

15 January 2015

NAfME Share Your Story (22 submissions)

As Collegiate VP of NMMEA and ten-year music educator at Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU), I would like to share twenty-two Share Your Story submissions from students enrolled in my Freshman Seminar class at ENMU this past fall semester (2014). After seeing only one New Mexico entry in last year's compilation of NAfME's Share Your Story submissions, I changed the topic of one of the weekly journal assignment topics in my Freshman Seminar course to read: "Why Music Education Matters to Me." My class, although mostly comprised of music majors, included four non-music majors. The common denominator – the "community" element – of this course was each student's enrollment in University Singers. The shared bond of music allowed us to explore the topic of music education's intrinsic value in each of our lives. Students knew as they wrote their journal entries that these would be submitted to this meaningful NAfME initiative, and were thrilled to participate. As our stories join the chorus of those already advocating for the inherent value of music education in our nation, we hope others will also be inspired to share their story, too.

Kayla Paulk

Instructor of Music, Eastern New Mexico University
Collegiate VP, New Mexico Music Educators Association

A three, another three, and a four. It was in that succession that I had read the scores given to my choir at UIL Concert and Sight Reading my junior year of high school.

Average...average...below average.

My tears flowed freely as I stared into the faces of the girls in my section while delivering the news. They went from expectant to disappointed when the first number fell from my lips. It were as if someone put weights into each word, coming down as crushing blows on their spirits.

We did not look our conductor in the eye when he told us how proud he was of us in class the next day. We could not bear to look at our black binders. We could not accept the fact that despite our hard work – hours that must have added up to days in additional rehearsals for our music – three people delivered scores below our expectations.

Not superior....not even excellent...but average.

During the first semester of my senior year, I had enrolled myself in World Religions. The teacher, Mr. Duelm, was a man whom I deeply admired, and was the sole reason for me taking the course. I remember the very first day of class he had a question projected from the overhead. We were to ponder it throughout the whole semester. It read:

Is it the journey that matters, or is it the destination?

The question resonated throughout my whole entire being. Though it had been months since what had been perceived failure at UIL, it left behind an aftertaste that never washed out. My disappointment with the destination caused me to forget all about the journey, and just how beautiful and meaningful and life changing of an experience it was for those involved.

The hours that made up days of extra rehearsals were moments in our lives that shaped us as so much more than musicians. We grew into people, forging friendships with our peers and laying a solid foundation for all future students who would be preparing for UIL through that program. On our journey, we made music. Beautiful music that echoed through our tiny choir room and down the halls of the music building. Inspiring music that kept us coming to each and every rehearsal, ready to create.

The destination in 2012 was not what we wanted it to look like, but it was not permanent either. Five months after it was I able to realize this, but it was those thoughts that carried me to rehearsal the next day with an important message:

Straight ones do not mean you did something magical up there. Straight ones do not mean you are more worthy, more talented, more anything than anyone else. Straight ones do mean that an objective score was given to your school based off of one performance.

To the students who were here last year, I can honestly say that I worked harder for this program at UIL last year than at my previous school. I worked harder for threes and fours than I ever did for ones. The judges do not know that, but I do. We all do. That is the pride we must carry within ourselves.

To the students who are just joining, I hope you know you are among some of the most talented people I have ever had the honor of working with.

To everyone: thank you for being here.

Before then I had already been thinking about music education as a career, but that afternoon had set those ideas in stone. Choir was no longer about singing and competitions, rather it was about character building.

For myself, I know I will not care if every student I have leaves as a grade a sight reader; I will not care about how many students go to All State on any given year; I certainly will not care about how often we get sweepstakes at UIL.

I will care about the journey, and the role I play in making sure my students keep moving along a more righteous path. Teachers are facilitators of growth, and while of course there will be academic and artistic growth, I hope to see growth as human beings in my students.

Sight reading levels, All State patches, UIL trophies – they are not guaranteed to be the meaningful experiences in a young musician’s life. They are materialistic at best. They mean nothing to me now that I am in college.

Taking a piece of music and turning it into something worth listening to, actually stepping into those audition rooms and performance halls, having a director tell you they are proud when you are not proud of yourself – those are the moments that inspire growth.

Music is important in schools. Hundreds of studies have tested and proven time and time again that students involved in music tend to be higher achieving. That is not the only reason why music education is important, however. It is not even the most important reason in my opinion. Exposure to music in an academic setting will without a doubt inspire a greater appreciation of music in young people. Auditioning and performing will boost self-confidence, as well as set a precedent for diligence. Teachers, though – facilitators of growth – need to be there to oversee this. It is their job to help mold students into functional adults, and the freer and more expressive atmosphere of a music room is the best place to do such.

We never did get straight ones while I was a part of that program, but we did continue to grow. Though I do not keep in contact with many of the people still there, all I can hope for them is that they continue to do such. I hope they continue to work and sing and learn about music and themselves. I hope they are never discouraged by a score.

A three, a three, and a four. Those numbers were just highway signs on my journey, and with some guidance, they sent me in the right direction.

Kelsey Wickerham

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Music Education – Choral Emphasis

Hometown: San Antonio, Texas (78201)

Music education was not my first choice. I wanted to be lawyer, a politician, an author. I wanted to do something huge and profound, something that would get me recognized. I had done choir off and on as a younger student, knew I could do it well enough. But I never wanted to teach it, let alone make it my lifelong profession. I took choir in high school because (my high school director would hurt me for saying this) it was an easy class that I could pass with little effort on my part; public speaking and performances were no big deal for me, and I already mostly knew how to sing. Or so I thought. Then, my choir director convinced me to go to ENMU’s Choir Camp the summer of my sophomore year. And it was the second best thing she ever did for me. Seeing all those kids there, actually *wanting* to be there and actively participating in the activities with little complaint (there were complaints, but of the more sarcastic variety), it *blew my mind*. And then I met Dr. Paulk, and the man was literally *sweating* with the effort he put into conducting the choir. And he was always smiling. Even when the choir did something wrong or it was towards the end of a long day. He almost never had a sour

expression. He put his whole body, his whole being into educating us, into making us the best choir we could be. And I thought, my god. This man is absolutely in love with his job.

The next person I met who influenced my decision to become a music major was Dr. Paulk's wife, Mrs. Paulk. Quiet, thoughtful, reserved. I don't think I'd realized how much she influenced my decision until much, much later. Like, as I'm writing this paper later. It's funny, because I'd never really heard Mrs. Paulk speak much until I got to college. I didn't know what she was like, I didn't know who she was, but I knew that she loved music. No one can play the way she does and *not* be in love with music, heart and soul. It was a subtle change in my thinking, but it began to change never-the-less.

The next year, I came back to school with a new outlook. I began watching my choir director more. I noticed more and more how frustrated she got when the choir was lazy or making the same mistakes over and over. But she came back every day with a fresh outlook; she tried to get us to do our best musically every day. She really did love what she did, even if it wasn't always the easiest job in the world, even though it didn't pay well and the clients (and their parents!) were tough on her. Heck, she even did extra work, helping students outside of class and collaborating with the drama department on the musicals. I remember the summer before my senior year, about a week before choir camp I called her in a panic. "I don't have my solo for choir camp! I signed up for a private lesson, what do I do?" And do you know what that woman did, on a Saturday, in JUNE no less? She went and got the book and scanned my solo and emailed it to me. With a practice track. Oh yeah, she was dedicated all right.

The last person to influence my decision to become a music teacher was my best friend. He's two years behind me in school, but he's been musically involved since he was an amoeba. He plays guitar (he taught himself), he plays piano, he even picked up my violin one day and just... started playing. No previous training on it, just plucked out a rhythmically and tonally accurate song. The whole thing. Mary Had a Little Lamb, which was more than I could do at the time. This kid literally thinks in music. He plays nonstop when he's near a piano or guitar. He can't help it. He writes little tidbits all the time, writes full-fledged songs every now and again. He loves to sing, to perform; he just loves music. And I thought that it must be so much fun to teach someone that is as passionate about the subject as he is.

So I guess I really didn't start thinking about music education as a career until my junior and senior years. By then, I had grown to love music so much, it was a really simple choice. And if I hadn't have been able to take that first actually choir course in ninth grade, I wouldn't be where I am today. I wouldn't be the person I am today. Performing music, especially at this level, requires that I be more diligent in my work and harder working than I have ever been in my life before.

All education is important; learning is one of the foundations of our society. Music is important because everyone, no matter how young or old, identifies with music. How many cultures around the world have some form of music practice? Music is one of the physical forms of a

person's soul. Whether someone is performing or composing or conducting or teaching, it is always an expression of a person's inner self. So without music education, which would almost certainly leave us with a hole, a gap in our lives, that we would be lost. And it's not just classical music education I'm talking about. What about education in music production, music technology? Where would we be without those fields, and people to study them? What I'm trying to say, none too elegantly, is that music is essential to education, just like math and reading are. There are some people who identify strongly with the music portion of the education system, and if you take that away from them, what do they have left? Maybe they're not good at sports, or drawing, or a wizard at math. Or, maybe they are. But for some of us in the world, music is all we have. And that is what makes music education important. Especially to me. I would be lost without it.

Edouijen "Edie" Gutierrez
Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Music Education – Choral Emphasis
Hometown: Belen, New Mexico (87002)

I have been in choir since I was a sophomore in high school. Though I didn't join for my love of music. I joined for the same reason that everyone joined choir, the easy A. We never actually did anything just sat around and talked. The teacher wasn't a choir teacher to begin with, but he never tried to teach nor try to engage us in music. I spent the time to do homework for the remainder of the year. My junior year was approaching, and the time came to choose your classes for your schedule. I again chose choir because it was a class that I could finish my homework in.

My first day as a junior in high school; I looked at my schedule and realized that we had a new choir teacher. Once in class, we were asked to sing individually for him, His name was Roy Stubbs, so he could place us into our voice parts. (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, etc) I was in shock, my first day in choir and we actually did something with music. He told me I was a tenor, the only tenor out of the four guys there. I never sang before in my life, I was nervous. The next day he had us stand and do vocal warm up exercises, again something new to all of us. He immediately had us learn a new song, *Come Celebrate this Day* by Adriano Banchieri. The first time any choir sang at our school and it sounded amazing, even though there was only about ten of us.

Mr. Stubbs was preparing the choir for State Solo and Ensemble. It would be our school's first attempt at anything music related at a state level. He told me that I would be singing a solo, *Crucifixion a Negro Spiritual*. I was nervous. I have never sang solo before. It was the day of Solo Ensemble and I was up first. When I finished I felt good, not only did I feel good about my performance, but I received great comments from my judge. I received a 1 out 5 rating, which is the highest score. I felt great. I also made honor choir that year and it was a great experience to

sing with such a large ensemble. From then on we had different concerts at the school and Mr. Stubbs gave me solos for most of them.

That summer I discovered that Eastern New Mexico University hosted a choir camp. I was very interested. I asked my mother if I could attend the choir camp she said it could be a possibility. Well the time came around and I could not afford to go to the choir camp. I was so sad that I wasn't going to be able to attend. I received a call from Dr. Jason Paulk and he asked me if I was still interested in the choir camp and offered me a scholarship that would allow me to attend the choir camp. I enjoyed the choir camp. I enjoyed singing with a large ensemble. The atmosphere was great, everyone who was there loved music and we all had a strong passion for it. That summer was when I decided that I would continue my education in music.

My senior year came along and I received the same score for Solo and Ensemble. That fall I wanted to audition for the all-state choir. I asked Mr. Stubbs and he agreed that I should audition. Mr. Stubbs missed the registration deadline for the auditions and I didn't know what to do. I spoke with Don Gerheart, the executive director of the New Mexico Music Educators Association and advised him that I wanted to audition, but my teacher had missed the deadline. Another school offered to take me with them since my school wasn't going to take me. I did not make the audition, but it was still a good experience to see how auditions worked. I made honor choir again, but my school was not going to take me. I felt I could not participate in musical opportunities due to my schools lack of support.

Why would I tell you my musical story you may ask? It is a journey of how my love for music came to be. I started in choir with no motivation for music, I was in the class for the easy A. The next year I fell in love with music, with performing. Music education is not just teaching music, it's about helping students find a passion that will make them happy for the rest of their lives. Music sparked a light within me, I felt driven to discover more and to learn more about what music has to offer. I hope to become a Music educator someday; I will become a music educator someday because I would like to help spark something in young people, just like Mr. Stubbs sparked something in me.

Powell Cly

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Music Education – Choral Emphasis
Hometown: Gallup, New Mexico (87301)

Music Education has always had a huge impact in my life. Without music I do not think I would be the person I am today. I have been in band since I was in sixth grade, and choir since I was in seventh grade. Being in both band and choir have really shaped me into a successful musician and individual.

Being a musician comes with so many benefits, not only in gaining great musician skills, but leadership, social and mind skills. Being a musician gained my leadership skills when I was drum

major in band and section leader in choir. It gave me the opportunity to be a leader and gain responsibility. It also gave me the skills to be social with my section and other musicians around me. Participating in several TMEA (Texas Music Educators Association) All-State competition as well as Texas State Solo and Ensemble allowed me to interact with other students and music educators who have a passion for music. Advancing in these competitions also motivated me and it would build up my spirit if I would succeed with my hard work. There's no way to explain the rush you feel after a concert. When the chords of the choir or band come together and echo in the hall you are performing in, gives you this feeling that gives you the chills. It's difficult to explain what kind of rush you get after you share the story behind the music you or your ensemble have prepared. An article from PBS.com, *The Benefits of Music Education* shows various amounts of research done by various Universities, of students who do music and the benefits that come along with it. Students who do music use more parts of their brain and think differently than students who don't do music.

I currently attend Eastern New Mexico University, School of Music in Portales, New Mexico, and I'm doing a double degree in Instrumental Music Education and Vocal Performance. Music is an incredible experience and I want to share and show others the wonders it has to offer. I want to make an impact on other student's lives like the music educators did in my life, and show them what music can do for them. This would not be possible without the importance of music education. It is important for today's music educators and the future music educators to do our best to continue to teach music and give other individuals the greatness music offers.

Cristian Zaragoza

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Music Education – Instrumental Performance and Music – Vocal Performance

Hometown: Muleshoe, Texas (79347)

Students that enter the music program, are doing so because music has either changed or strongly affected their lives. I know that's true with me. Ever since I was adopted from foster care as a young child, my parents have surrounded the house with music. Music seemed to follow me everywhere. Children in my situation often don't get that chance, but I was one of the lucky ones. I feel that by getting a music education I can pitch in to help bring music to children. Music is the one thing I can do every day and never get tired of it. It's interesting that on the days when I feel like I can't stand music, I always go back to singing or listening to music to relax. There is a running joke in the music department, that music majors spend exhausting days going to classes and practicing. Then for fun and entertainment they go to music recitals, social jams with friends, or just lying in bed with some of their favorite music on full volume. Music is a big part of our lives and one of our biggest goals is to influence lives for the better.

Angela Rudd

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Music – Vocal Performance

Hometown: Albuquerque, New Mexico (87101)

Music Education is important, period. I could sit here and list so many reasons why it matters, but sometimes that it isn't enough to show people how much it matters.

Here's the thing, non-music educators take Music Education for granted because it's been around for so long and they have never thought of how their life would be without it. They don't think about it because music isn't a big part of their life, or so they think. Music education affects EVERYONE and EVERYTHING. Sit down and take a couple seconds to close your eyes and imagine what would happen if music was banned somehow. Think about how that would affect YOUR life. On your way to work you may listen to the Radio, well that would go away. No more Pandora or Spotify. Your iPod or mp3 would be useless. You couldn't listen to your favorite song anymore. Watching TV would be boring. Imagine watching your favorite movie. Now think about your favorite scene in that movie. That background music you never pay attention to will go away. And only then, you will realize how powerful those thirty seconds of music there was; however, many people wouldn't know this because music to them music becomes *just another part of everyday life*. What would happen to all those music educators? What would our purpose be in life? What would we do?

I know I'm not a music education major, I'm a performance major, but learning the music skills that I've learned since August, have been enough to start teaching my four year old brother to play piano. No, he is not Mozart, but I know that he loves music. He may not know it yet, but I know it has become a really big part of his life, otherwise he wouldn't sing around the house and get annoying songs stuck in my family's head. Hopefully one day he will appreciate it as much as I do. We need music educators to teach the world how to live life more musically. Music is a whole other world that we use as an escape, whether it's in church, school, at a dance club, your bedroom (Adele songs), a late night cruise in the car and the list goes on.

If I would have never met the people that have taught me everything I know about music, my life would be boring, dull, and depressing.
My life is music.

Dalia Melendez
Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Music – Vocal Performance
Hometown: Muleshoe, Texas (79347)

My thoughts on being a music major are really scattered for the moment. I enjoy what I do here as a music major at ENMU. Taking voice lessons and piano lessons at the same time is a little intensive but I've managed to survive so far and it's starting to become a lot of fun. I enjoy being taught by the music professors here, while some experiences were not always the most pleasant, much of my time here as a music major has been a blast. I imagined the work done here would be very intensive in terms of practice time which did not surprise me when I declared my major and begun my work.

Most of my enjoyment as a music major is normally within the practice room and on the lobby couch when I take my breaks. I enjoy being taught and critiqued by my private lesson teachers. At times I feel slightly terrified that the slightest mistake I make in my Piano private lesson will result in disappointing my teacher and a temporal loss of my confidence. All of my other experiences regarding my major have been fun and pleasant experiences and I wouldn't trade it for anything else. I hope that my years here as a college student will be fruitful and that I shall reap many awards in terms of experience as a music teacher and as an individual.

Juan Espino

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Music – Vocal Performance

Hometown: Lovington, New Mexico (88260)

Music is everything I have. I believe that God blesses us with gifts and puts us in certain places in life where we can share our gifts with others. Hopefully sharing these gifts not only helps other people, but they help us as well. A gift that I was blessed with is music. I can't see myself doing anything else in life besides music. I would like other things in life and would like to do more things than just music, but without music, I would not be the Hannah that everyone knows me as, including myself. There is no me without music. It is important to me to work hard on achieving a music degree and do the best I possibly can, and more, so that I can be the best Hannah. A Hannah that loves what she does in life, beyond school, still doing music and sharing that gift that makes her happy and joyful in life.

Hannah Weeks

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Music – Vocal Performance

Hometown: Albuquerque, New Mexico (87105)

Did you know that students who attend a high school with a music program have a 90.2% graduation rate? To deny students the opportunity to study music is just a crime. Students who study music while in school show an increased interest in learning, and overall have better grades in school. Music-driven students are often more motivated than those who show interest in other extra-curricular activities. While students often study music for a love of the subject, they show a surprisingly high self-confidence level that disciplines them in their learning environment. There are several aspects for why music students excel more so than those who do not study music.

Studies show that even on an elementary level, students show an increased rate of brain development which prepares them for their future education. For many music students music classes are not just for extra-curricular activities, they study music because it is “food” for their soul. Music isn't a subject that just stays in a textbook, instead it reaches within one's soul and becomes a part of who they are. For this reason, music is a basis for students broadening their horizons and taking on more than the average student would. For example, students that learn

how to read music, often learn new languages at a faster rate because learning music IS learning a new language. In addition to this, students will show a longing for learning about different cultures.

Music often derives from varied cultures and as a result, causes students to show an interest for learning about these cultures. Due to this, music students have a higher vocabulary as a result of their exposure to the world of different cultures. Music is considered a physical exercise for the brain because it expands a students learning abilities and causes them to want to participate in the school environment. This type of participation can stretch as far as athletics, clubs, student government, and any leadership positions. Due to their multi-tasking skills, music students will almost always pursue higher education.

Taking music out of the public school systems would be the first step in depriving students of their freedom of expression. To get in touch with your inner-self, The 4th Dimension is an effective way to reach your full potential. The 4th Dimension is the concept that when Mind, Body, and Soul come together you tap into the center of your being. For example, when music students are engaged in their melodious climax, they are entwined within The 4th Dimension, and while in that moment, they are held there by the music. Music lives within a safe space where the musician can reach a place that is mind over body, which academics cannot provide. For these reasons, music is not only recommended for the school environment, but it is vital for student success. Music is the passport to success; which is why taking it away from the school system is an attack on the future of success.

This topic is very important for me because the center of my life is music. If I did not have music in my school I'm not sure how I would have ended up. My distant relatives come from a more "dangerous" life style, I could have very well ended up like them. Every single music teacher I have had has been an extraordinary motivational person. Especially my high school Choir teacher Mr. Miller. Mr. Miller is a person I turn to for advice on anything in life. He has literally pushed me through school so that I could be where I am today.

I understand that one of the reasons that music is being cut from schools is the financial aspect. I was thinking that budget cuts could be made elsewhere in the schools. I am asking on all of the music student's behalf tp please let the music live!! There are foundations out there that raise funds to save music. If these organizations are advertised more, it would help with their endeavors. These things may not help very much but it will make a HUGE impact on a student's life.

Musically Yours,

O'Shaun Estrada
Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Music – Vocal Performance
Hometown: Carlsbad, New Mexico (88220)

When people ask me what makes me happy, only one thing comes to mind, and that is music. Music is more than just a hobby; it is my one true passion. Two months into college I realized all I want in life is to inspire others with music. Be it performing or teaching. I grew up in Santa Fe,

New Mexico, one of the most culturally rich cities in the world. The music community is bold and strong, and one would think that the music education is just as vast. But that was not always the case. In the last ten years Santa Fe Public schools transformed it's small music program into a growing dynasty. I am proud to say I helped with that. At the age of seven years old, I made the independent decision to study the violin. I began in a local organization that offered after school activities. The Santa Fe Youth Symphony Association was a blooming organization and provided Santa Fe's youth with an enormous amount of musical exposure. Of course not everyone could afford these programs, so where could children experience the joys of music; school. Not every school offered music programs though, sure they had the general music class but not every school had a band, or a choir or an orchestra. I found my love in music and the fact that I could not receive it on a day to day basis at school was really hard. The Santa Fe Youth Symphony Association provided its best resources and really maintained a strong program and as much as possible tried to provide children with scholarships so they could study music more intently.

In 2010 I joined the Music Advisor Council as a part of the Santa Fe Public Schools. It was our goal to keep the dynasty of arts and arts education alive and well in Santa Fe. I am proud to say that with lots of communal support and hard work from the head of music at the Santa Fe Public Schools, today, all of the high schools and middle schools have an orchestra, a choir and a band program. Slowly but surely almost every elementary school is adding a band besides general music. This is very important to me because I know what music does for someone. It opens up a whole new world of opportunities and helps you express what words cannot. I graduated knowing that Santa Fe Public Schools and the Santa Fe Youth Symphony Association will provide music education for the youth of Santa Fe as long as music is needed.

Today, reflecting on my early music education career I can confidently say I want to inspire children with the exciting world of music. I am currently studying Music Education with a Choral Emphasis at Eastern New Mexico University. Along the road of my high school career I realized I loved singing. My high school choir teacher was so full of life and energy everyday when she taught, she is the real reason as to why I am studying music education. Music gave me a voice, and someday I hope I can help a child find their voice through music.

Alexandra Esquibel
Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Music Education – Choral Emphasis
Hometown: Santa Fe, New Mexico (87501)

Music has done so much for me as an individual. I cannot express the value it has in my life. Growing up, I did not have a very easy life. There were numerous times I thought that life was too overwhelming. I will admit that I contemplated taking my own life, but music was always one of the things that helped me through those times. My teenage years were not quite as

rough. There were still obstacles I had to face, but they were a different kind of obstacle. I had to study hard, do more activities. The stress of high school was intense. If it weren't for music, I might not have graduated high school. It is safe to say that I owe my life to music. It has kept me going strong and has moved me forward. Music has shaped me into the person I am today, and will continue to shape me for the future.

Thomas Fisher

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Music Education – Choral Emphasis

Hometown: Las Cruces, New Mexico (88012)

Music is one of the most important things to life. It is a way to express your feelings, thoughts, and prayers in a way that words and actions cannot. It is a God given gift to this world. I think throughout my whole schooling I learned the most from either being in band or choir or some other music class or activity. It teaches you how to relate and understand other people and be a team who works together to achieve something so pure and beautiful. I think that it is such a blessing that I was able to have that throughout school and I cannot imagine what my life would be like if I did not have the daily Influence of music. Music in the schools teaches so much more than just how to play or sing; it teaches honor, respect, pride, dedication, endurance, acceptance, love, and compassion. It is something that you will be able to have forever if you so choose, and the lessons i have learned in music I will never forget.

Bailey Thompson-Garcia

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Bachelor of Science – Music major, Religion minor

Hometown: Portales, New Mexico (88130)

Music education is an important part of becoming a well-rounded person. Any type of fine arts can help build one's character and give one perspective on other parts of the world. Music is an excellent example because styles of music vary so vastly all around the globe. Learning music from other cultures can help one learn a lot about how others live and also learn what morals and values are important to them. Music is also an important part of self expression. Where words may fail, music can prevail. Music can soothe the soul, set the mood, and so many other things. There really are no limits or boundaries; only the threshold of creativity. Music in itself is a vast and uninhibited freedom and acts as a medium for sharing our thoughts, our beliefs and most of all our feelings.

Kenneta Montano-Aragon

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Graphic Design

Hometown: Fort Sumner, New Mexico (88119)

Music is one of the most basic human endeavors because with it comes expression, pleasure, and happiness. Such an extensive and influential subject as music ought to be studied because of its evermore importance to the world. Music education is important because today it provides joy, passion, realizations, and opportunities; each leading to the other. However, there are times when joy and passion are halted because of lack of opportunity. For example, in my hometown, there were no music education classes available to the student body, and it was devastating to those yearning to learn. Now that I'm in college studying music, I have colleagues farther ahead because they had opportunities I didn't. I feel if I had more knowledge of music, I would be much more satisfied. This is the reason why I want to go back to my hometown and give that knowledge to them. It would give those students joy, which would turn into passion, which would turn into the realization of their calling, which would turn into their opportunities to build a future. These are all important things, which is why I know music education is important.

Tomasita Sherman
Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Music Education – Choral Emphasis
Hometown: Gallup, New Mexico (87302)

Music education is very important to me because it has changed my life in many ways. Music education has allowed me to express, and find who I am as a person, it has taught me how to work with others, leadership skills, patience, and how to work hard for something that I want. Music education has taught me how to express myself through something that everyone can understand, and relate to. It has given me a way to get my emotions out in a healthy way, and it has given me the voice that I have today.

Music has helped me to come out of my shell and become a social person, who is confident because of music education, and what it has allowed me to do as a performer, and a person. Music education has made me gain skills in which I am able to work well with others, and know how to work with different types of people. I have learned to be a leader through music, and what skills a leader possesses. I have learned through competitions, and auditions that I have to put everything into something in order to get what I really want. Music education is what helped me to realize what my true calling in life is, and what God wants me to do with my life in order to glorify him. Music education has been a life lesson ever since I can remember, and it will continue to be a life lesson through the rest of my life. Music education is the drive for me to keep pushing, and to go for what I truly want in life. It is powerful, and it could change the world. This is why music education is important to me.

Shaye Ventura
Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Bachelor of Science – Music major, Religion minor
Hometown: Nogal, New Mexico (88341)

Music education matters to me because it gives me a chance to actually be who I am and express myself. Without music education I would not have experienced the great musical background I have today. Music is a way to bring out the best in myself and having music education makes me work harder every day to reach the goals I want to accomplish. Also, the teachers I have had throughout my music education have inspired me in ways by their talents to become a better musician. Music education is very important to me because it lets me be creative and learn new things every day.

Tymia Peterson

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Music Education – Choral Emphasis

Hometown: Rio Rancho, New Mexico (87144)

Why does music education matter to me? Actually there are a lot of reasons music education matters to me. Not only because I believe music brings people closer together, but that it helps us discover another way to show your feelings other than words. Music is a way to express ourselves. With music education, we can learn how to express ourselves in other ways that nobody has even thought of doing.

"Ubi non accipit verba Musica" translated from Latin means "Music takes us where words cannot". These are the words I go by ever since I started learning music. I personally started music when I was in elementary school pretty much like everyone else growing up. But since that day I first walked into that music classroom, I have been inspired to continue on with music. Even in college right now, I am learning to become a music teacher so that others can feel what I feel and become inspired the same way I did. That is why music education matters to me.

Matthew Henry

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Culinary Arts

Hometown: Rio Rancho, New Mexico (87144)

All my life I have been around music. From kindergarten all the way through high school and even now in college, I have been in choir. I attended Annunciation Catholic School where all students were not only in the church choir but also enrolled in a music class with Mrs. Miles. I loved going to music class every other day and looked forward to church on Tuesdays.

Singing has been an outlet for me and it continues to be today. When I sing, all my troubles go away. Music education matters to me because if it weren't for choir I would probably listen to only a select few genres and I would be a much more troubled child. Music education, has taught me what it means to have a greater knowledge of where music comes from, what it means to be musical, why music impacts so many others, and it teaches me stories almost like a novel or book can.

Music education isn't *just* about learning notes and playing or singing them. Music education takes it a step further and teaches morals, values, respect, quality of work, values, etc. Music

education has brought me close to so many people I would have otherwise never talked to. If my high school friend didn't convince me to join choir my sophomore year, I would have missed out on a championship medal, some amazing lifelong friends, and an appreciation for the sixteenth notes (the little things in life). That is why music education matters to *me*.

Isidro "Adam" Rubi
Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Computer Science
Hometown: Albuquerque, New Mexico (87106)

Music education is important to me because of my love for music. It is a good way for me to forget about all of the other things that I stress about in school. To me, music class is a good stress that helps me get by with my day. Music education is a large part of my life even though I'm not a music major. It is important to learn music and be a part of a large choral group because it teaches one how to work in a group.

Elizabeth Rodriguez
Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Business Administration
Hometown: Clovis, New Mexico (88101)

Music Education matters to me because it helps us reach out to people of many ages, lifestyles and backgrounds. It is hard to say that anyone can go through their day without humming or whistling a tune. To me, Music Education helps everyone be reminded of the roots of music, from just learning the easy Do, Re, Mi, to learning scales and intervals and much more. I would be honored to introduce these things to a younger generation of kids. I feel as if music brings us (the whole world) together in a very special way that nothing else can, and if we lose that bond it would not be such a beautiful place. To me music is what makes us fall in love. Music is what makes us want to be around others. Music is what makes my world go round, and I want to share that experience with others.

Rosa Andujo-Burciaga
Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Music Education – Choral Emphasis
Hometown: Muleshoe, Texas (79347)

Music Education is so important in my life. All my life all I've ever wanted to do is create my own music and perform it for the world; and to be a professional musician everyone has to go through a learning process of some kind before they can get anywhere. I started in the choir at kindergarten and am still going at it today. Choir has always been a love of mine; I love that I

can be a part of a group of kids that all share the same love that you do, and are all striving for the same thing you are. Growing up I always told my mom I wanted to go on a reality singing show like American Idol, and her and my dad always told me they would love to take me but I should get some more experience in first. So over the years I tried to get as much practice in with my voice as possible. I did talent shows, sang for sports events, town events, and competed in many choir competitions.

All my life I was striving for one goal and it was to be a professional singer. I thought that American idol would be a great place to start my path but i was absolutely wrong. Once I finally turned the age old enough to try out for the show I noticed myself not wanting it as much as I used to when I was a kid and that was because I grew up and started to see the more importance of music and such great value that it had. I went to different university choir concerts to see what it would be like to join a choir in college and after seeing my first college concert I was completely set for what I wanted to do after I graduated. I knew growing up that whatever I was going to do in life was going to involve music some way or another. I learned that you can be a professional singer through education and get taught properly and really learn and get the most out of those 4 to 5 years of studying music, instead of trying out for some reality singing show that may or may not get you anywhere. Its much more guaranteed that a person can get a job in the music field by going to school for it, rather than hoping to win on a TV show. I'm so happy that I grew up quick enough to realize that you don't need TV shows to become a professional vocalist. I've gained so much more knowledge being a music major at this University for only a few quick months that I've been here, and I can gladly say that education matters so very much if you want to reach your highest potential in life.

Breeana Jones
Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University
Major: Music – Vocal Performance
Hometown: Willcox, Arizona (85644)

This journal is to discuss why music education matters to me, well music education is a really big matter in everybody's life even if they do not realize it. When you have music education it opens many doors for many people. Also having music education as a skill can also help you in other classes. My favorite Choral Director was Mrs. Fuss. She was my sixth, seventh and eighth grade choir teacher.

She was always so fun but when she meant business, you knew it. She always had a lot of character in all of her songs and, especially she did not get irritated when we did not have the music learned with a couple of go arounds. She was my main inspiration to keep singing even when i did not get along with the conductor or did not like the pieces. She always had so much confidence in everyone that she knew or worked with and made everything possible for that person that she could do in her power.

I think learning about music makes a difference in everybody's life because it shows the inner self. Even if your not comfortable singing it always feels great afterwards, especially when you have successfully learned a piece. I also think learning music is a great thing to learn is because it opens people up to themselves, they realize how really special they are and the power they have.

Renee Babcock

Freshman, Eastern New Mexico University

Major: Social Work

Hometown: Roswell, New Mexico (88201)