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## Grassroots “Music Makes Us Whole” Campaign Promotes the Power of Music

*Music Makes Us Whole illustrates how the benefits of music learning extend far beyond the classroom*

**MINNEAPOLIS, Minn., Jan. 8, 2015** – A growing wealth of research proves the immense benefits of music learning – and dozens of diverse Minnesota organizations are banding together to ensure every child receives the rich experience they deserve.

The new grassroots initiative, called "Music Makes Us Whole," was formed by a consortium of nonprofit and for-profit organizations, including Minnesota Public Radio, Twin Cities Public Television, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Minnesota Opera, Schmitt Music and Southeast Minnesota Youth Orchestras (SEMYO), as well as higher-education institutions, teachers from rural and urban districts and myriad other groups from across the state.

The campaign launches with the debut of [MusicMakesUsWhole.org](http://MusicMakesUsWhole.org), a website with tools that community members and parents can use to ensure their children are reaping the broad benefits of music learning.

Music Makes Us Whole also involves a marketing campaign, including grassroots efforts from participating organizations and radio spots showcasing the compelling stories of Minnesotans, from fourth graders to baby boomers. The campaign features stories of everyone from CEOs to financial advisors, who explain why the skills they gained in music training were critical to their professional success.

### Benefits Extend Far Beyond the Classroom

Quality music learning is not a luxury. It equips students with a diverse skillset that helps them excel in non-music disciplines, and prepares them for success in adulthood.

- Music training **stimulates nearly every region of the brain**, and students with 1+ year of high school music experience **earn higher ACT scores**.
- Music education may **help Minnesota close the achievement gap**: Low-income students who took music lessons in grades 8 to 12 saw math, reading, history, geography and social skills **soar by 40%** compared to non-music students.

- Research from the National Endowment of the Arts found at-risk youth with access to arts programs in schools also have **higher career goals and are more civically engaged**.
- Music students **gain the skills employers want most**: teamwork, communication and problem solving.
- 83% of adults with **incomes higher than \$150,000** participated in music.\*

Kenneth D. Holmen, former Chief Medical Officer of Regions Hospital and current CEO of St. Cloud-based health system CentraCare, is the subject of a Music Makes Us Whole radio segment. He says music equipped him with the unique skills to succeed in the medical field. "Music helps define who I am; it is sustaining for me," says Holmen. "Music makes me appreciate the full richness of life."

### **Why Now?**

Students can only reap the broad benefits of music learning if their schools have strong music programs.

While Minnesota schools have been adding teachers since 2006, the trend in music is the opposite – a decline, according to the latest Minnesota Department of Education data. That means larger music classes, fewer music classes or less time spent in music class.

Principals and superintendents value input from community members, and "Music Makes Us Whole" encourages Minnesotans to contact schools, focusing on why music is important for students' success. Can their students choose from multiple offerings? How often and for how long do classes meet? Does each student have access to an instrument and the chance to sing? To help start the conversation, Music Makes Us Whole offers criteria for quality music programs, which can be found at [musicmakesuswhole.org/quality-school-music](http://musicmakesuswhole.org/quality-school-music). The site also features a "find your school" tool, as well as sample email and phone scripts for use when talking to local principals or superintendents.

"We advocate for quality music in schools not only because of music's intrinsic value in the human experience, but also for the whole-brain and whole-life benefits to the child, as well as his or her community," says Brian Newhouse, managing director of Minnesota Public Radio's classical programming and a member of Music Makes Us Whole. "Whether it's classical music, hip-hop or rock 'n roll, music truly does make us whole."

"We're thrilled that so many diverse organizations have joined together to support quality music programs for young people," adds Mary Schaeffle, Executive Director of the Minnesota Music Educators Association. "We want to ensure that every child in Minnesota experiences the joys and lifelong benefits of music."

*\*Find more statistics about music education and the research from which they were derived at [MusicMakesUsWhole.org](http://MusicMakesUsWhole.org).*