

a publication of the Denison University Suzuki Program

## ***Institute Magic – A Teacher’s Perspective***

by Jim Van Reeth

Summer is just around the corner! Have you thought about attending, with your child, a Suzuki Institute? It is a fantastic experience where learning and fun are crammed into one short week. A summer institute may be a perfect family vacation opportunity that also allows your child to have a concentrated time of group lessons, masterclasses, recitals and fun with kids and teachers from around the country and around the world at one of the nearly 100 summer institutes across the United States and world-wide. Institutes are patterned after Dr. Suzuki’s summer school in Matsumoto, Japan where teachers, students and practice partners come together and share in a program of instruction, motivation and enjoyment.

As a teacher I benefit greatly from having families attend institute. I get the opportunity to see my students and practice partners through new eyes. I learn so much from observing the work an institute teacher does with my students. I see how I might improve my teaching and I also gain validation for my teaching. It seems all institute participants, be they students, practice partners or teachers always come away with a renewed passion and enthusiasm for learning. I witness friendships and close bonds that form between students, parents and families who look forward to seeing each other year after year.

I feel the institute experience is magical because while I first see and appreciate the results of all the wonderful learning experiences happening all around, I can’t help but also notice that the students first remember the trips for ice cream, getting caught in a down pour on the way to master class, the whacky teacher skit at the talent show, playing Frisbee after lunch, swimming, and all of the extra stuff that happens in the summer camp environment. But, I also notice that students remember their favorite teachers, the fun classes and do appreciate what they are learning. I hope you and your family will experience the magic of a summer institute this summer, for the first time, or once again.

## ***More Than Just An Impressive Collection of T-Shirts***

by Maryfrances Kirsh

We attended our first Institute at Capital University in 1998. Our oldest violinist was ten and was working on Minuet 1, our middle violinist was playing Lightly Row, and we left our youngest at a friend’s house. The years that all three went, my husband took the week off and helped with taking notes and attending lessons. It became our family vacation. In 2006, we attended our ninth Institute (we have all the t-shirts, too!).

My husband’s favorite part of Institute was attending masterclasses. He really enjoyed it the year all three kids were studying pieces by Bach, his favorite composer. He practiced with them during free time at Institute and the experience gave him insight into my role as the regular practice partner.

For the first few years, there was a giant bush outside of the music building at Capital that all the kids loved to hide in and climb on. We were sad when they took it down, but the kids

soon found new places to hang out together. My kids still say that the best part of Institute is the people.

Attending Institute early in our Suzuki journey gave me the support I needed and the confirmation that we were making progress. I enjoyed getting to know the other parents in masterclass and group class and have “grown up” with them through the years.

The week of lessons with master teachers and leisurely times with Institute friends may have seemed like all fun and games for my kids, but I could also hear improvement in their playing. It gave us a boost that we all needed.

Institutes usually keep the same dates from year to year, so it’s not too early to look ahead and pencil them in. Most have posted their information on the SAA website already. Start your t-shirt collection this summer! ☺

[www.suzukiassociation.org](http://www.suzukiassociation.org)

Summer Suzuki Institutes

# Summer Suzuki Institutes

## *A Suzuki Student's Perspective on Summer Institutes* by Katie Wolff

What's Institute? Institute is a place where you have lots of fun playing your instrument and get to make new friends. There are many great reasons to go to an institute. You can learn from different teachers and learn more and different techniques. You can also build on the skills you have already learned. When I was a student and much younger, these are some of the things I learned from my experiences at the American Suzuki Institute in Stevens Point, WI. I have great memories, too.

My mom and I stayed in a dorm on University of Wisconsin's campus for the week of institute. I thought that was fun and I learned what it was like to share a bathroom with several other people. It also gave me an understanding of what to expect when I went to other music camps and college.

I grew up in a small town in Iowa, and was the ONLY person who played the violin. I

felt like I was "normal" for once when I saw many other children playing and practicing an instrument just like me!

Best of all, I made a new friend, Kristin. Even though she was two years younger, we had a lot in common. We both played the violin, both had an older sibling that played the piano, were the same height and we loved to roller skate. Every year at institute, we would request rooms across the hall from each other so we could spend more time together. I remember Kristin being a big motivation for me because we wanted to be in the same classes every year so, we had to be on the same pieces of music. For several years, Kristin and I kept in touch by writing each other letters.

I am so glad I had the opportunity to go to institute those couple of years. The value of the memories and everything I learned is priceless.

## **Wait, Wait... Don't Give Up Now!!**

by Maryfrances Kirsh

I know you've heard it:

"I don't WANT to play anymore."

"I don't LIKE it. It's too HARD!!"

Perhaps you've even said it yourself! 😊

It's O.K. It happens to everyone involved in teaching and learning. The question to ask is: What should you do about it?

The very first thing you should do is tell your teacher. He or she has been there! Your teacher can give you ideas on how to keep going, can take lessons in a different direction, or just be a sympathetic ear.

Second, call a Suzuki-friendly friend whom you've met at group. (This is not the time to call your friend who thinks that Suzuki is a motorcycle!)

Third, take a break. Just listen to the CD for a while with your child instead of going to the instrument. Set a goal beyond playing, such

as learning all the names of the pieces in Book 1 or reading about the composers of those pieces.

Fourth, read a book. It's always good to review Dr. Suzuki's philosophy in [Nurtured by Love](#). It will remind you why you set out on this journey in the first place! Another good book to have on hand is Ed Sprunger's [Helping Parents Practice](#).

Finally, consider attending an Institute this summer. Many offer parent workshops each day given by teachers who are Suzuki parents or who have studied Suzuki parenting. You will meet other parents who are or have been in the same situation. I promise you will come back with a different perspective.

Just don't give up. Music education is a journey that you and your children can experience together. This rough spot WILL pass!

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Denison  
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# Suzuki Sounds from Cincy

by Linda Habig

## *Our Mission...*

...to create a positive musical learning partnership among faculty, students, and their parents/practice partners by following the philosophical principles and educational methods developed by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki so that children can grow into loving and respectful individuals who will have a positive effect on their world.

For more information about our program, please contact:

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On a nasty, snowy, sleeting weekend in February, what could be better than total immersion in the warmth, nurture, love and learning of a Suzuki Workshop! Happily, two of my Suzuki flute teacher friends in Cincinnati invited me to participate in the Winter Workshop of the Cincinnati Suzuki Cooperative. The Cincinnati Coop is a fabulous program providing Suzuki training in string instruments and flute to students in the Cincinnati Public School System, enabling children from all economic levels to experience Suzuki education through private lessons, group classes, and workshops.

On Friday of the Workshop weekend, I attended a teacher-enrichment training program, taught by a Suzuki teacher-trainer in cello, who is also an international expert on the impact of sound and tone on the human body. The highly academic, yet practical course covered the physics of sound, and how tone and sound affect the individual cells in our bodies. Sounds are waves of energy, causing our cells to actually vibrate within our bodies, which are resonant vehicles. Recent research has shown that tones and sounds directly affect body cells in the same way cells are affected by amino acids (peptides) generated by the brain in response to emotions. Further, research has shown that our body's cells recognize various pitches, which can enhance the health of cells and our bodies. The training session progressed from the esoteric to the practical, pointing out that Dr. Suzuki focused intently on beautiful tone production, creating the teaching concept of "tonalization". He was ahead of his time, understanding and teaching that

"Tone is a Living Soul", and "A Refined Tone is a Refined Spirit".

The weekend Workshop was attended by several hundred Suzuki students in the Cincinnati program, all of whom had the opportunity throughout two intensive days to be coached individually in master classes by nationally-known teachers. (One of the string teachers was our own Jim Van Reeth!) Students also participated in group classes and enrichment activities such as choir, fiddling, and Irish flute. At the end of each day on Saturday and Sunday, a play-in was held, where several hundred students filled the gym with glorious sounds of Suzuki repertoire being performed. Teachers participated in the play-in as well, and I surely enjoyed playing with the 25 flute students!

I observed the flute master classes, taught by David Gerry, an internationally-acclaimed Suzuki flute instructor from Toronto. Interestingly, his focus with virtually every student was on that most essential element of flute tone production - air. He worked with each student, ranging from age 5 to 16, to breathe more deeply and to send a faster air stream through the flute. His goal with each student was a bigger, rounder, more singing tone that would carry across the room.

It was a wonderful, exhilarating weekend for me as a teacher and as a flutist. A terrific part of the Suzuki philosophy and pedagogy is the ongoing education and sharing of ideas that naturally occurs through workshops such as this, even when the roads are glazed with ice and snow makes our noses and fingers freeze!

## *Instruments for Sale...*

The MacDonald family has a violin and a flute for sale and they would love for them to go to Suzuki homes.

The violin is a full sized "Kohr" with a beautiful sound and the flute is a full sized Emerson.

Please contact Ann MacDonald for further information at (740) 587-7805 or send her an email at [annbillmac@roadrunner.com](mailto:annbillmac@roadrunner.com)



