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## CELEBRATING FIFTEEN YEARS TOGETHER!

"Our two children, Jessica and Kyle, spontaneously go into singing and music-playing, sometimes with the CD playing and sometimes without. It is such a gem of a program!" says parent James Eng of Philadelphia. "I continue to praise the Music Together program for its purpose and function."

Parents have been singing the same tune for fifteen years now—that Music Together brings music, joy, learning, and a special relationship into their lives. This year, Music Together marks its fifteenth anniversary—fifteen years of singing and playing together with parents, children, teachers, and center directors in hundreds of towns and cities throughout the world.

Music Together classes are forty-five minutes long and include an artistically conceived flow of songs, movement activities, nursery rhymes, instrumental jam sessions, and finger-plays. The types of activities are research-based and support children in developing tonal and rhythm competence. Activities evolve from the child's world and include engaging music, animal sounds, and a good bit of genuine, silly fun!

Music class is the high point of the week for many young children, but researchers know that music-making by parents, especially at home, creates a more lasting impact. How could parents make music in a way that was as much fun as in class?

Music Together created materials to carry the music home—a recording, a songbook, and educational information for parents. Over the years, the materials have proven to be a well-loved catalyst for music-making—with parents often reporting that their children have learned to press the replay button to dance to a favorite song again and again. Families develop music-making rituals—two songs before bed, dancing after breakfast and on Saturdays, jam sessions when Grandma visits. And parents often confess that they listen to the CD when the children are not around!

### A Children's Program Based on Research

Kenneth K. Guilmartin, founder and director of Music Together, collaborated with Rowan University researcher Lili M. Levinowitz, Ph. D., to develop the Music Together curriculum. Key to their approach to family music was research in early childhood education, particularly the parent-child relationship as it supports learning. The program drew from the work of leading educators and theorists, including Emil Jacques-Dalcroze, Edwin Gordon, Howard Gardner, Joseph Chilton Pierce, Lillian Katz, and Shinichi Suzuki.

The Center for Music and Young Children® was founded by Mr. Guilmartin in 1985 for the purpose of developing Music Together, and the first classes for children and parents were held in

suburban Philadelphia in 1987. Co-author Lili Levinowitz has vivid memories of the children in the first classes: "Those children I worked with as babies and toddlers are 14-17 years old now and many drive cars. The original moms frequently stop to tell me how much of an impact the

the developmentally appropriate practice brought them close to their love for music and what they knew was essentially good for families."

Since 1989, the Center for Music and Young Children has sponsored many teacher trainings nationwide in order to make Music Together available to those who want a musically rich and developmentally valid approach to early childhood music. CMYC now sponsors over forty intensive trainings each year, available to musicians, dancers, early childhood educators, parents, and others. In addition, the co-authors and key faculty participate in national conferences and publish in professional journals.

### Outreach

CMYC's outreach initiatives include programs for teenage mothers, for homeless families, and a major preschool development program for Head Start and other preschool populations. The largest of the preschool programs is in Trenton, New Jersey, offered through the Trenton Community Music School's Music for the Very Young. The program is almost four years old and has served over 900 children and 60 teachers in weekly music classes, daily music-making, and parent involvement. The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation has supported the program for the past two years, saying: "We know that assisting Trenton preschools to integrate challenging, developmentally appropriate musical learning into their daily routine is fostering values that may, in the words of our own mission statement, 'help make society more humane and the world more livable'."

### Music Together Centers

Music Together LLC licenses and supports hundreds of independent centers throughout the United States whose programs offer weekly Music Together classes in their communities. "When we first began, I thought that people we trained could find challenging part-time work by opening small centers. But around 1992, it became clear to me that many could make directing a center a full-time career," said Guilmartin. "In order to reach families we realized that we needed to help directors learn how to organize and run their schools. We gathered key directors yearly for training and collaboration."

"What we have developed works," says Guilmartin. "I'm grateful for the dedication of hundreds of Music Together teachers and directors, and I'm grateful to have found a wonderful staff in Princeton to support this work. Music Together as a culture, a musical way of being for families, is still evolving. The opportunity to bring the joy and developmental power of music to the preschool/child-care community, regardless of financial resources, and to families around the world is our challenge for the future."



program has had on their child and family." CMYC continues to sponsor ongoing research and development in early childhood music, and operates a lab school serving over eight hundred Princeton-area families each year.

### Teachers Drawn to the Program

"When we first made Music Together available to other teachers, we were surprised to find how much people enjoyed teaching this way. It was really more than enjoyment—it was as if some teachers connected with their musical identity and purpose," said Guilmartin. "The Music Together song repertoire, the involvement of parents, and



# MUSIC TOGETHER

## RETURNING THE LULLABIES

My husband asked me recently if I was ready for another summer of teacher trainings, to which I resoundingly replied, "You bet!" Although most of our Music Together family knows me as the director of research, I identify with *myself* through teaching—and teaching is integral to my research process.

Teaching is also a renewal for me, even ten trainings over the next four months! After my son's birth almost seventeen years ago, I learned through my new mothers' network just how few songs those moms knew to sing to their brand new babies. That experience served as my epiphany, and helped me to formulate my life's *working* purpose—to return those lullabies to the parents who should be singing them. (Fortunately, Ken Guilmartin had a similar dream, plus the brains and gumption to form a company to deliver such a service.) In my imagination (which is quite vivid) I see in every trainee the realization of that dream hundreds of times over!

—Lili M. Levinowitz, Ph.D

## MUSIC TOGETHER CELEBRATES

One might be surprised to see more adults than children in the audience at Music Together's recent Fifteenth Anniversary Party. CMYC School Director Diane Girer accounted for the numbers: "When we first mentioned the party, the response from our families was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. So often just one parent comes to class, so they jumped at the chance for the whole family to participate." Children brought not only their parents, but, in many cases, their grandparents and other relatives as well.

Both currently enrolled families and alumni as old as teenagers celebrated together with singing, drumming, and dancing, led by the Music Together teachers of Princeton. A highlight for all was the live performance by the musicians who record the Music Together CDs: Joel Perry, guitar and harmonica; Matthew Parrish, acoustic bass; Jill Crawford, flute; Chuggy Carter, Latin percussion; Ed Nardi, percussion; and all led by Ken Guilmartin, piano.

## YEAR AFTER YEAR

Thousands of Music Together families return year after year to share in the joy of family music-making. Especially delightful for families and teachers are the times when older children return to class, having kept up with the recordings and songbooks brought home by their younger siblings.

Amanda Stanton of Princeton has been bringing her four girls—aged one through ten—for eight years, and continues to come, because her kids simply love the program. "They all know the songs by heart," she explained, "and I learn in the process, too, whether it's a fact on child development, or what to listen for in a song."

Roxanne Scurlock, also of Princeton, has four boys, eleven months to seven years, who are the "driving force" behind her seven years in Music Together. "The older ones can't wait for a day off from school so they all can come enjoy the music," said Roxanne. She especially appreciates that the program allows so much freedom of thought and movement so each of her boys "can experience it on his own, in his own way."

## MAKING MUSIC TOGETHER

*Music Together loves to celebrate—especially a 15th Anniversary! Ken Guilmartin (top left) welcomes families attending the March 22 party. Parents and children participate in favorite songs and movement activities.*

*Co-author Lili Levinowitz (left) joins a family around the gathering drum during a sing-and-play-along. One of the highlights of the party was the first public appearance of the Music Together band (above and below right), formerly heard only on the Music Together recordings. What a treat to see them, too!*



# DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Parents, Teachers, and Caregivers:

A mother spoke to me spontaneously in the public library the other day. She wanted me to know how much she had appreciated the program when her kids were little—they were now busy middle-schoolers. She said Music Together had been, hands-down, their family's favorite activity, music or otherwise. I asked her why, and she talked for several minutes about various aspects—the fun in class, the ever-present recordings in the house and the car, the teachers they loved, singing songs with friends, neighbors and relatives, and, of course, the love of music and specific musical skills that her children developed. But she couldn't really put her finger on why Music Together was their favorite family activity, except to say that it was "more than just the music."

Since 1987 we've become much more conscious of how our work is "more than just the music," more than the notes or the traditional image of "music lessons." In the same way that language is more than learning words and grammar, music is more than the orderly arrangement of tones and rhythms. We value it for its emanations of heart, mind, body, and soul. At once practical and profound, we can sing—"speak," if you will—music about "ridin' in the car" or our love for our children. We value music for the life that it expresses.

Key to the "more than just the music" quality is a deep appreciation for the process of *development*. With a determination to provide the right nutrients comes a sense of trust in the process, a willingness to allow the necessary space and time. Music Together operates much more from a developmental orientation that considers the whole child than from an instructional orientation preoccupied with the material to be learned.

Children learn to talk as they learn to live—they never have to take "talking lessons." In Music Together, we want to help children learn to sing and dance as they learn to live. Talking, singing, dancing—it's all part of living, all part of feeling, knowing, expressing, growing. We want to help children and the adults who love them claim the music that's already theirs—just because they're alive.

A lot has changed since we began, yet what is perceived as "change" is often just the surface of a natural unfolding or evolution. For example, I knew I wanted parents involved because their example of participation is critical to the child's learning. So evolving strategies to promote the understanding and participation of adults became a primary focus. The result is that many adults enjoy Music Together as much for themselves as for their children—what a serendipitous delight!

Seeds planted germinate, then sprout, root, grow, mature, and bear fruit. We notice these changes, yet what we are actually witnessing is *transformation*. Transformation implies the inner dimension as much as the outer; it signals process as much as product; it reveals vision as much as it triggers perceptions. As a program, as an organization, and as individuals working together, we have lived through many significant transformations that began with the few seeds Lili and I planted over fifteen years ago. Thanks for growing with us!



Kenneth K. Guilmartin  
Founder/Director, Music Together LLC

# CENTER NOTES

Veteran Music Together parent, teacher, and former center director Susan Van Sickle—now back in Princeton teaching and working as a national center director mentor—founded the seven-year-old Music Together program for the Lake Forest Symphony in Illinois. Recently they invited Susan back to speak for their birthday celebration. Part of Susan's speech follows:

"I've been a part of Music Together for thirteen of its fifteen years. When I left Music Together in Princeton, NJ, in 1994 to move to Lake Forest, IL, there was a big U.S. map on the wall with pushpins for all of the Music Together centers. At the time there were only centers on the east and west coasts. I told Ken Guilmartin that I wanted to put the midwest on his map!

"I remember the Lake Forest Symphony Music School's director calling me into her office and saying that the early childhood component of the school was nearly dead, and would I consider teaching some music classes. I knew very clearly then that the only program I was interested in teaching was Music Together. The Lake Forest Music Together program began that summer with two classes.

"My dream was to bring this program to Lake Forest knowing that it wouldn't die as past programs had. I knew I could help train teachers and the program would go on even if I had to move. Today I feel like the proud parent who has nurtured something special, which is no longer dependent but quite independent."

# RESOURCES

Music Together resources specifically for parents and caregivers have expanded over the past fifteen years. During the early years, parents received photocopies of the songs, a cassette recording, and handouts on music-learning. In 1989, the educational handouts for parents were compiled into the booklet "Music and Your Child: A Guide for Parents and Caregivers," which every family now receives when they begin Music Together. Also in 1989, Music Together began sending families a newsletter, which, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary, was redesigned to add columns especially for parents.

In 1992, Music Together commissioned new artwork to communicate the family feel and folk-like quality of the music. The unique wood-cut illustrations have been a source of pleasure for thousands of families and provide a high-interest educational resource for parents and children. In 1998, a babies program was developed as a one-semester introduction to Music Together. Its substantial information on early childhood music development makes the Babies Class a primary resource for first-time parents.

In 1999, Music Together began a major revision of the song collections, expanding from six songbooks and recordings to nine, adding artwork for each song and detailed activity suggestions for parents. In that same year, Music Together began to include as class materials both a CD and a cassette—one for the car and one for home—a resource exceptionally popular with families.

In 2001, the [www.musictogether.com](http://www.musictogether.com) website was launched. Here, parents can find research articles, past newsletters, and, through the "class locator," a class nearest home.

# MAKING MUSIC

Consider celebrating your child's next birthday with music. Make a list of your child's favorite songs and activities and include a few songs that friends and relatives will know. Think about how many children to have, how to engage the adults, and where you all could sing and move comfortably together. Consider musical instruments (such as Music Together egg shakers or maracas) for party favors—and use them during the party as well. Music Together centers throughout the country could serve as a resource for your ideas, or point you towards a Music Together teacher who independently leads birthday parties.

Here's one scenario for a toddler party. As children arrive you might have musical instruments out in a basket on the floor and a CD playing. Let children and parents explore the instruments and play along informally. Then start the "Hello Song," singing to each child and adult in the room. Sing songs that everyone knows, such as "She'll Be Comin' 'Round the Mountain," "I've Been Working on the Railroad," or "Eensy Weensy Spider." (Sing several repetitions of each song because children need and love it.) Then collect the instruments and get everyone up to move, using one of the songs with built-in activities, such as "Old Brass Wagon," or "Skip to My Lou." Ask different parents, then different children, "What else could we do?" Toddlers will likely mention "jump" and "run." If the excitement ever builds too much, try a whispered verse or invent a sleeping verse followed by a lullaby—then move on to a different kind of activity. After a story or snack, you might include moving to music with scarves or ribbons. End with a jam session using instruments that suit the developmental levels of the children, like rattles and egg shakers, or pots and pans. A lullaby or story song might be a nice closing, just before singing "Goodbye, So Long, Farewell" to some tired, happy children. A similar format could work for three- and four-year-olds, with the addition of some musical games.

While there are many things to consider when planning—age, number of children, space, instruments and props—the possibility for a fabulous music party is yours—Music Together style!