

HISTORY AND MISSION

Community Music School (CMS) is a nonprofit arts organization that has been building community through music since 1983. CMS offers innovative music programming for infants through adults, building on a **40-year tradition** of providing quality music instruction to residents of shoreline communities. CMS programs provide students with a thorough understanding of music so they can enjoy playing and listening for their entire lives. Founded in Essex in 1983 by Patricia Hurley, a local high school music teacher who saw a need for high quality music instruction, CMS has grown steadily over the years and now occupies a 5,000 square foot building with 14 studios and small group performance spaces. Through a given year, we serve over **700 students** of all ages from Essex and 17 surrounding towns throughout Middlesex, New London and New Haven counties from Guilford to Niantic.

Our mission is to foster the love and pursuit of music through comprehensive music education for community members of all ages, abilities, and income levels.

As a member of the National Guild for Community Arts Education, CMS prescribes to that organization's Code of Best Practices in the areas of quality, accessibility and accountability. This pledge confirms our commitment to challenging each student to realize his or her highest level of artistic potential, to eliminating barriers for people with disabilities, to affirmative action in hiring, to effective management, to offering need-based financial aid, and to adherence to our mission and responsiveness to our community.

QUALITY AND ARTISTIC MERIT OF FACULTY AND PROGRAMS

CMS's core activity is private music instruction in voice and most instruments. Our **23 professional faculty members** are graduates of some of the finest conservatories and university music programs in the US and Europe with a bachelor's degree at minimum; several hold advanced degrees including masters and doctoral degrees, or specialty certification. Many of our instructors are affiliated with area orchestras and performance groups such as the Eastern Connecticut Symphony, the US Coast Guard Band, Salt Marsh Opera, and the New Haven Symphony.

Our faculty members are committed to outstanding pedagogy and student services. They assist their middle and high school students in preparation for auditions and performances, and take the time to write college recommendations and help with recordings for the application process. CMS offers students ample performance opportunities with mid-semester and end-of-term recitals, and other community performances.

In addition to private and semi-private instruction, CMS offers group classes at the beginner level in many instruments and voice. Membership in our ensembles is open to the general public, as well as our own students at very low cost.

We're a licensed provider of **Music Together** classes, an outstanding curriculum that gives the chance for families with children from birth through age 8 the chance to get in touch with their inner musician and connect with other families. . Also included in our programming are special workshops and events. We are well-known for our Broadway Bound and Broadway Beginners summer musical theater programs for children as well as a variety of other summer offerings.





COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND ACCESSIBILITY

Community Music School draws students from at least 17 different public school systems as well as a number of home-schooled children. Over 30% of our students are adults. Our racial and ethnic makeup is reflective of that of the area in which we are located. CMS's outreach into the community continues to grow through partnerships with Essex Elementary School, John Winthrop Middle School, Westbrook Park & Recreation, Essex Park & Recreation, the Essex Board of Trade, and many other groups.

Prime examples of how CMS enriches the musical lives of our community members are the CMS String Ensemble and CMS New Horizons Band. The **String Ensemble** is an intergenerational group of nearly 50 music hobbyists ranging in age from 8 to 83. It's incredible to attend their rehearsals or concerts and see children, teens, adults and seniors all working together for a common goal. Since few of the nearby public schools have string programs, this ensemble fills an important musical void in our community. The **CMS New Horizons Band** is an active and dedicated ensemble of (primarily) senior-citizens. Part of the national "New Horizons" movement that provides supportive musical opportunities for beginners and/or those that have not played instruments in years, the ensemble rehearses twice weekly, and regularly performs throughout our community.



MANAGEMENT and FUNDING

CMS is governed by a fifteen-member Board of Trustees. Committees of the board include Governance, Development, Finance, and Marketing. Full board meetings are held monthly. The CMS Board of Trustees has oversight of the School and its \$550,000 budget. The administrative staff is comprised of full-time executive director, program coordinator, and business manager, and part-time evening receptionist.

CMS's principal source of revenue is student tuition, which covers approximately 70% of operating costs. The rest is raised by grants and generous donations from community-minded businesses and individuals in our area. Our fundraising strategy includes appeals to individual donors, corporate sponsors, special events, and public and private grant awards. .