

**Susan Randazzo's Remarks**  
**Evening of Gratitude**  
**November 10, 2018**

How are things at Indian Hill? I am asked almost every day in almost every setting. I know you are wondering the same thing. It's a three-part answer.

First, the organization is *growing*. Here in Littleton we are bursting at the seams. We are running out of teaching studios and offices. Blackman Hall is busy every single night of the week, literally.

Music School enrollment is up 30% since 2015. Under Pete's leadership we have created new programs. This year, a Regional Youth Wind Ensemble and Two Children's Choruses, added to our 3 levels of Youth Orchestra, Big Band, Flute Orchestra, and New Horizons Band. Then there are our small groups: classical chamber music, jazz combos and rock bands, recorder groups, Roots ensemble, Suzuki classes! How will we fit more?

Performances are also expanding. Already this fall we've had 2 Orchestra of Indian Hill concerts, 2 chamber concerts at the Kalliroscope Gallery, a Jazz Jam, a Roots/Celtic Jam, a Flute Orchestra concert, and a special performance by the Jason Palmer Quintet (we are becoming THE place for jazz in this region). At this time next week, Grammy-winning cellist Mike Block, a pioneer on his instrument, will be in this very room. He'll do a rock strings workshop with students followed by an on-stage interview and concert which will be recorded for podcast- a great example of our integration of education and performance.

Community partnerships and outreach are growing too. The band program at McKay Arts Academy in Fitchburg now serves 57 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Our terrific partner there, Lourdes Ramirez just shared the impact we've had on the children in that school. The Indian Hill strings program in the Ayer Shirley district continues with 13 violin students. We also partner with the high-need Lawrence High School by coaching their band students. Our free Bach's Lunch concerts are at capacity with 300 attendees each month. And requests for the Threshold Singers are increasing, this year providing comfort through song at 40 bedside sings and 15 memorial services for hospice organizations.

Secondly, this growth is purposeful & strategic: We are totally focused on setting the stage for 2022, so we are ready to bring to life the incredible facility we are building in Groton. A year ago the foundation was being poured. Today, the beautiful renderings are being realized. You can see and feel the volume of the spaces. Bruce even stood on the Concert Hall stage a couple

of weeks back. It is thrilling to watch it all unfold. As one visitor recently said, “It takes your breath away!”

But the measure of how we are doing that matters most is not in the numbers or the new building. It is in *your* experiences – in what touches *your* minds and hearts when you are with us. Part 3 of my answer is: Indian Hill Music is truly living our mission and values.

Recently, our staff engaged in a process to re-articulate our organizational values. It was very heartening to me because the *essence* of these values has not changed in 25 years. Our Board will be providing their feedback in a meeting this coming week. As I share each value, think about your own experience of Indian Hill Music.

- A Community of Excellence - Open to All
- A Feeling of Home
- Vibrant Experiences
- Personal Growth
- Meaningful Connections
- Responsible Stewardship of the Resources Entrusted to Us

These days there are articles and studies telling us that despite all the social media and technology, people are feeling more isolated and lonely. This is true for all age groups. We are craving *connection* – not virtual connection but *real* connection, real community through shared experiences. We want to feel alive, vibrant. We want to *connect not just with others but with the deepest parts of ourselves*.

This is exactly what happens at Indian Hill Music every single day in our studios and concert halls and in the community. I experience these things myself playing cello in the orchestra or singing at a bedside with the Threshold Singers. Or when I attend a masterclass and see a student light up when the master teacher’s coaching clicks and a more beautiful performance comes forth. I feel it at concerts at the Kalliroscope Gallery concerts or here in this hall when I am transported, moved or want to get up and dance. And I know this happens for you, too, because you tell me over and over again.

Here’s one story about our impact on one child’s life:

Our next door neighbor, Littleton Academy, is a therapeutic residential school that treats children who have experienced extreme trauma and have significant emotional and learning challenges. Our wonderful early childhood teacher, Joey Pierog, has taught weekly music

classes there since the fall of 2017. One of the students, 11-year-old Nathaniel [in his mother's words] "was adopted from foster care at age 5. He has a history of trauma from his early life. He is sweet and caring, but can get dis-regulated when overwhelmed, scared, or feeling a surge of emotion (including happiness). Nathaniel loves music. It helps him to feel calm and is something that he will work hard at. Sometimes he just wants to play music in an exploratory, free flowing way, and does seem to have a good musical sense."

Nathaniel so enjoyed working with Joey, particularly with percussion instruments and activities, that he asked his mother if he could take drum lessons. Now, his mother says, "Nathaniel is taking drum lessons as a resource for healing, as a medium for creativity, and as a mode for self-expression and for coming together with others. We would love to also see him grow musically." *This is why we exist.*

You are our closest friends. We are so grateful for your generosity – because you make what we do possible. We can't thank you enough.

You also know us best. You are embracing our vision and we need you to help us carry it forward. Please share your excitement far and wide, because we need more people to help us reach our destination. Together, we will realize our incredibly bright future!

Thank you.