Dear Suzuki Parents:

Our semester has gotten underway and it is moving into fall with such speed! The teachers and myself hope that things are going as smoothly as possible for your family. We are all lucky to be here and sharing music together. Music is such a wonderful activity to turn to when days are not going quite the way they are expected to go. The gift you are giving to your children will see them through many times in their lives. It will help them to make friends and meet people from around the world. Thank you for letting us share in your child’s growth!

Make a habit of frequently check the MSU-CMS Suzuki website; start at [www.cms.msu.edu](http://www.cms.msu.edu) then click on the Suzuki Program link. The MSU-CMS Suzuki Program Newsletter will be posted on the web every two months. I encourage you to read the information, calendar of events and up-coming news to stay well informed.

Please send any up-dated e-mail addresses to Sue Garber, Director (garbersu@msu.edu) as soon as possible.

**Some Important Dates**

**November 6-7 (Friday/Saturday) Okemos Suzuki Workshop** Ask your teacher for a brochure for this wonderful and inspiring workshop! Everyone should go to motivate their music student.

**November 12 (Thursday) – Strings Recital Day** All students involved in group classes will get a wonderful opportunity to perform for their fellow musicians and parents. Recitals will begin at 5:30 pm and will run in two rooms at the same time for about 1 hour.

**November 16 - December 19** - We encourage you and your children to “Bring a Friend to CMS!” During this month long period, bring a friend of you or your child to their lessons, your lessons, or group classes to show what great things you are doing at CMS! If someone does attend a lesson with you, both the family and that guest will receive a token of our appreciation for introducing them to CMS.

**November 22 (Sunday) - Barnes and Nobles** Suzuki Strings Performance from 3 - 3:45pm. Help the MSU-CMS raise money by mentioning “Michigan State University Community Music School” during purchases at any Barnes and Nobles bookstore across the US. Please arrive in white top/dark bottom at 2:40 pm to get set-up and tuned.

**December 3 (Thursday) - The Spartan Strings** will be performing at Burcham Hills Retirement home at 6:30 pm.

**December 10 (Thursday) – Strings Holiday Party** Caroling, playing together and treats, beginning at 5:30pm in the Auditorium. Families will be asked to bring holiday cookies, drinks, and good cheer!

**December 12 (Saturday) – Piano Winter Concert**

**December 13 (Sunday) - Come to the Turner-Dodge House in Lansing** to hear a chamber music recital of members of your Suzuki faculty; Susanne Garber, Anne Kearney-Looman, and Paul Rebeck perform string trios. The concert will begin at 5:30pm. This concert is free and open to the public.

**December 17 (Thursday)** - There will be an outreach performance for all the strings in the Suzuki program in place of group classes. We are hoping to be at the Meridian Mall that evening. More details to come!
Discovery Zone - Parent & Teacher
(excerpts from an article by Lisa Stang Goldman)

Often what is important to the teacher isn’t obvious to the parent. Even intelligent parents with the best intentions do not always possess an understanding of necessary skills vital to good playing habits, or knowledge of how they develop over time. The parent must be taught by their teacher when and how to isolate critical skills and troublesome areas. They must know why the skill is important, how to practice it, and how to nurture it into a mastered skill over a period of time.

Parents should insist on highly detailed information from their teachers. Your teacher’s personality may not be the type to stop, look at you, and say, “Play the first two beats in measure 31 five times a day, with your left hand doing this and right hand doing that simultaneously on the first beat…”

Discover these three zones of understanding:

1. Visual: How does it look? Is there something you can see to fix?
2. Verbal: Can you describe it for me in nonmusical terms?
3. Aural: How does it sound?

Here is an example of these zones of understanding with a violin Pre-Twinkler who is learning to place the bow:

- Visual - a tape marking the Kreisler Highway
- Verbal - “Keep all the hairs of the bow over the highway.”
- Aural - an example of how it sounds, both correctly and incorrectly

Your teacher may be very engrossed in working with your child and fail to stop periodically to inform you of details. Your teacher may communicate details in a variety of ways that you are not used to. It is the job of both the parent and teacher to find common grounds to decipher what is important. Watch for gestures: a glance at the parent while demonstrating a skill may really mean, “Please write this down!” Perhaps you will hear the same phrase go by—something like, “Try doing this with…” The “with” in this instruction is probably something you will need to focus on and write down. Listen for these phrases to go by: “Try it like this…” “Do it with…” “Can you do it without…” “When you play this…” “Instead of…” “Listen for…” These are all polite Suzuki teacher-isms. Zero in on the skill being demonstrated. Whenever you are unsure of what is happening, ask your teacher.

Some questions to ask your Suzuki teacher to clarify:
1. Which review pieces should we play? 2. What specific skill should we focus on in each review piece assigned? 3. Ask for an example/demonstration of the teacher’s expectations of how the child should sound during that week. 4. Where in the music is this? How is it notated? 5. What are we learning in this piece? (new material) How does it continue to develop later? 6. Do we need a metronome tempo? 7. How much bow do we use? Where is it placed to start/
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