



# JONAS C., MARIAN D., & ROBERT H. ERB CHARITABLE FUND PROPOSAL

## Contact Information

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Year Incorporated: 2023  
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## Organization Information:

### Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities       Environment/Animal Welfare       Education

**Mission:** To give the Gift of Music to aspiring musicians in need by providing instruments, securing lessons and providing community-based performance opportunities.

**Geographic Area Served** All of Chester County with current focus on West Chester, Kennett Square, Coatesville, Downingtown, and Unionville.

**Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:** We serve aspiring musicians in need, especially those from underserved communities, and the audiences they share their talents with. While not age restricted, our aspiring musicians are typically school and/or university students. As a young organization with limited funds the total population served is measured in the low hundreds. The population that can be served is a direct function of funds raised.

<u>Annual Budget</u> \$ <u>105,110</u>	<u>0.25</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>85</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>8</u> # of Board Volunteers
<u>10</u> % of budget for administrative expenses	<u>14</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers
<u>5</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses	<u>67/mon</u> # of Volunteer Hours
<small>100 % total</small>	

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Music Teachers National Association; Randy Stone; Roger Mustalish

**Grant Amount Requested: \$ 20,000**

**Proposal Summary:** Funds will support up to 24 community music performances by aspiring musicians as part of our Gift of Performance mission area. Half will be for general audiences; the balance for those at senior centers, retirement communities and assisted healthcare facilities. The project will also generate vital funds in support of our Gift of Learning mission area to help other musicians.

# GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

## 1. History, goals, key achievements & distinctiveness

If Not for Music was co-founded by Jae Winter and Roger Mustalish in 2023. The inspiration for the organization was the real-life experience of Jae's son Gannon. With his permission we wish to share his story:

While in middle school, Gannon began to suffer from anxiety and depression. He lacked friends, confidence and a way to express himself. His grades suffered. His condition worsened and he began to harm himself. He reached out for help and specifically asked to study music. The French horn in particular. Gannon was fortunate that his single mom could secure resources to make that happen.

Today he is confident, a leader, and well on his way to a successful music education career at the Wells School of Music at West Chester University. Gannon said, "If not for music, I might not even be here."

Thus, the inspiration for our name and mission. Focus groups and needs assessments conducted in 2023 confirmed that Gannon's story is not unique. He was lucky he had the needed resources. So many other aspiring musicians do not. That is where If Not for Music comes in.

Social science research is clear and compelling. Adolescents engaged in music education programs have lower rates of depression and anxiety; improved self-esteem; better grades; higher math and SAT scores; and are better socially adjusted to name a few of the benefits. At If Not for Music we believe that all individuals should have access to these benefits and share their musical journey with a wider audience. Music should never be just for the privileged.

Our Mission is to give the Gift of Music to aspiring musicians in need. We achieve this by providing instruments through donations, rentals and purchase; by securing blocks of instructional time so proficiency can be attained; and through underwriting community-based performance opportunities so performance skills can be honed. To learn more about us, please click here: [www.ifnotformusic.org](http://www.ifnotformusic.org).

We are a very young organization in need of additional funds to fulfill our mission. We have, though, still had an impact. January 2024 saw us help 5 members of the WCU Golden Rams Marching band have the adventure of a lifetime performing at the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, CA. Their performance was seen by over 20 million people live and on television. We also supported the marching bands of Unionville and West Chester Henderson high schools in 2024. From fall 2023 through spring 2024 we hosted 3 talented interns from WCU's Communication and Media program to launch our new organization. In association with East Fallowfield Township, we underwrote a community music performance in April by a student jazz quintet from WCU. In May, the Music Teachers National Association awarded us a grant to produce videos and print media that can be used in fundraising. Work on this is expected to conclude by May 2026. During the summer, we assisted a Life Scout in creating a community access Music Garden in Mendenhall, PA. Thanks to a generous anchor gift from a Board member we were able to create the Gift of Learning Fund that will provide support to musicians aspiring to compose, secure private music lessons, and attend community music camps.

There are many organizations, public and private, engaged in music within our region. What

distinguishes us is the focus on aspiring musicians in need, especially those from underserved communities. If one has the resources, there are ample opportunities to secure instruments, lessons and performances. But not so for those without these resources. Frankly, they are left out not only of musical experiences but of the clear benefits, noted above, that come with music education. We have been told time and time again by members of our Board, our advisors and volunteers, the musicians we have helped, and audiences that what we do is so needed in the region. This is what drives our mission and our vision.

## **2. Funding request**

### **• Description of key initiatives**

A student we helped last year said, “It’s one thing to nail a performance while practicing, but if you cannot deliver the performance for a live audience, what’s the point?” Learning the skills to perform in front of an audience is part of the music education learning curve. It transcends learning music theory and attaining proficiency. Live performance is the culminating step in music education. This initiative will directly address this need, to support musicians engaged in community performances open to the general public. We are planning up to 12 performances involving an estimated 50 new musicians in front of audiences potentially exceeding 750 individuals. A vital aspect of this part of the program is that in addition to addressing our Gift of Performance mission area, the business model to be employed will generate new revenue through ticket sales in support of our Gift of Learning mission area. Indeed, we expect new revenue through this project to exceed the amount being requested here.

A portion of funds will be used to secure aspiring musicians to perform at senior centers, healthcare centers, hospice units and other venues. We are planning up to 12 events and have already received interest from sites, all that is lacking right now is funding. This is a unique need we will address that is sorely needed in our community. Data from the National Institutes of Health clearly document the benefits of music for those faced with cancer, dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, depression, anxiety, and other acute and chronic diseases. Our work here will be in collaboration with the Music Therapy program at West Chester University.

### **• Specific needs & issues to be addressed**

If Not for Music collaborates with the Kennett Flash, a nonprofit entertainment venue, to produce 12 community-based performances. Funds requested here will go to the aspiring musicians who will be performing. We already have a commitment from a local, new jazz sextet to inaugurate this program, pending funding. Future performers will be identified with the help of West Chester University as we create a ‘musicians on call’ list. Finding musicians will not be a significant barrier to the program’s success. Cost per performance will vary based on the number of musicians. There is a venue rental of \$300 per event that we must cover. To do so, we are seeking community sponsors for each performance. A total of \$3600 will be needed to cover the venue rental for the year. This is still an outstanding need. In return for the venue rental, the Kennett Flash will advertise the performances on their social media platforms, handle ticketing, and provide professional light and sound support for each performance.

These benefits are typically far beyond the capacity of new musicians to secure. We’ve been told by new musicians that having access to a venue like the Kennett Flash is a huge step forward for them.

There will be no venue rentals for those performances at senior centers and other private locations. The funds requested here will be specifically directed to the performers. The nature of the performances here will be different than for the general community, consisting more of single performers such as a classical guitarist, or keyboardist, or perhaps a small jazz or classical trio. We are working with each site

to tailor the music to their clients' needs.

- **Why it is important to fund this now**

We have successfully demonstrated in 2024 and 2025 the need for our services and our ability to respond and be successful. What is holding us back from greater impact is simply funding.

For example, it costs approximately \$1800 to provide weekly private lessons for six months for one student, the time whereby proficiency is attainable. \$18,000 would help us support 10 musicians; \$180,000 supports 100 musicians. Impact is a direct function of the funding level. Funding this now will give us a critical level of funding to make a real impact immediately. And it will be a catalyst and accelerator to more funds.

Through the project requested here, funding will directly support these community performances by providing funds for the musicians. Community sponsors will enable us to cover the venue rental. That permits us to direct 100% of ticket sales to our Learning Fund, in support of music education. We realistically expect average attendance at these events to be 40 individuals, or up to 480 per year. At a ticket price of \$25.00 per event, this will generate \$12,000 in new revenue that we can immediately put into expanded service provision. You can see that the net revenue from this project will easily exceed the requested amount, permitting us to address two key mission areas and impact dozens of musicians and hundreds of audience members.

We have a goal of raising at least \$25,000 this year for our Gift of Learning Fund. Net proceeds from this project, plus our anchor gift, will get us 70% of the way to our goal. We currently have a needs list of students seeking support for lessons; community based senior and healthcare sites seeking musicians for their clients; and dozens of new musicians looking for the opportunity to take their music education to the next level and to share their talents with us all. The importance of funding now cannot be overstated.

- **How impact & results will be demonstrated**

The measures of success for this project will include:

- Actual number of events scheduled at the Kennett Flash
- Number of musicians supported
- Number of audience participants
- Net revenue generated
- Actual number of events scheduled at senior and healthcare centers
- Number of musicians supported
- Number of clients/residents served
- Number of additional students helped with the net revenue generated by this project

There are other measures of success that include the longer-term impact of this project on the musicians and the audience. Questions we will address through surveys and longitudinal studies include:

- Did this project advance the musical careers of the performers?
- Did this project lead to advanced learning by the musicians?
- What was the level of satisfaction of senior/healthcare clients with our programming?
- Did we generate sufficient net revenue to grow our mission areas?
- How can we do better?

Note: Our Strategic Plan file is large. Please use this URL to view, or you can access the document through our website, [www.ifnotformusic](http://www.ifnotformusic) and use the About tab to find the Strategic Plan:

[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/649066a1412377594c4a5131/t/666354138462d243b31a27fb/1717785620881/INFM\\_strategic-plan\\_2024-2029.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/649066a1412377594c4a5131/t/666354138462d243b31a27fb/1717785620881/INFM_strategic-plan_2024-2029.pdf) ###