



# Parents as Partners Online 2012

By Christie Felsing

From January 30 through June 30, more than 6900 parents and teachers enrolled in the 2012 Parents as Partners Online event. This SAA offering aimed to provide a dose of parent education, as well as nurture, inspire and rejuvenate participants. Thirty-two new talks plus sixteen selected presentations from PPO 2011 addressed such subjects as autism, chamber music, early childhood education, graduation, group lessons, institutes, listening, performance, philosophy, practice tips, parent-child relationships, reading, repetition, review, Suzuki perspectives/memories, teacher appreciation, teens and tone production.

This second year of Parents as Partners Online included 24/7 access to both video and audio podcasts of each presentation, online commentaries and an opportunity to start a new parent education discussion topic. Teachers were encouraged to guide parents in their viewing selection, organize a parent meeting and hold discussions afterwards. Some studios started a "PPO Club" with informal gatherings for question-answer dialogue. At the Aber Suzuki Center in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, parents met for coffee and discussion with Pat D'Ercole. After viewing James Hutchins' session "7 Guarantees for More Progress During Practice," ASC parents "offered their thoughts about which ideas they thought would work with their child and why. As one of the parents stated, 'The video reminds me that even though my children are getting older, I still need to make practice fun. It's something I paid a lot of attention to when they were preschoolers, but I tended to forget as they grew. Parents as Partners Online gave me new information, insight on things I never thought of before, but also reminded me of the more forgettable characteristics of practice that I know, but definitely need to be reminded of time and time again.' " Another ASC parent shared, "Spending 15-20 minutes watching a Parents as Partners video is a small investment to make to support me becoming a better Suzuki parent."

Suzuki teachers also shared various personal benefits of the project. Violin and viola teacher Carol Kiefer of Philadelphia said, "Mostly, I have a better sense of where each parent is in terms of the Suzuki philosophy and their understanding of practice skills."

Violin teacher Therese Wirakesuma, based in Indonesia, shared several thoughts about Beth Cantrell's session "Nurturing the Individual: Rivers, Trails and Time": "I appreciate the reminder that music learning follows a long meandering path with scenery that may look the same each day. It is a challenge to stay in the moment and notice and celebrate the little surprises and changes, to steer the course with the end in mind, and to

find that sense of peace/patience that comes from letting the child blossom in his/her own time."

Ann Montzka-Smelter's talk on "Trusting Your Teacher" elicited much feedback, including a post by Connecticut teacher/parent Donna Ngai, which stated, "Parents hold such power, even without speaking a word. This is so true! And is sometimes so hard to do... to sit quiet and see what comes out of what just happened."

Similarly, Kathleen Spring's session "How You Can Be Helpful and Supportive of Your Teacher" addressed key studio expectations. After viewing, Emily Sommermann posted, "Communication between parents and teacher is so important. When the student and parents are in sync with the teacher, progress moves along more quickly. Kids are inspired when they hear themselves improving, thus more motivated to learn, more fun is had, parents are happier too!"

The 2012 Parents as Partners Online was made possible by the contributions of numerous people. Many thanks to the 2012 presenters for their time, preparation and creativity in this year's project! New sessions included:

- A Realistic Look at Balancing Activities (Ellie Albers LeRoux)
- A Star for Victor (Susan Baer)
- Are We Having Fun Yet? Part 2 (Lucy Shaw)
- Around the World of Wonder: Life Lessons with Dr. Suzuki (Karen Kimmett)
- Children on the Autism Spectrum: Collaborating Towards Success (Laurie Scott)
- Competition: Striving Together or Against? (Koen Rens)
- Dynamic Practice: *Creative Movement Games for Channeling Energy, Regaining Focus and Productive Practice* (Sarah Bylander Montzka)
- Every Child Can: Believe and Envision (Diana Galindo)
- Graduation: What It Really Means (Tal Schifter and Susan Crawford)
- Guarantees for More Progress During Practice—The Sequel (James Hutchins)
- Help! I'm So Different From (and Similar To) My Child (Carrie Reuning-Hummel)
- How You Can Be Helpful and Supportive of Your Teacher (Kathleen Spring)
- Ideas for Creative Review (Robert Richardson)
- The Importance of Group Classes (Jennifer Burton)
- Let's Hear from the Students! (Reagan Brasch)
- Motivated to Practice (Irene Mitchell)
- Nurturing the Individual: Rivers, Trails and Time (Beth Cantrell)

- Our Ambitions, Our Children—A Reality Check! (Teri Einfeldt and Anne Lambright)
- Parent Power! (Donna Ngai, Jessica Meyer, Calida Jones)
- Power (Edmund Sprunger)
- The Power of Music (Fernando Pinero)
- Practice Buddies (Beatrice Blanc)
- Preparing for Recitals and Performances (Sasha Garver)
- The Rewards from the Special Ones (Rafael Vidiera)
- Sharing the Vision of Excellence (Lauren Baker)
- The Suzuki Early Childhood Experience (Lynn McCall)
- Suzuki Perspectives (Kimberly Meier-Sims)
- Tatu Mianzi and the Teen Beat (Susan Reed)
- Trusting Your Teacher (Ann Montzka-Smelter)
- Why Are Summer Institutes Worthwhile? (Donna Davis, Debby Bandy, Irene Mitchell)
- Why Delayed Reading is Important (Joanne Martin)
- Working with Adolescents and Teenagers (Daniel Gee)

**Additional thanks to past 2011 presenters, whose talks were replayed as part of PPO 2012:** Susan Baer (The Value of Repetition), Teri Einfeldt (The Changing Role of the Parent), Teri Einfeldt with teen panelists Rachel Margolis, Anny Li, Tiana Piscitelli, Luke Piscitelli, Emily Surprenant, Ian Sunde, Andrew Sunde, Selah Kwak, Nathan Kwak, Chas Pfeifer, Elizabeth McDonald (Suzuki Teen Interview), Patty Erusha (Practice Pointers), Margaret Ferry (Balancing Busy Schedules), Everett and Santha Goodwin (Seeing the Results of Long Term

Commitment), Carey Beth Hockett (Making Practice More Effective and Fun!), Michele Horner (Listening like a Maniac!), James Hutchins (7 Guarantees for More Progress during Practice), Ed Kreitman (Listening), Cathryn Lee (Why Tone?), Rebecca Martin Rebecca Martin with parent panelists Jennifer Blankenship, Julie Stibbards and Cat Akerson Bendt (The Suzuki Triangle Relationship), Patricia Purcell (Parent Membership), Diane Slone (Suzuki Memories), Edmund Sprunger (It's OK to Struggle), and William Starr with Boulder Suzuki Strings panelists Emily Anne Bowman, Stacey Brady and Amy Gesmer-Packman (Developing Independence from the Start).

**A special thank you to the following moderators, who volunteered to answer new discussion posts:** Beatrice Blanc, Donna Davis, Rachel Fabulich, Sasha Garver, Daniel Gee, Lee Hadden, Michele Horner, James Hutchins, Carol Kiefer, Charles Krigbaum, Jessica Meyer, Irene Mitchell, Laura Nerenberg, Diana Nuttall, Carrie Reuning-Hummel, Wendy Seravalle-Smith, Diane Slone, Yasmin Craig Vitalius, and Carol Waldvogel.

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