



Saskatoon Suzuki String Program Newsletter

November 2009

www.saskatoonsuzukistrings.com

President's Message

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Wow, it's hard to believe it's almost Christmas! Only a month left to practice all those Christmas Carols to play for your family and friends...

We've had a busy fall already with several fun events including the Halloween Party (with the spooky "horror chord"), the solo day, and the recent performance and bake sale at Lawson Heights Mall. I encourage everyone to participate in the "extra" community performances at various times of the year. These are fun and also help to promote our program to the greater community.

We've had a number of changes this year, the biggest of which has been a change to our venue for group lessons and orchestras. I want to thank everyone for their continued support and patience in making this transition a smooth one. Thanks to the hard work of Karen Koehler, we've also launched a

new fundraising initiative called Fundscrip. If you missed the first opportunity to order gift cards to support our program, don't despair - there will be additional opportunities.

I hope you plan on attending our upcoming Christmas Party on December 3. This is definitely one of the highlights of the year, with lots of great music, food, and Cheer ... and you never know who just might show up!

Why not also take in the Saskatoon Symphony's performance of Handel's Messiah on December 5, featuring some of our talented Suzuki teachers.

On behalf of the entire Suzuki Strings Board of Directors, I would like to wish you and your family a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Dave Klymyshyn



SUZUKI PARENTS ELIGIBLE FOR SASKATCHEWAN'S NEW REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT

In 2009, the Government of Saskatchewan introduced the Active Families Benefit (AFB) which is a new refundable tax benefit for Saskatchewan families who have children participating in cultural, recreational, and sports activities. The AFB allows the parent or legal guardian of a child who is six to fourteen years of age and who is registered in a cultural, recreational, and sports program to receive a fully refundable tax benefit of up to \$150 per year. Families who have children participating in the Saskatoon Suzuki Strings Program are eligible for the AFB.

To claim the benefit, the child's parent or legal guardian must file a personal income tax return for 2009. Because the AFB is a refundable tax benefit, it is not necessary that the tax-filer has taxable income to claim the benefit.

In order to allow families within our Program to claim for the AFB when they file their 2009 personal income tax returns, we will be issuing receipts in early February 2010 to all families with children registered and participating in our 2009-10 group and orchestra programs. The receipts will be issued to all families regardless of the age of the child. It should be noted that while the AFB is provided for children who are 6 to 14 years of age in 2009, provision has been made to also include those children who turn 6 and 15 during 2009.

The issuance of a receipt does not represent the Program's determination of the recipient's eligibility to receive the AFB. Families will have to determine their eligibility based their specific circumstances (e.g. whether the child falls within the specified age range, whether a parent or legal guardian can claim the benefit).

The receipts will be issued according to the following criteria:

Parents will be required to enter the age of their child on the receipts.

The receipts will be issued for actual payments made for the 2009-10 Program during each calendar year.

For those families who provided a post-dated cheque for January 2010, two receipts will be issued – one for the cheques that could be cashed before December 31, 2009 and another for the cheques that could not be cashed until after December 31, 2009. The first receipt will apply to the 2009 taxation year and the second receipt will apply to the 2010 taxation year. Parents who are issued receipts for 2010 should keep them in a safe place since duplicate receipts will not be provided to replace lost receipts.

The receipts will be issued for the actual payment of Suzuki membership (not including the portion collected on behalf of the Saskatchewan Orchestral Association), group lesson fees, and orchestra lesson fees. For families with more than one child registered in the program, the membership fee will be allocated to maximize the benefit for families.

The receipt will be issued to the person(s) who paid the child's Suzuki fees. This will be determined by the account information (that is, the name or names) on the cheques through which payment was made. If the payment is made in cash, the receipt will be issued to the person identified as the "participating parent" on the 2009-10 Suzuki registration form.

Participants who have withdrawn from the Program will not receive AFB receipts, even though a portion of their fees have not been refunded.

For cultural activities, this refundable income tax benefit only applies to Saskatchewan income tax returns and not to federal income taxes. The federal government has a non-refundable children's fitness tax credit which does not apply to cultural activities.

An announcement will be made in late January 2010 as to when the AFB receipts will be ready for distribution. We plan to hand these out during group/orchestra lessons.

Ken Pontikes
Treasurer

Director's Message

I have a few messages, so here they are:

1. The Saskatoon Symphony will likely be moving to Thursday evening rehearsals next year. This will affect most of the teachers in the program. One possible solution to this problem is to move group lessons to Tuesday evenings. We need your feedback about moving to Tuesday evenings, whether it would impact your family positively, negatively. Please let me know at jenpayzant@shaw.ca or on the feedback form provided in this newsletter.

2. The Saskatoon Symphony will continue to offer discounts to our program. For the Master Series and possibly the Pops Series, the discounted price is \$15 per child or chaperone. We would need to handle it as we did the last time when Phav Meekins graciously agreed to collect money from interested families and distribute the tickets. In addition, the Music for a Sunday Afternoon series offers a discount of \$5 per child, full price for adults. For that series, phone the Saskatoon Symphony office at 665-6414 to purchase your tickets by Friday before the concert. For further info, please check the Saskatoon Symphony website: www.saskatoonsymphony.org.

3. Saskatoon Symphony Gourmet guides are still for sale. \$25 per guide. \$20 goes to the symphony and \$5 to our Suzuki program. There are some really good savings at restaurants and theatres in the Guide. Karen Koehler has Gourmet Guides for sale.

4. I would like to acknowledge the support of the Saskatchewan Orchestral Association. This is one of five Saskatchewan Cultural Organizations, which also include the Saskatchewan Music Festival Association and the Saskatchewan Choral Federation. The SOA has been giving our program about \$13,000 every year in grants for the past several years. Without the dedicated teachers, Suzuki parent executive and the SOA, our Suzuki program would not exist. The future of the SOA is at risk, due to restructuring from the government and senior granting agencies. Any letter to the provincial government in support of the SOA would be greatly appreciated.

5. I have included a survey in this newsletter for your feedback.

6. This may be a bit early, but I wish you all the best for the festive season.

John Payzant



Saskatoon Suzuki String Program Survey

We are interested in your feedback on what you like and how we can improve the Saskatoon Suzuki String Program as a whole. Please do not include references to individual teachers. If you wish to discuss concerns with a teacher, it is best to do so in confidence (please refer to Guide or see Program Manual under “Regular Programs” link on our website, www.saskatoonsuzukistrings.ca). Please feel free to write on the back of this paper, or to email jenpayzant@shaw.ca. I will leave a box where you can deposit these comments at Group Lesson. We welcome comments from parents and children.

Where did you first hear about the Saskatoon Suzuki String Program?

1. What do you like about the Saskatoon Suzuki String Program?

2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the Saskatoon Suzuki String Program? _____

3. What can we do to make it a 10?

4. Would you be in favour of a move to Tuesday evenings? Opposed? Neutral?

Fundraising Report

Thank you to all the parents and friends who have participated in our recent fundraising activities.

The winner of the xmas fundscrip fundraising campaign was Nicole Pawlovich who raised a whopping \$2,220.00! Thank you so much for all your efforts. Second biggest fundraiser was Mary Lissel-Decorby \$1775.00, and Wendy and Ron Lepage were third with \$1470.00. Thank you to them and everyone who participated. The Nikki Yanofsky tickets were given to the Lissel- Decorby family as the Pawlovich's are unable to use them. The funds earned from this activity was \$470. Congratulations to all!

As mentioned earlier, fundscrip will be an ongoing fundraiser that will run the entire remainder of this calendar year. This will work by registering you with an online account that you can self manage. Just log on, place your order and it will arrive a few days later. We can even offer recurring orders ("Set it and forget it") for you if you wish to pay via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) - the best way to pay. Fundscrip also accepts major credit cards and cheques. We are returning from the christmas break on Jan 7th, and will begin setting up people with the online registry at that time. We will be able to track how much each individual is fundraising, and reward cards will be given out periodically to those who meet our target goals. Don't forget, you can



use fundscrip cards to shop at all of our major grocery stores all year round including, Superstore, Safeway and Sobeys!

We also raised \$204.67 at our xmas bake sale. Thank you again to everyone who brought baking, helped out at the booth, and of course who brought their children down to participate. A very special thanks also to Agata for running the music end, and also to Karen Nel and Stewart Mcintosh for helping me out at the sale. The children sounded wonderful and looked great in their new suzuki shirts!

I hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday and many blessings in the new year. Thank you all your support this past year, you make the impossible possible! Also, I will be posting future fundraising information about fundscrip and all fundraising information including forms, dates, and times of upcoming activities on our website: www.saskatoonsuzukistrings.ca. Please contact me if you have any questions, comments, or would like more information. Have a wonderful christmas break.

Karen Koehler
Vice-President/Fundraising Coordinator

2009-2010 Board of Directors:

President – Dave Klymyshyn
Vice-President – Karen Koehler
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Karen Koehler
Volunteer Coordinator – Paul and Kim Hebert
Social Convenor – Wendy Lepage
Newsletter – Tim Brown
Piano Convenor – Lisa Laskowski

Upcoming Events

GENERAL MEETING I will be held at Evan Hardy Collegiate at 6:30PM on **Thursday 26 November 2009**

Saturday, November 28, students from our program will be performing as a group at **Festival of Trees**. Students in V-3 and up or C-2 and up are invited to perform. There will be a signup list posted. You can also email John at jenpayzant@shaw.ca or phone 373-9130 to sign up. Time: Unpack and tune at 4:30 PM, playing at 5:00 PM. Location: Western Development Museum. Further details to follow.

Christmas and New Years Party is Thursday, December 3. 5:45 Tuning, 6:00 playing begins. Location: Commons Room, Evan Hardy Collegiate.

A-L savory, M-Z sweets.

Sandwiches will be provided

Sunday, December 6, students from our program will be performing as a group at the **Sundog Arts & Entertainment Faire**. Students in V-3 and up or C-2 and up are invited to perform. There will be a signup list posted. You can also email John at jenpayzant@shaw.ca or phone 373-9130 to sign up. Time: Unpack and tune at 10:30 AM, play at 11:00 AM. Location: Credit Union Centre. Further details to follow.

Possible performance at **Lawson Heights Mall** and **Saskatoon Symphony lobby** shows TBA.

The **Winter Orchestra Concert** is **Sunday, January 17, 2010** at 7PM (tuning at 6:45). Location: TBA

The **Mid Winter Concert** is **Sunday, January 24, 2010** 3PM (tuning at 2:45). Location: TBA

Saskatoon Symphony Master Series Concerts

“Love Across an Ocean”

TCU Place, Saturday, 7:30pm February 13, 2010

“The Power of Song”

TCU Place, Saturday, 7:30pm March 13, 2010

“Let the Trumpets Sound”

TCU Place, Saturday, 7:30pm April 10, 2010

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