

It's ^{all} ~~None~~ of Your Business

Think Outside The Home: Teaching Options And Opportunities Teaching At A Non-Profit Organization

Editor's Note: This is the fifth installment in a series of columns exploring various teaching options.

The previous column (December/January 2014/2015) examined teaching at a for-profit organization. This column examines non-profit organizations, which I define as organizations classified as 501(c)(3) by the IRS.

Non-profit organizations seek to maximize income, but any surplus is kept in the business to support the mission rather than benefitting an individual owner or shareholder. Many non-profits supplement their income through individual donations, corporate sponsorships and grants.

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Like for-profit organizations, non-profits come in many shapes, sizes and business models. The organization might be a community arts school, independent academy, preparatory department at a university, private music school with a particular focus such as Suzuki instruction, or sole proprietor who has elected to incorporate as a non-profit organization.

Non-profits provide high-quality music instruction to the public and hire qualified instructors. If considering employment, a key factor to determine is whether you will be hired as an employee or independent contractor (note: the differences were examined in a previous column).¹ Non-profits in your area may vary in whether they hire employees or independent contractors.

Non-profits are mission-driven. A board of directors is responsible for overseeing progress toward the mission in addition to bottom-line financial results. The vision or mission statement may go beyond arts instruction.

Community Schools

There is a rich heritage of community schools across our country. Many are independent schools; increasingly, universities are developing community schools as a means of connecting

with their community while providing diverse teaching experiences.

A valuable resource for exploring community schools is the National Guild for Community Arts Education (www.nationalguild.org), which “supports and advances lifelong learning opportunities in the arts.” The Guild has more than 450 member institutions in 45 states, including community schools of the arts, arts centers, and arts education divisions of performing arts institutions, universities and museums. Collectively, the member institutions employ more than 20,000 teaching artists and provide instruction to 2.5 million students each year. The Guild provides publications and information resources (surveys, research and best practice guides), networking, professional development, grants and advocacy.

Find community schools in your area by searching the Guild’s online member directory by city or state. The Guild website also has a Job Board for administrative and internship postings.

In addition to serving thousands of children with exceptional teachers and facilities at multiple locations, many community schools have significant outreach programs for children who lack access to teachers or instruments. Each has its own unique mission and identity.

Here is a brief sampling of outstanding schools to explore:

- The Colburn School, Los Angeles (www.colburnschool.edu). Includes the Colburn Conservatory of Music for gifted college-age musicians.
- Levine Music, Washington, D.C. (www.levinemusic.org). Offers master classes with visiting artists and faculty performances in prominent venues. Minimum of a master's degree required; offers benefits for part-time positions.
- MacPhail Center for Music, Minneapolis (www.macphail.org). Has been a leader since the 1960s with its Early Childhood Arts and Suzuki Talent Education programs.
- Merit School of Music, Chicago (<http://meritmusic.org>). Features a comprehensive curriculum with an evaluation process to track students and teacher effectiveness.
- Music Institute of Chicago (www.musicinst.org). Features Musikgarten, Suzuki education and creative arts therapy for phys-

ical or emotional needs.

Includes The Academy, an elite pre-conservatory education for gifted piano and strings students.

- South Shore Conservatory, Boston (www.sscmusic.org). Holds annual Summer Music Festival in its own amphitheater.
- Washington Conservatory of Music, Washington, D.C. (www.washingtonconservatory.org). Features a free community orchestra and free professional concerts by international artist faculty.

As director of a community arts school at a university, I see young professional teachers thriving in an environment with experienced colleagues, an umbrella organization to

“Music Institute of Chicago believes that enjoying and understanding music and developing the skills to create and perform music enhance the quality of life and nourish the human spirit.”

take care of administrative details and a mission that resonates with their personal values. Many of my teachers are pedagogy or performance majors; after graduation, some have joined Teach for America while others continue to work with youth orchestras, local schools and community arts schools.

Metropolitan Youth Orchestra

The Metropolitan Youth Orchestra (MYO) in Indianapolis was founded 20 years ago by Betty Perry, an independent teacher with a vision that music making could keep youths off the

Pros And Cons Of Teaching At A Non-Profit Organization

(Note: Many of these apply equally to teaching at a for-profit organization)

Pros

- Mission and values resonate on a deep level.
- Colleagues provide support, mentoring and collaborative performance possibilities.
- Teacher can focus on teaching rather than administrative details.
- Organization provides marketing, space, piano, recitals, business procedures.
- Organization takes care of overhead costs, building maintenance, cleaning.
- No home studio issues (zoning, noise, parking, neighbors).
- Location amenities may include parking, waiting area, copier, group teaching space, recital hall.
- Professional development.
- Students see a “bigger picture” with all ages, levels and instruments.
- Positive reputation in community lends credibility to young teachers.

Cons

- May not have the freedom to interview and accept or decline students or determine schedule.
- No choice in hiring status (employee or independent contractor; full-time or part-time).
- May not have input in setting pay rates, policies and business details.

streets. Today, MYO is a family development program of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. In the beginning orchestra, parents learn an instrument along with their child, "creating a common language and experience that strengthens a family connection." In addition to private lessons and ensemble experiences, families have access to a social worker, free meals, parent seminars and college readiness sessions.

University students who have assisted with MYO programs are motivated by far more than a paycheck. The MYO mission resonates as they develop transformative relationships. Ray, a pre-law major and violinist, was given the opportunity to conduct an

MYO orchestra while still an undergraduate student. He honed his leadership skills under the guidance of Perry. He continued to work with MYO throughout law school and today as a practicing attorney. Recently, he started his own youth orchestra in a nearby town.

In addition to providing employment, non-profit organizations have the power to inspire teachers and students in meaningful ways. Non-profits are a viable, growing alternative to home studios and college faculty positions.

"Washington Conservatory of Music believes that music-making can be a model for peaceful cooperation in the world."

Note

1. "Think Outside the Home: Teaching Opportunities and Options, Part 1 Independent Contractor or Employee," *American Music Teacher*, December/January 2013/2014, pg. 45-47.



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