Seattle Music Partners Volunteer FAQs



Photo by Tom Wolken

What is Seattle Music Partners?

Seattle Music Partners is a non-profit organization that provides after-school music instruction to underserved elementary school students. We recruit, screen and train volunteers to work one-on-one with students in Seattle's Central District. Volunteers come once a week after school to teach students how to play instruments and read music.

Who are the volunteers?

You! We welcome skilled musicians in high school, college and throughout the community who are passionate about playing music, enjoy working with children and who have an interest in community service. This past year we had more than 100 musicians participate in the program as tutors.

Do I need teaching experience to participate?

No prior teaching experience is necessary. We provide a comprehensive orientation session that will focus on teaching/mentoring techniques, cultural competencies and other relevant skills and information, as well as a tutor curriculum to guide you in lesson planning. We also hold ongoing training and support sessions for volunteers throughout the school year.

What instruments are typically taught?

Clarinet, saxophone, flute, trumpet, trombone, violin, viola, cello, and percussion. We match tutors with students according to their instrument. If you play something not listed like bassoon, bass, oboe, or French horn (for example), please contact us anyway so we can figure out if there is another way we could utilize your skills in our program. We want you to be involved!

What about piano and guitar?

We've decided to focus on the instruments that are traditionally represented in orchestra, concert band, and marching band, and available as part of traditional middle school ensembles. If you have been a piano or guitar tutor with us in years past, please get in touch so we can find other ways for you to be involved in the program.

Why volunteer?

The lives of SMP's tutors are enriched by joining our program. Not only do tutors aid in the development of a student's learning and self-confidence, they also gain teaching experience, earn service-learning hours, improve their own musicianship and join a network of volunteer musicians from around the Seattle area.

When and where does the program take place?

One-on-one tutoring sessions occur once a week at the following schools:

Mondays: Leschi Elementary School
Tuesdays: Madrona K-8 School
Wednesdays: Lowell Elementary School
Thursdays: Bailey Gatzert Elementary School

We ask that volunteers commit to one afternoon a week. Our afternoon sessions run approximately 2 ½ hours, with start times depending on school dismissal times. Sessions include prep time, snack with the students, lessons, group debriefings and training.

There are also opportunities to volunteer as a Student Assistant after school on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, or Fridays, where we lead music lessons and ensemble rehearsals. We seek volunteers who are especially interested or experienced in working with groups of children in a music education setting. Please contact us if you are interested in learning more about this particular volunteer opportunity.

How can I become a volunteer?

First, fill out an online application at www.seattlemusicpartners.org ("Be a Tutor").

All application materials (including 2 confidential recommendations) are due by Sunday, October 18th, 2015. Once we have received your completed application, we will contact you.

Are there other ways to help?

If you have instruments, music stands or copies of Standard of Excellence, Essential Elements 2000, or other method books you're able to donate, we would love to put them to use! We also need volunteers for other areas like photography, videography, recital set up and more. Let us know what your interests are! If you have friends or siblings who might be interested in volunteering, please spread the word!

How can I learn more?

Visit our website at www.seattlemusicpartners.org or contact our Program Director, Meaghan Leferink, at 206-329-2350 or meaghan@seattlemusicpatners.org.