 4th and 5th-grade instrumentalists in our program if they were to have an in-school music education enrichment component throughout the year in their K-3 classrooms, before they even walk through our door in fourth grade (it is important to note that in the two sites we were discussing, there is no general music teacher or instruction for any of the students in grades K-5).

My supervisor put together a quick proposal to the principals of both schools, and within a few days he asked me if I could make the proposal more specific, and link it to the general music curriculum guidelines that have recently been adopted by Seattle Public Schools. I opened up my spreadsheet, and instantly began plugging in the SongWorks pedagogical ideas that we re-visited at the conference: using language in the form of nursery rhymes, connecting songs to literacy, involving students in creative play, using instruments to teach rhythm with ostinato, allowing for student engagement and choice....everything fit in perfectly with the curriculum that the school district adopted earlier this year!

The principals at both schools have expressed their desire to implement some of the ideas my supervisor and I drafted up, and a memo has been sent to the teachers of the grades at both schools to see if they would be interested in having this in-school enrichment possibility. While nothing is final, I have already received many informal verbal positive responses from teachers; so I am excited about the possibilities!

Thank you so much again for the opportunity to attend and present at the conference--I have no doubt that this opportunity would not have transpired had I not been "re-invigorated" in Portland.

§



Danielle Koplinka-Loehr
Seattle, WA

Danielle is the Education Director of Seattle Music Partners, a non-profit organization that provides one-on-one music instruction to elementary and middle school students. Last year, Danielle was granted a Thomas J. Watson fellowship and traveled to Chile, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Uganda, to see the power of music as a tool for self-empowerment and positive change in the lives of disadvantaged youth around the globe. She continues to delight in singing with young people whenever she can!



Jacie Sites
Idaho Falls, ID

Jacie teaches violin, fiddle and cello in the award winning nonprofit Strings for Kids program that she and her husband Joe opened at their Violin Shop in Idaho Falls. Jacie is a champion fiddler and has recorded CDs with her band, Celtic Air, arranged for symphonies, recorded performance tracks for others, authored books for teaching cello and fiddle.

Since the MEI conference, I have spoken with many fellow music teachers about the SongWorks approach. Miriam and I both enjoyed the conference and learned so much. We have recommended that the Strings for Kids organization adopt the SongWorks approach and they have approved the purchase of both manuals for our new teacher to use and for us to train our new teachers. The SongWorks approach is perfect for our organization because many of our students have had very little musical training. The tools and techniques will work perfect with our student base of 4th through 6th graders.

I have implemented several of the SongWorks principles and practices into my private teaching studio recently. I have found the music mapping and dotting the most beneficial when it comes to teaching a musical instrument such as the cello or violin. When the students are active, they experience the concept first hand. I have used the music mapping with ribbons several times with my private students and it really helps them to understand flow and express the music more freely. I am currently trying to develop a strategy for teaching rhythm reading that more fully incorporates the use of dotting in our group violin classes. I am very excited that the Strings for Kids program has approved the order of the two SongWorks manuals to help train our new teachers in the use of these essential principles and practices.

My monthly group violin lessons have become much more energetic and memorable for my private students because of the SongWorks approach. SongWorks has truly helped bring the music to life for my students. Stories, activities and movements have helped to shape the music more firmly in the minds of my students. I have seen my students begin to listen to music in new ways; my students are now listening for intricacies that would have escaped them before they encountered the SongWorks approach. Thank-you SongWorks for helping me on my quest to raise students who truly love and enjoy making music.

I truly appreciate the opportunity I had to attend the MEI conference. This experience has truly changed the way that we teach music in the Strings for Kids organization.§

AT THE BANQUET



1. Peggy Bennett (OH, MT), Vicky Suarez (TX), Christy Bolden (OR), Angelie Timm (CO), Judy Fjell (MT)
2. Toshiko Hayashida (Japan), Norma May (MN), Doug Bartholomew (MT)
3. Hot fiddlin' band ~ Miriam Peck (ID), Jacie Sites (ID) and Judy Fjell (MT)



1. Sooney Viani (OR), Margo Selleck (CA), Bea Castillo (MI)
2. Anne Hammond (CA), Pam Bridgehouse (OR)
3. Daisy Cochran (AZ), Jacie Sites (ID), Miriam Peck (ID)
4. Yuki Kawakami (Japan), Atsuko Sasaki (Japan), Toshiko Hayashida (Japan)
5. LeAnne McClellan (WA) Annette Coffin (BC), Fleurette Sweeney (BC), Anna Langness (CO)

The Purpose of Music EdVentures, Inc. is to search for and practice ways of making music and interacting with people that preserve and celebrate the dignity of both. As a guiding principle, this purpose will focus our work on:

1. Practices that foster interactive, facilitative learning environments.
2. Strategies that empower the learner within the context of music experience and study.
3. Networks that encourage collaboration between diverse disciplines, professionals, and interest groups.

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SAVE THE DATE

2012 MEI CONFERENCE

March 1-3 (Th-Sat)

Vancouver, BC

Visit the MEI Website

www.musicedventures.org

Read articles, get ideas, and learn more about Music EdVentures, Inc. -- a great way to teach and a fun way to learn!

Support the Mission of MEI
with your membership dues!

\$35 Regular \$50 Sustaining \$100 Patron \$10 Student

Make checks payable to MEI (USD)

Include your name, address, phone and email.

Send to Anna Langness, Treas.

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Broomfield, CO 80020

News and Notes is the monthly communication of Music EdVentures, Inc. (MEI). Regular features will keep members and friends up to date on coming events and the latest teaching techniques, tips and strategies. Submissions are due on the 15th of the month prior to publication and may be submitted months in advance, indicating the month in which they are to be published. The committee reserves the right to

select material to be published according to length and appropriateness. Articles should be 200-325 words. Visuals should be scanned and submitted as PDF or jpeg files. Submissions may be sent to alangness@comcast.net and may be edited to accommodate space limitations.