Crossroads Academy Strings Program
2017-2018

Why do we teach violin?

The violin is considered to be one of the most challenging and rewarding instruments to learn at any age. Finger placement and bow movement are only two of the many skills developed when children learn to play a string instrument. Learning to play by ear strengthens neural connections that lead to the visual patterns of music notation. As they grow older and more experienced through practice, they join together and play in parts as an ensemble. This group work teaches them how to collaborate creatively. Violin instruction also encourages children to listen deeply and play carefully. Challenging themselves by practicing through a difficult section of music and sticking to it develops a can-do attitude. This type of perseverance is not only a core virtue at Crossroads but also a trait proven to contribute to success in life.

In addition, giving students the chance to hold and learn to play the violin gives them a deeper appreciation for orchestral music. Without this understanding, audience numbers decrease, and there are fewer donors to keep the art form alive. Every generation builds a culture of preservation. Knowing, first hand, the work that goes into playing the violin deepens the Crossroads students’ connection to the world of music, making it something worth keeping alive.

Will the students be successful?

Our program takes a step-by-step approach allowing all first graders to have access to nearly one-on-one instruction of basic violin. In second grade, the students will continue to develop their basic skills on the violin. They will also begin to work together on ensemble music. Third and fourth graders will have an ensemble class once a week. Students seeking private lessons can discuss the extracurricular opportunities. Ongoing conversations with Mr. Glee and his assistants keep you up-to-date on your child’s progress.

Through our Strings Program, the students will be able to...

- cultivate perseverance and a growth mindset through sustained effort;
- learn to create a supportive, collaborative environment;
- build self-confidence through public performances;
- learn proper techniques of playing a string instrument;
- learn to read musical notation;
- learn to be sensitive to tone and intonation; and
- learn to be creative and experience the joys of playing music.
**First Grade: Learning fundamental skills**
All first grade students will have a violin class once a week.*1 The students will learn basic techniques and build skills with the instrument to play simple songs from *Suzuki Violin School Volume 1*. They will also be learning to read sheet music from *Belwin Course for Strings Book 1* (by Samuel Applebaum). The instruction will be in a one-on-one or two-on-one setting, for approximately fifteen minutes.

**Second Grade: Working towards playing as an ensemble**
All second grade students will have the violin class once a week.*1*2 They will begin the year focusing mostly on developing the basic skills on the violin in a small group setting. Later, they will have alternating weeks between small group lessons and ensemble classes. They will also be learning to read sheet music from *Belwin Course for Strings Book 1* (by Samuel Applebaum).

**Third and Fourth Grades: Expanding their skills as performers**
The program will be an elective.*2*4 Parents will have the opportunity to opt their child(ren) into the Strings Programs at the beginning of the school year and again in January. The class will be held once a week as an ensemble rehearsal. The students in the ensemble are highly encouraged to have their own instrument (rented/purchased), take private lessons, and/or have ways and time to practice the instrument outside of school hours.

*1. With an ongoing conversation with the parents, in rare cases, some students may opt out of the program.
*2. If any students play a *string* instrument other than the violin and have been taking lessons outside of school, they are encouraged to bring their instrument to school and play that instrument instead of violin.
*3. Class grouping evaluations will be done in September and again in January.
*4. See the attached form at the end.

**Possible performing opportunities for ensemble groups:**
- Grandparents Day (Oct)
- Holiday Performance (Dec)
- Family Arts Night (Feb)
- Shakespeare Day (May)
- Final Assembly (June)

**Director of the Strings Program**
Glee Charlestream
[glee.charlestream@crossroadsacademy.org](mailto:glee.charlestream@crossroadsacademy.org)