

ANN ARBOR SUZUKI INSTITUTE OF MUSIC



NEWSLETTER February 2014

www.annarborsuzuki.org

734.726.0171

The commitment of the Ann Arbor Suzuki Institute is to the most fundamental principles of Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, that talent is not inborn, but can be developed. We believe that every child can learn, and we are free from all discrimination. We are a non profit 501(c) (3) organization which endeavors to educate parents and children in the Suzuki philosophy, using music to enrich their lives and the community. In this way, we help create a better world.

The Nurturing Environment

by MaryLou Roberts

Dr. Suzuki had many helpful thoughts on the environment, and using environment to teach. The environment is created by everything that surrounds children in the learning process; places, instruments, sounds, and also includes attitudes, words and actions of parents and teachers. The total environment has a profound effect on the life of a growing human being.

"You can make a huge difference with children by making one change in the way that you raise them. Give the child a good environment and create the desire to learn. Those children who make the effort to train hard will develop wonderful abilities, but I must caution you about the attitude and mindset of a mother toward her child. While it is certainly true that the more one practices, the more ability is developed, please do not forget that forcing your child to practice rigorously while incessantly scolding and yelling at him, will invite far different results than doing it the proper way. "

So how do we as parents give the child a good environment, which will create the desire to learn?

1 Bring the child into your space mentally and physically. This is even important to teens. Admire their playing, and not just through the bedroom door. Sit down with your child and just enjoy the moment. Happiness with each child and sharing joy in the learning process will feed not only the musical journey, but all the people involved with it.

2 Children need your attention to details in a way that shares the learning instead of pointing out faults. If you hear your child racing through the practice, suggest a speed instead of saying "slow down" or complaining. I am reminded of the speed limit sign, which has its limits (pun intended). Much more effective at controlling speed is the sign that blinks and simply displays your speed. Find the speed the child is playing on a metronome, and then pick a new slower speed. Even more support can be found in group class, when their children are playing at a slower speed. The child will eventually learn to slow down when necessary.

3 Variety is natural. In listening to the Suzuki CD regularly, also include live playing, other recordings and musical styles. All music that comes from the heart is wonderful and also creates an excellent ear.

"Everyone would surely agree that, had Beethoven been raised in an Osaka household then he would of course have grown up speaking the difficult Osaka dialect instead of German. A child who grows up surrounded by the Osaka dialect painlessly masters it's difficult nuances. This fact signifies the potential of every child to end up tone-deaf, or conversely, to develop a keen feel for music. I therefore appeal to all mothers to play fine music for your babies and young children every day. By calling upon that powerful spirit that all young children possess, create in them an inner strength."

4 Being kind in the practice session is good for you both. Read any lesson notes, or have the child say the point - before playing.

"The most important quality to have in this world is kindness and goodwill towards all people. A child must be kind to her father, her mother and her friends. She must be glad to be around people and good to everyone. When she grows up, she will be well-loved and carry with her the happiness of one who lives surrounded by love. The greatest task of parents is to nurture this sort of ability as much as possible in their children. In order to do that, the parents themselves must be kind and gentle-hearted and act on kindness."

5 Practicing twice a day often works well because the mind is fresh and ready for more. It is said that children progress through about one book a year when they practice twice a day. Our children are bombarded with information, both at school and on the internet. Sometimes a full mind can't absorb anything new. Practicing in two segments may work much better.

6 Play for stuff. Children like to share in the right environment - at school, at social gatherings, at places of worship, at play-ins, concerts, talent shows and group events.

7 Talk to Other Parents and Share Ideas We have a wealth of involved parents with great ideas as well as those who are just figuring out how this all works. Be supportive, listen and share ideas with other parents, it all creates a strong learning environment for us all.

"It is by wanting in their hearts to learn that children become experienced. That is, they internalize ability. It is through experience that the difficulties of starting something new completely disappear and a level of skill is attained." -Dr. Suzuki

Ann Arbor Suzuki Institute Faculty-Sharing Both Joy and Talent

Violin: Katherine Almquist, Wendy Azrak, Judy Blank, Kevin Horne, Rebecca Kaltz, Deborah Stanton, Anna Weller **Viola:** Katherine Almquist, Wendy Azrak

Cello: Alice Greminger, Andrea Yun **Bass:** Derek Weller

Piano: Gail Jennings, Katharina Getchner **Guitar:** Terry Farmer, MaryLou Roberts, Ryan Seay

For more information on the Suzuki Method, visit: www.suzukiassociation.org