Twenty Years of Spreading The Love of Music

Hungry for Music started in 1992 with a street musician concert to benefit the homeless.

Within three years, it had become a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to expanding opportunities in music for children.

And now, 20 years later, the organization has placed more than 7,000 instruments into the hands of young aspiring musicians.

It has delivered everything from guitars to horns to strings to harps to kids in 42 states and 12 countries. It now collects and donates more than 500 instruments a year all over the country.

Its regular recipients are in Appalachia, Chicago, Austin, the D.C. Area, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York. But its reach is truly nationwide and beyond.

Today, twenty years after those early days when the organization struggled to make ends meet with concerts, raffles, CD sales, and T-shirts, it has morphed into a full-fledged and full-time force for good in the musical community.

Here are twenty highlights from our twenty-year history.
Intonation Music Workshop

“Since 2009, Hungry for Music has played a crucial role in bringing IMW’s mission to fruition through annual instrument donations. As IMW has grown from serving six to 600 students annually, Hungry for Music has been there every step of the way, placing much-needed rock band instruments into IMW classrooms across the city and into the hands of our students through our instrument library so that they can practice at home.

We are deeply grateful for the dedication and generosity of Jeff Campbell and his team and literally could not do what we do without the instruments and equipment they provide. It’s inspiring when one stops to think that IMW is just one small part of a much larger national network of instrument support HFM provides. From Appalachia to the inner city, HFM is out there providing thousands with the instruments they need to make music!”

- Mike Simons, Intonation Music Workshop
“Hungry for Music has been a lifesaver for Junior Appalachian Musicians, Inc. (JAM), since it incorporated in 2008 as a regional organization. JAM, Inc., offers support, resources and materials to nearly 30 after-school JAM programs. JAM, which provides instruction in traditional Appalachian music, serves many underprivileged children in grades 3-8 in the Southern Appalachian Mountains, and loaner instruments are often a key resource in helping these programs be successful each year. Hungry for Music has continued to support JAM with donations of guitars, banjos, and mandolins, and as a result, you can hear those instruments ring throughout Southern Virginia, Western North Carolina, Upstate South Carolina, and starting in Fall of 2014, East Tennessee. JAM, Inc., is proud to have Hungry for Music as a partner!”

- Brett Morris Martin, Executive Director, Junior Appalachian Musicians, Inc.
More than a decade ago, Hungry For Music donated a violin to Nora, then a young girl living in an orphanage in Magdalena, Mexico, through a program called Bridges Across Borders. She grew up to not only play but to learn to love the instrument and all music meant to her.

She now is a violin instructor at the Casa De La Cultura. She said the instrument we donated to her changed her life, and she, in turn, wants to use music to change the life of others.

"Playing the violin is so special. It is the possibility of advancing in life when all else seemed difficult to me (at the orphanage),” she said. “I found a family in all those whose passion is music. I now have the possibility to give the opportunity to other small ones to learn as I did. To give a chance to those without opportunities. It is a way of life – a way to support my community and to be more alive.”

“Thanks to your work, not only me but other people in [the orphanages at] Magdalena, Imuris and St Ana who enjoy learning music. I believe that even you do not know how much you have changed my life and other people’s lives – through your organization and your dedication to people you do not even know.”

Nora Pays It Forward

One of Nora’s students at the orphanage.
Nora before a recent gig with a mariachi band.
Nora practicing around age 14.
Sometimes we’re helping kids who just want to get involved in music and see if it’s for them. Sometimes we’re helping truly gifted, driven individuals who one day might make the music all of us listen to.

That may be the case with Tyron Tention. By the fourth grade he was arranging music. In the fifth grade he received a keyboard from Hungry for Music. In the sixth grade, he asked for a violin. “He told me ‘I’m going to be a conductor, so I need to know all the instruments,” said his teacher Anita Rozenel in Randallstown, Md. In the seventh grade, as promised by Hungry for Music, Tyron received a Yamaha clavinova piano for keeping his grades up.

When Tyron mentioned to us he had composed some of his own music and wanted to record them, we arranged for him recording sessions with the generous Cletus Kennelly’s Urban Garden Studio in Wheaton, Md.

Today Tyron is going to be a senior at the prestigious Baltimore School of Arts with aspirations to be a professional musician. Without the donations, said his mother, “I’m sure we wouldn’t be where we are now.”
Amy Farris Annual Memorial Donations

Since 2009, Hungry for Music has been making annual donations to the Austin Independent School District in honor of the late violinist Amy Farris who died that September. Amy grew up in Austin, attended Bedicheck Middle School and Crockett High school and went on to teach for a few years at Mendez Middle, also in Austin.

As a teacher, Amy developed strong bonds with her students and kept up with their progress even after she was no longer teaching them. When she arrived as the teacher at Mendez, there were few usable instruments in the inventory, so Amy immediately recruited her musician friends to play a benefit concert to raise the needed funds. Years after she moved to Los Angeles, the Mendez orchestra would receive donations from benefactors Amy had recruited to help sustain their program. Before she passed away, Amy had chosen Hungry for Music as her memorial charity.

To honor Amy, the Hungry for Music has enabled more than 50 string students in Austin to experience the pride of instrument ownership. These donations benefited not only the students themselves but the orchestra programs they participate in as well. Most importantly, the donations have been a wonderful tribute to Amy Farris’ blessed memory.
The Roots of Music is an innovative free after-school music program that serves children in New Orleans. The program was founded by Rebirth Brass Band member Derek Tabb and Allison Reinhardt. Our organizations share the belief that music has the power to transform lives.

The Roots of Music empowers the youth of New Orleans through music education, academic support and mentorship, and it preserves and promotes the unique musical and cultural heritage of the city. The goal is to provide kids the resources they need to lead positive, productive, self-reliant lives.

Since 2009, Hungry for Music has made several deliveries of brass, woodwind, drums and keyboards to support this award-winning music program.

“We were amazingly lucky enough to receive 30 instruments from Hungry for Music. Thanks to their generosity, we’re now able to bring in new students in the coming weeks!”
- Roots of Music, New Orleans, November 2014
In 2003, Rockport Shoe Company teamed with Epiphone Guitars for an in-store marketing promotion. The guitars were bright orange and carried the Rockport logo. After the promotion ended, Rockport donated the promotional guitars to charity. Hungry for Music received 100 of the guitars in 2004, and we distributed the guitars to individuals and music programs including Girls Rock and Roll Camp in Portland, Ore., and Little Kids Rock. We also raffled and auctioned some of the guitars to help with operational expenses of our music instrument donation program, such as fuel and shipping costs.

A recipient in Minnesota said it was the "coolest guitar I have ever seen" after receiving it on Christmas Day.
Upright basses always have been our toughest request – many more people want them than donate them. So, in 2010, when a mom from southern Illinois called and asked for one for her son, we told her the best we could do was ask around. Before we could even put out the request, though, a mom in Alexandria, Va., said her son had three such basses and wanted to donate one of them. Then, it was a matter of getting this big, heavy musical instrument to Illinois in time for Christmas. The mom in Illinois put a note on Craigslist for anyone who happened to be driving to St. Louis for the holiday asking if they would mind letting the bass ride along. A couple responded, and her son, Alex Waters, had an outstanding Christmas. But the story doesn’t end there. Alex’s mom became a volunteer for HFM, held instrument drives and has herself provided instruments for kids in her area. As for Alex, he has been invited for the second straight year to play bass at the state musical finals and several colleges have offered scholarships.

Christmas Bass

Alex Waters
El Sistema, the powerful music program that began in Venezuela and has been featured on “60 Minutes,” has been training music teachers to bring the El Sistema programs to the U.S. Hungry for Music has helped three of these programs get started – the Revolution of Hope music program in the Roxbury section of Boston, the St. Luke’s El Sistema program in New York City, and a program in Washington, D.C. Hungry for Music has supported these programs with violin, violas, cellos and basses.

St. Luke’s Youth Orchestra NYC
"By putting musical instruments into hungry hands, Hungry for Music has been donating to Road Recovery large portions of musical instruments (electric guitars, basses, amplifiers, keyboards, drum kits, and more) for several years. With great appreciation, Road Recovery commends Mr. Campbell and Hungry for Music – showing how two non-profits can provide instruments and musical experiences to young people who would not normally have the opportunity to experience a kind of freedom and self-discovery to overcome adversity."

- The Road Recovery Foundation

Road Recovery kids rehearsing.
Believe it or not, more than half the music instruments Hungry for Music distributes are collected by teenagers and young adults performing community service project requirements. Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, Boy Scouts, high school music groups, musical sororities/fraternities and others have all been a huge support to our mission over the years.

Their help has allowed us to double our outreach. That is both inspiring and encouraging to us. Kids helping kids. Kids learning the purpose of their existence. It’s a beautiful thing to witness and we are very grateful.
Any time people are trying to get musical instruments into the hands of needy kids, Hungry for Music stands ready to help – no matter where those people are. So, in 2010, when HFM got a call from Bruce Adams, who was working on the Montgomery County, Md., Sister Cities project asking for help with Montgomery County’s sister city of Morazan, El Salvador, we sprang into action. Since it’s not all that easy – or affordable – to get musical instruments into El Salvador, we decided to raise money for them instead. This way, kids could play music, and the local economy would receive a boost. We raised $2,500, in part by raffling off a First Act guitar at Bethesda Big Train games and at Strathmore Hall, a performing arts facility in Montgomery County, and in part through gifts from others, such as the Haydee’s Restaurant, a Salvadorean eatery in Washington, D.C.

Thanks to the partnership between the Big Train, Adams and HFM, a music store in El Salvador provided 50 acoustic guitars, 25 small guitars, six violins four metronomes for children to use in the new center, and an ongoing effort has been established to continue to meet this community’s needs. Besides Montgomery County Sister Cities program, we have donated instruments through other agencies such as Bridges AcrossBorders (Mexico, Central America, South America), Haiti Outreach – Pwoje Espwa - HOPE (Haiti), Bill Jenkins World of Music (India), Paul Anastasio’s Fiddle Outreach (Mexico)
Anthony Mullens was headed for trouble, his grandmother Anne Shea said recently.

He was a 7th grader who was angry at the world. Then one day in 2006 he received a saxophone from Hungry for Music. He was one of hundreds of kids to begin their musical journey in this way.

That saxophone meant everything to Anthony. “It wasn’t something he was borrowing. It was his. And it became so important to him.”

He began to play in the marching band and concert band at Langston Commons High School in Peoria, Ill. Before long, his grandmother said, “He started to succeed and the school started to call for good reasons.” He ended up as one of his school’s leaders in competitions.

When he moved on he gave that saxophone to his cousin who also played in the concert and marching bands throughout high school. And when his own brother, Alex, was going to high school Anthony recruited him to the band.

Anthony Shea graduated high school at the top of his class. He is now twenty years old and serves in Afghanistan as a Navy Corpsman who supports a Marine artillery unit. His superiors regard him as a top-notch soldier.

“Anthony is where he is today because of Hungry for Music,” Anne Shea said. “Music kept him centered. He would’ve been one of those throwaway kids without it.”
We’ve made two donations of violins and violas over the last five years to the Rhode Island Fiddle Project. These donations led to us supporting other projects in the Providence, R.I., including Music & Arts and a couple of area high schools.

“The students who are benefiting from Hungry for Music’s instruments range from 5th through 11th grades. Some students have been on our free program’s wait list for one or two years, so they are at many different ages when they begin the violin. That being said, it’s been a particularly powerful role-modeling experience for our younger students to see 10th and 11th graders leading the way as committed beginners. Even in their first year, many students are already engaged in peer leadership and peer teaching. As they learn new music, they begin to pass it and strengthen their own knowledge by teaching pieces to each other. Thanks so much for your support of this work.” Music Director, Rhode Island Fiddle Project
Getting disparate musicians together to serve others is how Hungry for Music got started. To help support its outreach Hungry for Music began releasing themed compilation CDs to promote its outreach and raise funds. Before CDs took a backseat to downloads, Hungry for Music released 30 CDs of Christmas, Chanukah, Baseball and Artist Tributes.

Some of the CD releases featured DC-area artists; others included national recording artists such as Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, George Winston, Jerry Jeff Walker, Dave Alvin, Joe Ely, John Prine, Peter Case, June Carter Cash, Iris Dement, Maura O’Connell, Susan Cowsill, Kim Richey, Hazel Dickens, James McMurtry, Chris Smither, Dave Alvin, and many others.

The CDs provided an excellent lift in HFM’s early fundraiser efforts and became a signature fundraising initiative for more than a decade. The CD releases could not have been done without the support of all the talented musicians who contributed by either recording or licensing a song pro bono to support the cause.

The Diamond Cuts series was the most successful of the themed CD releases. It was written up in the New York Times and the subject of three interviews on NPR’s “Morning Edition with Bob Edwards” over the years, and two more when Edwards moved to XM Radio.

CDs available here: http://www.hungryformusic.org/music-store.html
It was near the Kingston, N.Y., exit, right off the New York Thruway, when Wyndy died. She had gurgled a bit and, really, we’d known the end was near for months. But on that late-summer day in 2013, Wyndy, the van in which thousands of instruments traveled from generous music lovers to young aspiring musicians, made her last mission. That van was, in ways, the lifeblood of the organization. Hundreds of trips totaling nearly a quarter-million miles had been taken in that vehicle. Its loss was somewhat personal, but from the standpoint of Hungry for Music, it was a critical loss.

In stepped Mike and Genny Fontaine, owners of Commonwealth Roofing and Siding in Chantilly, Va. They are a company and a family dedicated to community service. We met Mike at COFaQUE – he was cooking, naturally. He also cooks and otherwise helps wounded and returning veterans.

In our case, he had a Ford Expedition that he was planning to trade in. But instead of trading it in, Mike donated it to Hungry for Music. To this day, it is Wyndy’s proud successor. It has a perfect deep cargo space for holding musical instruments of all shapes and sizes. It is racking up the miles – and the instruments collected and delivered – at a rate worthy of Wyndy herself.

Also, Mike and Genny donated warehouse space to store instruments. “This is a Godsend,” said Jeff Campbell, HFM’s founder. “We collect and deliver a lot of instruments in the D.C. area, and to have a space to store them is incredible. Mike goes out of his way to help people, and this is just another example of that.”
Night of 100 Elvises has supported Hungry for Music almost from the beginning. For almost 20 years, our great friends at Elvis have allowed us to promote our outreach and also raise funds through various raffles at this annual legendary Baltimore music extravaganza. If you haven’t gone, it’s worth the experience. It’s held annually the first Saturday of December. www.Nightof100Elvises.com
It started as a few friends getting together for barbecue. Then, it became a barbecue competition. Then, in August 2007, it became a fundraiser for Hungry for Music. It's called COFaQue – Circle of Friends barbecue – and it has been a key part in helping Hungry for Music get the support it needs and to further its mission.

The event has been held at Quail Ridge Lake in Aldie, Va., but a new location was sought because of development in the area near where the family of Scott Raughton, who has generously extended his hospitality to our organization, his friends and others for years.
Hungry for Crawfish Boil

You can take people out of Louisiana, but you can’t take the Louisiana out of those people.

When a group of friends from the Bayou State found themselves in the Washington, D.C., area as adults, they began to hold annual crawfish boils. When Hungry for Music emerged as a force for getting music to needy kids, the Louisianans, as they always do, found a way to help this organization—which was, after all, founded by a man from Shreveport, La.

In the early 1990s the first crawfish boils were held in the backyard of a friend. Today, it has grown too large for a backyard and now is held at Fort Hunt Park in Alexandria, Va. It is a sun-splashed day, most years, of eating, drinking, live music and revisiting old times.

The event was probably Hungry for Music’s most consistently successful fundraiser in its early years and continues to be a huge draw today. The 20th Annual Hungry for Crawfish is set for May 30, 2015.
The Pick Me Up Foundation certainly picked us up at the end of our 20th year! The group collected more than 200 instruments in a drive in November and donated more than 100 to Hungry for Music to bolster our inventory headed into 2015. The PMU Foundation was founded to honor the life of musician Aaron Reed. That means providing instruments so those without them can play. We are happy to partner with this organization with truly like-minded goals.

www.thepickmeupfoundation.com

Some of the 100 instruments donated by PMU to HFM in Dec. 2014.
Thank you for taking the time to look over the highlights from our 20-year history.

We look back with satisfaction, joy, and gratitude at the number of instruments that we have distributed in our history on a shoestring budget, as Hungry for Music has grown from a fledgling part-time to a full-time organization with an international outreach that donates over 500 instruments annually.

Our outreach would not be possible without:

• Volunteers who supported us in collecting, repairing, then re-distributing the musical instruments.
• Volunteers who support us at events.
• Supporters who have helped us financially in tough times.
• Donors who contributed guitars for us to sale or raffle that helped us pay for the cost of picking up, delivering, or shipping music instruments.
• Donors who contributed their music instruments that they rescued from under their bed, closets, basement or garage.
• Artists musicians who have contributed their time and talent for a benefit concert or HFM CD release.

All of these people are the life that flows through Hungry for Music and we would not be able to give the gift of music without them.

We look forward to twenty more years of giving the gift of music.