Walk through the doors of Neighborhood Music School, and you’ll sense something special. You can’t help but feel the unique brand of energy that’s generated when people come together to share artistic experiences. Our integrative teaching philosophy allows for rich interactions among students of all ages, from toddlers to seniors in their 90s, who receive individual and group instruction in music, dance and drama and participate in over 100 weekly ensembles. NMS also houses a certified arts-integrated preschool, an after-school program and several summer programs. We provide financial aid and tuition support for over 500 students.

At NMS, we know an arts education improves the quality and enjoyment of life. We strive to develop each student’s creative potential guided by the core values listed below:

**Diversity:** Our school is a vibrant hub for all ages, genders, races, nationalities, and economic backgrounds. Through shared learning and self-expression, we overcome fear of our differences.

**Relationships:** We respond to the individual needs of our students and families, treating them with warmth and care.

**Teaching Excellence:** Our talented and passionate teaching artists inspire students of all levels of ability to discover their unique potential.

**Responsiveness:** Rooted in the classical tradition, we respond to the present-day interests of our community to encourage participation.

**Lifelong Learning:** We provide opportunities for continual growth and development, both in our organization and in those we teach.

**Welcoming Space:** We offer an open and collaborative environment, where individuals feel comfortable and supported.

**Community Presence:** We actively go into the community to share the joy of the arts.
A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We are living through extraordinary times. In this troubled and turbulent period, our school serves as an agent of unity and mutual understanding, spreading the positive ripple effects of arts into Greater New Haven and beyond. In a city where the privileged and underserved seem to inhabit different worlds, we provide a welcoming hub for all individuals to create together, and learn from one another in an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect. In a state with wide disparities in educational and economic opportunity, we provide life-changing arts-based programs on a tuition-free basis for lower-income families. Artistic expression is a basic human need. As our founders realized back in 1911, arts education is also a powerful vehicle for personal growth and academic success.

Under the leadership of our Director of Programs, Noah Bloom, and guided by our Board of Directors, our school today is more representative of New Haven than it was just a few years ago and growing more engaged with the needs of our community. This year, we expanded the diversity of experience and background represented on our leadership team. We also welcomed our most diverse cohort of new faculty to date. We launched the popular, tuition-free Sherry & Alivia Craft Steel Band for teens, hosted the Citywide Youth Poetry Slam, and expanded our tuition-free youth chorus. In the wake of the presidential election, a generous donor established and endowed the “Welcome to the Neighborhood” fund for refugee students (see p. 7).

On page 5 of this report, we highlight the growth of two programs that will shape our future for years to come: The DELTA Initiative (Developing & Empowering Leadership through the Arts), for income-qualified New Haven students in grades 6-12, and ASAA (our After-School Arts Academy), which offers hands-on artistic training and a personal development curriculum for grades 3-5. I invite you to read about these exciting programs.

We will welcome our first cohort of ATLAS, a pioneering arts-based middle school, in Fall, 2019. ATLAS will provide a comprehensive education for 7th and 8th grade students, placing theatrical production at the center of academic learning and personal growth during the crucial middle school years. Built upon the principle of “diversity by design,” the program will promote empathy and creative collaboration.

I am grateful to all of you who have joined with us to advance this important work. These programs touch lives in a profound way, and they would not exist without the generous financial support of our funders. You should take pride in what we have been able to accomplish together. I would also like to thank our amazing team of faculty and staff for their dedication and personal sacrifice over this past year. Every day, I am honored to work with you.

Our Greater New Haven Youth Orchestra, led by Tom Duffy, recently performed in a concert with a youth choir from Haiti. At the concert, Stephen Davenport, a retired Episcopal priest, shared how a donor gifted two violins for Haitian youth in the 1960s. His initial thought, “Haiti needs food--what are they going to do with violins?” Years later, that gift blossomed into Haiti’s only music school - 1,500 students strong – which the Haitian Youth Choir represents abroad. Davenport came to realize that people need BOTH – food AND violins. Individuals and communities survive on physical nourishment, but they thrive on the spiritual uplift that only the arts can provide.

At a time of darkness and division, we will continue to do what we have done for over 100 years - create community, spark potential, and share joy through the arts.

Daniel Gurvich
For Jesse Hameen II, who leads our jazz program, coaches ensembles, and teaches drumset, teaching is a lot more than simply illustrating proper technique. For Jesse, teaching is all about mentoring – and imparting knowledge that has impact far beyond his studio doors.

“Studying jazz and other genres of music, students learn how to improvise, which, when transferred to their personal lives, allows them to think on their feet and to adjust immediately to situations. They also learn how to express their own personality and voice. I try to teach them how to apply the attributes of music into their own lives to become better people and to strive for human excellence,” he says of his philosophy. “Some of those attributes are compassion, sensitivity, support, sharing, leadership, organization, recovering from mistakes, how to listen and how to have patience with others.”

With that attitude, it’s no wonder Jesse forms lasting relationships with his students and their families, and is such a welcome presence in the halls of NMS, where he always greets his colleagues with a contagious smile. He’s taught at NMS for an impressive 18 years - not to mention his international reputation as a performer! Jesse has played professionally all over the world, from New York to Sweden to France, and with jazz greats including Hank Crawford, Charles Brown and Irene Reid, to name just a few.

But it all began in New Haven, where Jesse grew up, living and breathing music in a city that once was considered a “mecca for jazz.” “New Haven prepared me for it all,” he says of his experience. Because of that deep connection to his hometown, Jesse is dedicated to keeping New Haven’s jazz scene vibrant. He has been integral to other jazz programs in the city, including reigniting the New Haven Jazz Festival several years ago.

“I feel like I am contributing something positive back to the community that raised me,” says Jesse. “Through NMS’s programs, these students have opportunities that we did not have growing up. I am happy to be a part of those opportunities.”
We are committed to developing programs that harness the power of arts education as a powerful vehicle for personal growth, academic and career success. DELTA (Developing and Empowering Leadership Through the Arts) and ASAA (After-School Arts Academy) are free for income-qualified families. Both programs allow students to participate in arts-related learning that also teaches important skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity and perseverance, to support success in school and in life. Both programs bring together students from urban and suburban settings, and diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, to learn, play and create together.

DELTA, for dedicated New Haven Public and charter school students in grades 6-12, offers free lessons, classes and ensembles in music or dance, combined with leadership development. DELTA’s Music Path, formerly “City Initiative” (CI), provides instruction to 60 young musicians and builds on 9 years of programming success. To date, every member of CI’s four graduating cohorts has gone on to attend college; most were first-generation college students. DELTA’s Dance Path, formerly “Dance Initiative,” offers intensive multi-genre dance training with collaborative student choreography to 40 students.

ASAA is a unique after-school program for 3rd-5th graders that uses hands-on artistic training and self-exploration as a platform for developing important life skills. Providing creative outlets focused on music, dance, drama and movie-making, the program develops goal-setting, collaborative problem solving and enhanced communication skills.

On each of the four days that the program is offered, the afternoon begins with mentor-led activities that help students gain confidence, grow as learners and work in teams. After that, each day offers a different artistic curriculum:

- **Tuesday:** “Pans and Plays” - Students learn how music can tell stories and how stories are enhanced by music through playing Caribbean steel drums and acting in scenes.
- **Wednesday:** “Musical Warrior” - Participants develop their musicianship through fun activities that include singing, theory games, rhythm study, DoSo 3-string guitar and songwriting.
- **Thursday:** “Magical Movie Maker” - Students collaborate on original short films and music videos, craft personal stories and learn hands-on video production.
- **Friday:** “Dance and Drum” - Students explore the relationship between rhythm and movement, and learn the basics of choreography.
NMS gratefully acknowledges the many generous donors listed below who thoughtfully supported our school’s students and programs in fiscal year 2017.

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**$10,000 TO $19,999 - PRINCIPAL DANCER**
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Marion Feldman
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A New Home in New Haven - and at NMS!

NMS has a rich history serving immigrants, and we are a place for individuals from all walks of life. We proudly include refugees in our vibrant community.

This year, a generous donor anonymously endowed the “Welcome to the Neighborhood Fund” which provides opportunities for refugee families newly settled in the region.

“People who love Neighborhood Music School and want to give children a chance to heal through music came up with this idea,” said the donor, who wanted the fund to benefit both the NMS community and IRIS, New Haven’s non-profit refugee resettlement program.

Ann O’Brien, Communications Director at IRIS, remarked how studying music or dance at NMS enables these new arrivals to connect to our community.

“The arts are an integral part of acculturation.”

The fund allows NMS to serve students like Amal, an eight-year-old ballet student whose family arrived from Syria last year. Dr. Laurel Shader, a volunteer who drives Amal to class says, “Amal just loves every minute. It’s an opportunity that she would not have had otherwise.”
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In Memoriam
Stephen Alan “Steve” Ross (1944-2017)

This year, the field of financial economics lost a giant. And we at NMS lost a dear friend.

Professionally, Steve was internationally renowned as the inventor of the Arbitrage Pricing Theory and the Theory of Agency, as well as the co-discoverer of risk neutral pricing and of the binomial model for pricing derivatives. He was a generous, formative, and beloved mentor to many of today’s leading economists, who turned out in droves for his memorial service.

Steve was a brilliant and broadly influential mind, but at NMS we knew him as a husband, a dad, and a frequent visitor. His wife of 49 years, Carol, a long-time NMS board member and past president, is an adult piano student - and one of our foremost supporters in the community. Steve’s children, Katherine and Jonathan, were students in our school as kids. Steve was a regular presence in our hallways and at school events, including the Twilight Tuesdays series. And yes, when financial matters loomed, Steve was always there with his friendly ear, brilliant mind, and sound advice.

At NMS, we knew Steve as the kind, funny, down to earth soul at Carol’s side. And that’s how we’ll always remember him.
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THANK YOU!

* We regret any errors or omissions in this publication. Please contact the NMS development office at (203) 624-5189, ext. 19 if you have an update or correction.
A Labor of Love

Last fall, Grace Feldman, a 54-year veteran of NMS, director of our Ensemble Program and Chair of Strings, decided that she wanted to help her beloved school by launching a special fundraising appeal. She reached out to a very dedicated group: our alumni, many of whom had been her students over the years and carry wonderful memories of that experience. Grace’s students frequently refer to her as the greatest teacher/mentor they have had in their lives — in any field of study.

In her personal appeal letter — decorated with Grace’s signature drawings — she explained why NMS was so important to the community:

“For the past 105 years, Neighborhood Music School has been a gathering place for students of all ages. Today, the vitality, enthusiasm and sense of community all remain a strong part of NMS. The halls are crowded with students of all ages, ranging from toddlers to senior citizens. Children of Yale professors join in ensembles and classes with financial aid students.”

Grace was clearly onto something. By using her personal touch (every letter was hand-addressed) and reaching out to a population motivated to see NMS succeed, her heartfelt appeal, mailed to 1,336 alumni, raised no less than $45,425.

While there is no doubt that Grace was the driving force behind this campaign, she had a lot of help from friends — including students, faculty and board members, and even family members — who gathered regularly at NMS to stuff envelopes, research alumni and more. Grace’s vision was the impetus for this appeal; their countless hours volunteering made that vision a reality.

“The atmosphere in the room was wonderful,” says Anne-Marie Foltz, who was one of those volunteers, and has been a student at NMS for about 16 years, studying recorder, violin and viola de gamba with Grace, as well as playing in the Never-Too-Late ensemble for adult musicians. Grace has “an encyclopedic memory” for former students, Anne-Marie says, and the group’s collective local knowledge was crucial when tracking down far-flung alumni.

Grace had talked about contacting alumni for many years, and this time around was determined to make it happen, says Anne-Marie. They began with a small list of alumni — but the list kept growing. Soon they were up to 1,000 appeal letters and the project expanded from there, receiving new energy when NMS board member, parent, and Grace student, Kathrin Day Lassila, editor of the Yale Alumni Magazine, contributed another compelling letter:

“As you’ve experienced, NMS is a place like no other. There are barely a handful of schools in the country that provide the kinds of services NMS does, and I’m convinced that none of them have such an incredible ensemble program for students young and old. Grace is only one example of the superb skill that the NMS teachers bring to their teaching. I’d describe it as a combination of professionalism, profound musical ability, and heart,” Kathrin wrote.

“It was fun,” Anne-Marie says. “But it took a lot of work and Grace to do it! She’s the best music teacher there is.”
NMS gratefully acknowledges the donors below who contributed generously to our endowment fund.

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The NMS Cornerstone Society

“You don’t have to be a professional musician for music to become part of you and stay with you all your life. When I was a girl, music changed me. I’m a board member of Neighborhood Music School now, and when I look at the kids in the hallways with their instruments and sheet music, I know how they feel.

There’s the sense of accomplishment when you’ve worked your way through a music book—even your very first one. There’s the pride in mastering something that gives you pleasure. There’s the experience of playing in a group: you feel the parts fitting together, and suddenly you feel joy. When you make music with other people, you make friends.

Not all children choose to make music, but every child deserves the chance. NMS gives them that chance.

Please consider including NMS in your own estate planning. Any gift, large or small, will be a gift to the future.

I would love to have you join me as a member of NMS’s Cornerstone Society and help ensure a strong future for this very special place and the wonderful students it serves. Thank you!”

NMS Board Member, Judith Hackman

Contributions Through In-Kind Donations

NMS acknowledges the organizations, businesses and individuals below who provided in-kinds donations, including musical instruments, equipment, food and other products and services.

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**FACTS & FINANCIALS**

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED**

2,545

**NUMBER OF FACULTY MEMBERS**

133

**NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL LESSON HOURS**

21,189

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**INCOME BY CATEGORY**

- **81.6%**
  - Tuition
  - $3,322,375

- **15.1%**
  - Contributions
  - $613,946

- **3.3%**
  - Investments
  - $135,937

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**EXPENSES BY CATEGORY**

- Faculty Expense: $2,217,122
- Admin Staff: $946,747
- Admin Expenses: $286,093
- Building & Facilities: $282,623
- Financial Aid: $278,517
- Program Expense: $119,575
- Marketing: $49,013
- Development & Events: $42,482

Total: $4,222,173
STUDENTS RECEIVING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

STUDENTS BY TOWN
- NEW HAVEN: 770
- HAMDEN: 340
- GUILFORD: 192
- WOODBRIDGE: 134
- NORTH HAVEN: 112
- MADISON: 81
- BRANFORD: 77
- ORANGE: 73
- MILFORD: 68
- WEST HAVEN: 64
- OTHER: 188

STUDENTS BY AGE
- 0-5: 14.6%
- 6-18: 60.6%
- 19-64: 15.9%
- 65+: 8.9%

213 NUMBER OF WEEKLY CLASSES & ENSEMBLES
$278,000 AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL AID AWARDED
NMS acknowledges the donors listed below who participated in the FY2017 Great Give campaign which raised $49,142.78.

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* We regret any errors or omissions in this publication. Please contact the NMS development office at (203) 624-5189, ext. 19 if you have an update or correction.
NMS is grateful for the many individuals listed here who made a gift in honor of or in memory of someone special.

**In Honor Of**

**Julie Asuma Levene**
Jerome Serling

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Kathrin Lassila
Sheila Taub

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NMS’s Dancing with Parkinson’s (DwP) program offers individuals with Parkinson’s and related neurological disorders (along with caregivers) the opportunity to explore movement in a variety of dance styles. The classes, in Middletown, New London and Branford, are based on the Dance for PD™ program of the Mark Morris Dance Group in Brooklyn, N.Y. They are taught by NMS faculty, including Program Coordinator Laura Richling.

“It’s an artistic pursuit. Here is a sacred place where you can go and be a dancer, rather than a patient. It can become a really meaningful thing for people,” says Laura. “Additional benefit...is the chance to be with a group of people who largely understand what you’re going through.”

The Connecticut Parkinson’s Working Group is a long-time supporter and their president, Jeffrey LaGrange, noted, “people’s lives are better for this program--so many people who come to our program are alone and need friendship.”

Laura says that viewing DwP through this artistic lens, unlike the medical lens used in so many activities designed for this population, makes the program truly unique.
A CONVERSATION
WITH NMS PAST PRESIDENTS

Volunteer leadership is integral to successful non-profits, and NMS is no exception. We spoke with some of our past board presidents about their years of service: Burton Alter, Linda Burt, Alayne Mouradian, Carol Ross, and Hedda Rubenstein.

What brought you to NMS and why did you stay?
Carol Ross: In our family, music was essential to a well-rounded education. As soon as we moved here in 1977, we enrolled our children in the nursery school. Why NMS? Because I wanted a community of learning. Here was the possibility of finding other families with shared interests.
Linda Burt: We moved here in 1976. I was working as a speech pathologist, but needed something extra for myself, so I started taking Rebecca Raffaelli’s adult piano class. There were a number of us that started volunteering, and found our way to the board. Adult volunteerism was part of our era; it created a social, musical network that we could all continue to benefit from. We organized the library, re-shelved music, cleared out rooms and stuffed envelopes.
Carol: When I was retiring, NMS became a place where I could use my skills. NMS was there to provide that rich environment for continual growth.

What are you most proud of?
Linda: I have to go back a little in the history. There had been a series of executive directors and the school was in physical deterioration. The board decided to make a change and we brought in Larry [Zukof] - that was the rebirth of the school.
Burton Alter: Years of effort with Carol Ross, Linda Burt and Larry Zukof in securing public and private funding to enable the expansion and refurbishing of the Audubon Street facility. [Ed. note: a $6MM capital campaign was completed in 2009.]
Linda: [Discussing the move to Audubon Street in 1968] We made a conscious decision that our home is in New Haven and to provide our music lessons to anyone who wants them.
Alayne Mouradian: Through active committees and events which raised the school’s visibility, we engaged board members and community members in the work of the school.
Hedda Rubenstein: The nature of volunteerism has changed; we are no longer in the corner typing. What we contribute is more than stuffing envelopes. That evolution to a more strategic role was necessary.

What do you envision for NMS’s future?
Linda: There is something very special at this school. The longevity and the dedication to both children and adults. The school is aligning its programs with the New Haven of today.
Carol: Steady and planned growth. I think this organization is incredible for the community. We meet people where they are, regardless of background, age or ability. I think we can continue to develop that, and further grow wellness and creative aging programs for older adults.
Linda: When I go back to thinking about the origins of this school (as a settlement house) – it was to help the immigrant population…and arts education was an important part of that.
Alayne: It is the school’s founding mission that will define its future. It is an enduring and noble pursuit.
Linda: What we have here, it’s worth it.
2016-2017 Student Awards
Held Monday, June 5, 2017

The Grace A. Feldman Endowment Award for Ensemble Excellence:
The NMS Premier Jazz Ensemble, coached by Jeff Fuller:
Nigel Regan, alto sax; Ryan Griffiths, tenor sax; Tyler Felson, trumpet; Derrick Gaskins, trombone; Gary Grippo, guitar; Anton Kot, piano; Matt Aranow, bass; Tyler Jenkins, drums

The Danko - Todd Award for Excellence in Jazz Performance:
Tyler Jenkins, drum student of Jesse Hameen II, member of the NMS Premier Jazz Ensemble & NMS Latin Jazz Ensemble, participant in the City Initiative program

Barbara L. Townshend Award for a Classical Piano Student:
Eddie Salazar, piano student of Mary Bloom

Regina M. Lilly-Warner Scholar Award for New Haven Public School Students:
Amber Green, piano student of Alexis Zingale, voice student of Terrence Fay, participant in the City Initiative program

The Jon T. Hirschoff Scholarship (Inaugural Presentation):
Claire Dobbins, piano student of Rebecca Raffaelli

Executive Director’s Award for Excellence in Performance:
Will Hartog, French horn student of Christopher Fry, member of the Premier Wind Quintet, Greater New Haven Youth Orchestra & the Greater New Haven Symphonic Wind Ensemble

Paul Stelben, bassoon student of Sue Zoellner-Cross, member of the Premier Wind Quintet, the Greater New Haven Youth Orchestra & various NMS chamber groups

The President’s Award for Outstanding Achievement and Citizenship at NMS:
Michael Barnes, long time flute student of Chris Radawiec, member of the Premier Wind Quintet, Greater New Haven Youth Orchestra & the Greater New Haven Symphonic Wind Ensemble, graduate of the NMS Young Artist Diploma Program, composition student of Istvan B'Racz, NMS music theory student, participant in various chamber groups, including Summer Baroque & Baroque Ensemble

Matteo Coletta, percussion student of Gretchen Hary, member of the Greater New Haven Youth Orchestra & the Greater New Haven Symphonic Wind Ensemble, NMS Percussion Ensemble, participant in NMS Rock Ensembles, Summer Rocks! & Summer Jazz

Young Artist Diploma Program Presentation:
Michael Barnes, flute student of Chris Radawiec
Brian Hao, piano student of Rina Kinber