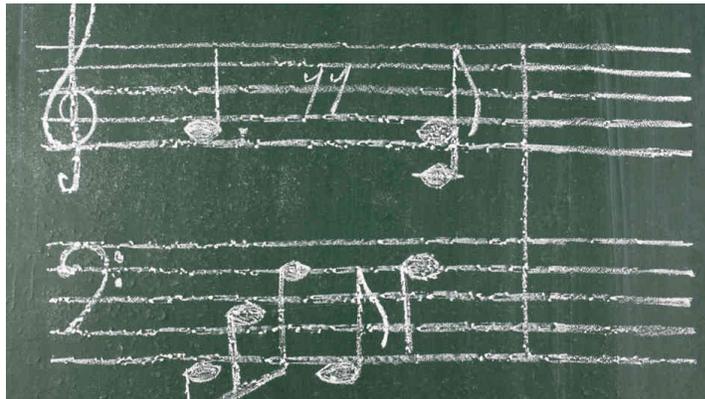


# How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?



Read The Stories Of Over  
1,400 Pennsylvanians That  
Believe In The Power And  
Value Of Music Education

March 2015



# How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?

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# How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?

A Collection of Responses from Pennsylvanians Brought To You By  
PMEA: The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association

[www.pmea.net](http://www.pmea.net)



# Pennsylvania Music Educators Association

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March 25, 2015

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In 2014, Mark Despotakis, chair of the PMEA Advancement of Music Education got the idea to compile a booklet on “How Music Education Has Impacted Your Life.” His hope was to get letters from people across the state in various professions and tell their story about the impact that a quality music education had on their life. The responses were overwhelming. We have received over 1400 stories at the time of publication and hope to obtain even more.

According to NAFME Executive Director Michael Butera: “Research does indicate that music education enhances brain development and correlates with higher standardized test scores and better attendance rates. While these measures of student progress are indisputably valuable, the benefits of a balanced education also go beyond such measures. Music education can assist students in developing the 21st century skills of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity; while facilitating discipline, teamwork, and an appreciation for diverse cultures. Additionally, an education in music and the arts offers students understandings and experiences they cannot gain through other subjects: creation of tangible artistic products, engagement with ambiguity, focus on emotion, exploration of individual and group identities, and an orientation towards the ongoing nature of artistic processes. In short, music education orchestrates success. Since the transformative power of music education cannot always be expressed in numbers, we wanted to know how individuals would articulate the importance of music education in their lives.”

We at PMEA are pleased to offer these stories for you to read and enjoy. Hopefully, this will help you to better understand how a sequential, standards based music education, taught by a certified music teacher can impact people of all walks of life.

Sincerely,

Dennis Emert  
PMEA President

An Affiliate of the National Association for Music Education



# Pennsylvania Music Educators Association

56 S. Third St., Hamburg, PA 19526

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In our world of high stakes testing, music and the arts may be the only outlet for some students. Music and the arts may be the only reason a child wants to go to school. Music and the arts may be the only way a child can express himself. Music and the arts are a lifelong skill that every child and adult can appreciate and participate in throughout their life.

What you see in the following pages are testimonials written in their own words from over 1,400 Pennsylvanians that believe in the power of music and music education. The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) set out to answer the question: "How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?". What we received as answers were far more than we ever expected. You'll find touching stories from across the state of lives changed because of music. You'll read stories from people of all ages that realize how music has moved them and changed them and made them appreciate the world around them. Especially moving are stories included in this book from students involved in PMEA music festivals.

We ask that you, as a policy maker, remember and refer back to these stories when you are making decisions about education. If we truly want our students to be well rounded, culturally aware, engaged citizens, then, it's an obvious choice to give EVERY student the opportunity to experience the power of music.

We've all read the facts about the value of music education when it comes to learning to work together, appreciating culture, developing social skills, increased attendance at schools and increased proficiency in reading and math.

Now it's time to see the stories behind those facts. I urge you to take some time to read the stories of your constituents in this book. I promise you will be moved by much of what you read. These are real Pennsylvanians that don't ever want to see music education impacted in a negative way. We rely on your support to help us make sure music education in Pennsylvania continues to be a valuable part of an entire education for every child.

Musically,

Mark R. Despotakis  
Chair, PMEA Advancement of Music Education Council  
Director of Market Development, Progressive Music  
mark.despotakis@progrmusic.com

## **PMEA Legislative Recommendations**

**For Pennsylvania students to succeed in school and life, PMEA (Pennsylvania Music Educators Association) believes that:**

### **Because music and the arts effectively**

- engage students in their creative, cultural, aesthetic, intellectual, social, physical, and emotional developments—indeed, in the development of their identities as students and citizens,
- develop students' skills critical to 21st century learning for success in school and life, and
- develop skills integral to the economy of the state of Pennsylvania and the US, **All pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade students in Pennsylvania must be guaranteed**
  - music and arts education are offered as core curricula
    - music and arts curricula are based on a balanced, comprehensive and sequential pre-K-12, standards-based music and arts education
    - music and arts education are taught and assessed by certified music and arts specialists

### **THEREFORE PMEA requests that:**

**Ask #1: Increase in Basic Subsidy Funding** Pennsylvania should increase the Basic Education Subsidy. State budgets in the past have cut funding to local school districts. By increasing the basic subsidy to local school districts, Pennsylvania would serve students more effectively by allowing local school districts the discretion to use the money as they see fit.

**Ask #2: Enact a Fair Funding Formula** For far too long local school districts in some of the poorest areas of Pennsylvania have suffered by not receiving adequate funding for the students they serve. Pennsylvania should establish a fair funding formula that treats every student enrolled in a Pennsylvania public school the same. Students born into an affluent school district and students born into a poor school district should have the same right to an adequately funded education.

**Ask #3: PDE Arts Content Advisor / Liaison** Pennsylvania reinstate the funded PDE staff position that supervises the development of curriculum and standards in five content areas:

- *Music*
- *Visual Art*
- *Theatre*
- *Dance*
- *Media Arts*

The position was removed from the PDE Curriculum staff in the 2011-12 state budget.

# broader minded

## THINK BEYOND THE BUBBLES:

- In an age where teachers are forced to focus solely on narrowly construed measures of educational success (i.e. standardized tests and other quantifiable achievement scores), music education offers a unique opportunity to engage deeply with students' creativity, curiosity, and motivations.
- Studies have shown positive links between engagement with music and academic achievement. While important, these data are still a small part of the big picture. Music helps develop the student behind the score—students who are curious, motivated, engaged, and confident in their ability to succeed in our society.

## BROADER-MINDED ARGUMENTS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION:

- Music students have a unique opportunity to receive immediate feedback and to reflect on their progress, make needed adjustments, and improve based on their own observations of their performance.
- Students learn the value of discipline, determination, and “grit”—achieving goals in the face of obstacles.
- Students get the chance to fail, and try again. They gain confidence and self-understanding, and learn to manage better their emotions and decision-making processes.
- Students get the chance to develop a greater emotional awareness through music, particularly during collaboration, and to consider the thoughts and feelings of others.
- Students get the chance to develop a tolerance for process. They refine their thinking as part of the creative process; they gain the ability to re-evaluate goals and adjust approaches to an objective.

## CONCLUSIONS:

- We believe that music education is invaluable in developing successful students. Music shapes the way our students understand themselves and the world around them. It allows for deep engagement with learning. It nurtures assets and skills that are critical to future success.
- Because of the special qualities and skills it helps to instill, we believe that music is essential to a superior 21st-century education.
- This is the broader-minded argument for music education. It's about bringing balance back to the curriculum, and the ways in which music offers opportunities to excel. We're bringing the focus back to the student, not the score.

VISIT [www.broaderminded.com](http://www.broaderminded.com)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION

## NOTABLE RESPONSES

### **2015 Pennsylvania Teacher Of The Year Mairi Cooper**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted every aspect of my life. I was (and still am) a violinist but my school district did not have a strings program. Most of my peers did not understand my interest. Fortunately, I found a home within the choral program. Through the friendships that I made in that program, I developed social skills that have been critical in my adult life. While these skills have been invaluable to me, even more importantly, music education taught me how to think critically. I learned to analyze a problem, create approaches to solving that problem and then the discipline to work through the approaches until the solution was solidified. These skills are the ones that we all talk about in STEM programs. I learned them not in a science classroom but from my music teachers.

### **Internationally Renowned Opera Singer Marianne Cornetti**

Occupation: Internationally renowned opera singer

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Dear Legislators! My name is Marianne Cornetti, I am an internationally acclaimed opera singer. I was 12 years old and in the 6th grade chorus at Saxonburg Elementary School when my chorus teacher, Debbie Pakler, asked me to sing a solo in the spring concert! I accepted and sang I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing! I was so HAPPY to have been asked! What I was unaware of was Debbie Pakler had then called the chorus teacher, Evelyn Callender at Knoch High School, telling her to please watch out for me because she TRULY felt that I had a special talent. I arrived in Evie's class, and she immediately listened to my voice and asked me then to sing a solo in the fall concert. In the 8th grade she approached my parents about the possibility of taking voice lessons! Even though I was young to begin formal training, she thought my voice was mature enough! My parents and I consented and I began my formal vocal training with a WONDERFUL teacher. Starting with a VERY GOOD teacher was and is still VITAL to the development of a Young voice! My foundation was set correctly! From 8th grade through my senior year, I had so many opportunities to enhance my music education! I was encouraged to sing in the high school musicals from 9th grade to 12th grade! Every year I got a role and every year the roles got bigger. My senior year I had the lead in Funny Girl! Along with all of the musicals, I was encouraged to audition for honors, districts, regional and state choruses. Every year I placed very high and even had the honor of singing solos in these concerts! Evelyn Callender prepared me meticulously for all of these events! My other teacher, Don Orwald, prepared me dramatically for all of the musicals, and to this day I am using the skills that were taught to me at Knoch high School by Evie and Don! Might I add that each one of these concerts and musicals were building blocks for my confidence and development! Evie not only taught chorus, but also Music Education! I learned theory and harmony and solfege and composition in 7th, 8th and 9th grades! Because I had such an AMAZING high school background, I immediately was accepted into the FINEST conservatories in our country. I am now considered one of the FINEST VERDI MEZZOS IN THE WORLD TODAY! I have sung in all of the Major opera houses in the world, The Metropolitan Opera in NY, La Scala in Milano, Vienna, The Royal Opera House in London, just to name a few. I TRULY BELIEVE IT'S BECAUSE MY MUSIC TEACHERS WERE THERE TO GUIDE ME AND THE SCHOOLS WERE THERE TO GIVE ME THE OPPORTUNITIES! I would HOPE you NEVER take music education out of our schools! BUT INSTEAD ENHANCE IT AND ENCOURAGE IT! I AM LIVING PROOF THAT MUSIC EDUCATION IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY!

### **Nathan Buonviri**

Occupation: Professor

From: Havertown, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am a professor of music education at Temple University, a former high school music teacher, and a professional musician. Why would anyone care to know my biased opinions on the importance of music education in our lives? Why? Because I did not know I would be any of these things when I was in the third grade. But in that year, my mother somehow wrangled the administration of my small-town elementary school to let me begin trumpet a year early. I started elementary band with a small group of students who cared as much about sound as I did--much more, we came to realize, than our classmates. My first musical hero was the director of that band. I developed immediate respect for a person who could play all of those instruments, demonstrate anything we needed to know or be able to do, and lead us to performing music together in front of the rest of the school and community. Both of my parents were teachers, my father in high school mathematics, and my mother in middle school literature. Teaching seems to have been "in my genes"; music was not. Neither of my parents claim any credit whatsoever for my musicality. Luckily, they gave me the opportunity to study music and supported me from an uninformed but encouraging perspective. I count myself fortunate to have played in that elementary band for obvious reasons: it has undoubtedly led to all I have done in music over the years. But even as an 8-year-old boy in that group, I had already recognized that all of my bandmates and I, no matter what path we might take in life, were benefitting in a way that other students were not. Music opened to us a world that cannot be understood except by stepping firmly into it and experiencing it firsthand. On behalf of them, I encourage all of you to continue to support music in our schools in every way possible.

### **Dr. Raymond J. Boccuti**

Occupation: Superintendent of Schools - New Hope-Solebury School District, New Hope, PA

From: Langhorne, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

After achieving a B.M. degree in music education, an M.A. degree in jazz performance, and ten years of teaching K-12 music between the School District of Philadelphia and the Neshaminy School District, my career was not initially geared to prepare me for my current position as Superintendent of Schools in the New Hope-Solebury School District. However, as I moved through the administrative positions of Assistant Principal, Principal, Supervisor of Fine Arts K-12, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction K-12, Assistant Superintendent, and now Superintendent of two different high performing school districts, I have come to appreciate and highly value how much music education has genuinely impacted my personal and professional life. When I was in high school, while I attempted to always be a diligent student, my motivation to do well in school was to ensure I had the opportunity to play my saxophone in school every day. As a music educator, I learned the importance of dedicating long hours beyond the school day in the very best interests of my music students. When I was asked in my first administrative interview if I was prepared for the "long hours of administration," I respectfully replied that the question would really be whether or not the long hours of administration would surpass the long hours of a dedicated music teacher. As Superintendent, it is so very important to be highly visible and to share the insights into my own passions, deep seated principles, and values. To this very day, I frequently achieve that through music. For example, each December in our school district's final winter concert of the season, I have been so humbled and proud to be invited each year to guest conduct our high school choir and orchestra in movements of Handel's Messiah as the grand finale of the concert and now an established tradition. In the spring, I join our high school instrumental music students for a full week as a member of our pit orchestra for our annual high school musical. Finally, at many formal events where I am asked to speak, I often request to say just a few words and then dedicate a musical performance on one of my woodwind instruments. Music and the fine arts have always been the passion that drives my personal and professional life and will continue to play a important role in whatever I pursue. In so many ways, music has always defined who I am.

JARET GIBBONS, MEMBER  
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February 19, 2015

PMEA Executive Office  
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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing you today to discuss my experiences as a product of a public school music education program. During my service as a Pennsylvania State Representative, every day I witness the invaluable benefits that the study of music has provided me. The knowledge and skills I acquired while studying music in the classroom, and performing on the stage, were integral to my personal and professional development as a student, attorney, and now public official.

The study of music develops valuable skills that are transferable to all aspects of a person's life. Music teaches discipline, creativity, and focus. For me particularly, my time on stage, performing in choirs and musical theatre troupes, provided an excellent experience in collaborative work that still benefits me today as I try to work with my fellow representatives from all across the state to achieve our common goals. It also provided me with the self-confidence to take the public stage today in furtherance of the discourse of issues that are important to the residents of Pennsylvania.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to discuss the positive impact that music education has had on my personal and professional life. I have always been, and will continue to be, a proud advocate for public school music education. It is my sincere hope that this form of education will never be considered as anything but essential to students and that music education is allowed to thrive within our schools and communities.

Music has had an indelible impact upon me. The music education that I received in the Ellwood City Area School District will continue to provide me with treasured memories and invaluable knowledge that will forever shape my life.

Sincerely,

  
Jaret A. Gibbons, Member  
Pennsylvania House of Representatives  
10<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

JG/fs

 PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

## **Alexis Edwards**

Occupation: Student

From: Sidman, Cambria County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me in every single aspect of my life. The answer every politician wants to hear is that it's improved my school performance, which is true. But that's not all music has done for me. School can be a very stressful experience and music has been the only thing I have had to look forward to in school for the past 8 years that I have been a musician. It has taught me motivation, determination, perseverance, and that failure is okay. It's taught me how to make friendships and how to work with others towards one common goal. It's taught me that if you want something, you work for it; that even if you work as hard as you possibly can, someone will be better than you, and that's okay. It's taught me how to live. I don't express myself very well in words or art, but I can express every emotion I've ever had in music, and I do. I express my sorrow and my anger and my happiness through music. Music education has taught me how to live.

## **GRADUATING STANFORD UNIVERSITY ENGINEERS ACKNOWLEDGE IMPACT OF PENNSYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC EDUCATORS**

My son, John McMordie, reaped great benefits from his High School music education, PMEA ensembles and Cavalcade of Bands competitions. Recently, John had a unique opportunity to honor one of the people who was key in that Music experience – Mr. Greg Benson, current Director of Bands at Penridge High School in Perkasio, PA.

John played trumpet at Penridge. From 2007 until his graduation in 2011, he participated in County, District, Regional and State Bands and Orchestras, All Eastern Wind Ensemble, as well as Cavalcade Marching and Jazz Band Competitions. This June, John will graduate from Stanford University with his BS in Mechanical Engineering.

Earlier this month John learned he would receive a Terman Award as one of the top 25 out of 500 engineering students in Stanford's 2015 graduating class. The University asks every Terman Award recipient to identify the High School educator who was most influential in his or her life. Stanford then flies this teacher to Stanford to join the student at the awards banquet.

John chose Greg Benson as the High School teacher who most influenced him. Mr. Benson was John's music teacher in Elementary and Middle School. Mr. Benson also led the High School Jazz Bands in John's sophomore through junior years. Greg became Director of Bands at the High School in 2013.

John's experience is living proof that the benefits of a Music education and the PMEA and Cavalcade systems extend far beyond the arts themselves. While he has long loved the sciences, he recognizes that his experiences in music were key to shaping his character and abilities.

John is not the only such example among this year's Terman Award recipients at Stanford. Nick Cheung, a graduate of Strath Haven High School in Wallingford, PA, is also one of the top 25 engineering students there. Nick, a percussionist, also participated in PMEA festivals while in High School. Only after John and Nick met and became fast friends at Stanford did they realize they had played in several PMEA ensembles together as well as the All Eastern ensemble.

Like John, Nick identified his band director at Strath Haven as the most influential teacher of his High School experience. Unfortunately, that band director could not make the trip, so Nick invited his Middle School Band director to join him instead.

Thanks for allowing me to share the profound impact these music educators – and the PMEA and Cavalcade experiences – had on these young engineers. I am thankful that John had an opportunity to publically honor Mr. Benson for his contributions in his life. His mother and I are very thankful that Mr. Benson, Mr. Mark Morris (Penridge Band Dir., 2007-11), the Cavalcade, and the PMEA were there for John.

Best Regards,  
Bruce McMordie

## ADAMS COUNTY

### **Jane Feister**

Occupation: Retired

From: Arendtsville, Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me an appreciation for all kinds of music and different instruments. I played clarinet, saxophone in H.S. and went to District Band. Relationships formed with classmates or when going to various schools have been invaluable. My husband and I sing with the local civic chorus and enjoy the stimulation of the music and the group of people. Had we not had music in our lives early on, we would not presently enjoy singing or enjoying this wonderful group of people. Entertainment revolves around music whether attending or participating in events. We have passed down to our children this love of music.

### **Amy Miller**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Gettysburg, Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been an important part of my entire life. I use music every day of my life. Monday-Friday I use music with my special needs preschoolers. On the weekends, I use music while playing in a drum and bugle corps and singing in a church choir. We also support local schools' band and chorus programs by attending their concerts.

### **Bruce Moore**

Occupation: Broadway Singer and Disney Cartoon Singer

From: Gettysburg, Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I made my life singing on Broadway. I sang in 3 Broadway shows. I sang in 5 Disney cartoons and in countless shows across the nation. I went to the Gettysburg Area Schools. The chorus started in 5th grade. Even though I had the highest voice in the school, the teacher put me in the alto section. I didn't understand at the time, but she was teaching me how to read and learn harmonies. I started French horn in 4th grade and stuck with that only through 6th grade. The instrument was very helpful in my sight reading music. In addition to reading music, the chorus taught us how to work together, be a part of a team and shine when we need to. I continued with the chorus throughout junior and senior high. I am certain that I never would have made my dream of being a Broadway performer, without the guidance of my chorus teachers. I remember music classes in 1st grade through 4th grade, I do not remember reading music that young, but I remember enjoying the class and feeling as though I would shine as a kid singer. There was one musical while I was in high school, and I had one of the male leads. The English teacher was the director, but there was music involved too, of course. The musical was exactly what I was going to turn out to be doing for a career. Certainly most students will go on to do different careers than music, but an education in music will certainly enhance their lives, communication skills, fellowship etc. I am certainly willing to talk about how music in school enriched my life and my career.

### **Bill Serfass**

Occupation: Music Teacher & Guitarist

From: Gettysburg, Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am old enough to remember my classroom teachers putting record albums on the record player and telling our class to sit still, be quiet and listen during music class time. Apparently there was no music teacher at my elementary school. I made fun of Ed because he would close his eyes and his head would start to roll with the music; he was really into it I guessed. Years later, he would be the drummer in my first rock and roll band! Now I'm in middle school and the music teacher tells me to try out for a part in the Mikado and I get a lead part! I always loved singing and now someone was recognizing my true love; even if I didn't recognize it

yet myself! I took bass guitar lessons and joined the guitar club. In high school I decided to learn how to play clarinet and quit because I was so far behind the others who started in 4th grade. You'd think my mom and dad would have made music a priority for me but they did not, although she was a fine pianist (and accompanied for the Mikado) and dad loved to sing. I dropped out of Physics class because the math was ridiculously hard and my dream of becoming an Air Force pilot crashed and burned. I took study hall and with a pass from the band teacher I'd go to the band room and teach myself how to play the tuba, trumpet and bass clarinet. This is what I really wanted to do, play music! What I've discovered is that the music teachers in my life gave me a focus, a direction, instruction and support. College was difficult because the theory, history and practical applications of becoming a music teacher were not there for me as they were for other kids coming from school districts and states that had proper music education. But I stuck with it, graduated with a B.S. in Music Education and became a public school music teacher in 1981. Landed a permanent job in 1984 and the rest is history of course! Music education has been my occupation for over 30 years now. I learned to respect myself and learned that my ability to teach children about music was just as important as any other profession in the world, indeed any other profession. I've passed this on to my children who watched me negotiate this incredibly diverse thing that music teachers and performers do all the time. One has decided to follow in the old footsteps but in a modern way blending traditional instruction with technology and creativity. So I think I survived into a happy life with a meaningful occupation that I treasure because there were music teachers there along the way. I can honestly say that had it not been for music education I might still be managing a restaurant or working nights in a factory wondering what to do with my voice and my hands.

### **Molly Clark**

Occupation: Student

From: Gettysburg, Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music was the one thing in high school I excelled at. I was a good student overall but really found my place in music. I was one of the top musicians in my class and that gave me a real sense of accomplishment and worth. Studying music from an early age helped me to develop skills in areas not related to music as well. Music is so beneficial for a child/adult as a whole. With the encouragement of teachers in high school and middle school, I am now in a program that will give me the education needed to continue bringing music to schools for the rest of my life. I can't imagine a life where I'm not creating and sharing music every day. And to think of a day where music wouldn't be readily available to everyone is terrifying! I want my children and grandchildren to have the same musical opportunities in school that I had, and more!

### **Julie Holland**

Occupation: Veterinarian

From: Hanover, Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I started marching band in 2nd grade and chorus soon after that. Our teachers were amazing - Wellsboro PA Tioga County, Lenore Bujno, Pat Davis and others. I went to District Chorus and Band and Regional Chorus and Band for 4 years - not because I was super talented but because we worked so hard and were taught so well. The leadership experience has been invaluable. EVERYONE was in the band in junior high. We traveled to Philadelphia and played at the Liberty Bell on the 4th of July 1976 - what an experience. The band also went to NYC and saw a Broadway show. I have old LPs of all the performances and am still amazed at how well we sang and played. I later played in a small band at Penn State and sang in the University Choir with Raymond Brown. Under his direction we sang with Andre Previn and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. For a very small rural town, we experienced some amazing events and traveled to some wonderful places through music. Music helped me transition to a big university and more valuable exposure and some really mind opening concerts. A great teacher pushes students to perform beyond what they think is possible, in a team setting where everyone must work together to make perfect harmony. The satisfaction in performing difficult pieces in professional setting gives students a confidence that spreads into other parts of their lives. I have since had the satisfaction of attending many band and chorus concerts as my

3 kids grew up and made music a big part of their lives as well. I currently get my music fix by singing in the church choir directed by an extremely talented musician - a retired music educator!

### **Thomas W. Kittinger**

Occupation: Retired Music Educator

From: Littlestown, Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been involved with music my entire life. My Dad was an excellent singer and was a soloist with my family's church choir. My Grandmother on my Dad's side was the church organist for many years, and I became the assistant church organist when I was a sophomore in HS. I had taken piano lessons from the time I was in 5th grade and then took about 6 months of organ lessons while in HS. My Mom was a piano player as well. I had a cousin who was a trumpeter in the Marine Corps band, so I also took up trumpet in the 4th grade. I played throughout my public school years, my college years and then when I became a Vocal Music Instructor, the horn took a back burner for awhile. About 18 years ago, I began playing soprano bugle with the local Alumni Drum & Bugle Corps, and am still very actively involved with that group as Corps Director. I am also the Artistic Director of the Gettysburg Civic Chorus and am Organist/Choir Director at the U. Meth. Church in Littlestown, where I've been for the past 43 years. I have a love for music that appears to be unending. I enjoy playing it, sharing it and teaching it, and will continue to do so for as long as my health allows it. I have a quote on my music briefcase, given to me by former Cantata Choir members that reads; "God give me the gift of Music. My gift to Him is to share it with all my heart." That has pretty much summed up my association with music and the incredible impact it has had on my life thus far. I look forward to continuing to share my love of music with all I come in contact with.

### **Barry Wareham**

Occupation: Retired Music Teacher

From: Littlestown, Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been my life. I am a third generation PMEA member and PA music educator. I am turning the question around: How have our three generations impacted other's lives through music? We used music to teach and develop skills that last a lifetime - skills that are not on the "Test"; skills that prepare those students to be productive, self-directed, self-motivated and caring members of this society; skills that help them to be successful as an individual or as a member of a group or team. All of these are above and beyond developing a love of beauty and appreciation for the creative process.

### **Ashley Woy**

Occupation: Registered Respiratory Therapist

From: Littlestown, Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been involved with music for over 20 years, starting in 3rd grade. It was a way to express myself whether sitting down at the piano or singing, it has helped mold me into the person I am today. As a stress reliever, to bring a smile to someone else's face or to simply pass the time, the impact of music is endless. It is crucial to keep music in the schools---to rob our youth of something so important would be a crime and a detriment to our society.

### **Crystalyn Gureckis**

Occupation: Student

From: New Oxford HS, Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a part of my life ever since I was a little girl. Music binds all of my family together. I have a song picked out for each of my closest friends and family members that establishes the deepest connection between each of us. Music is the one thing that guides me through my darkest hours and helps me celebrate my brightest moments. Music makes me, me. It allows me to express all of my emotions in the most beautiful form. It has brought color and passion to my life. Without it, life is neutral; but with it, life is a

collage of color, shape, emotion, heart, and soul. Music is life; sing it, play it, hear it, compose it, make it, feel it, see it, touch it, but most of all, LIVE it LOUDLY.

### **Lisa**

Occupation: Medical Records

From: Adams County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education isn't just about playing instruments or singing. It's about history. Music was such an essential part of what shaped the different periods of time. Without Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, D'Vorak, and many other musicians, the periods of history don't seem to mean as much. I loved learning about not only the classical musicians, but about the Beatles, Elvis, and being taught to take music and interpret it to represent ourselves. I was a member of our band program from 4th grade through 12th grade. I sang solo and in chorus, and show choir as well. Being able to share the music we learned to play and sing, taught us how to give back to our community. We didn't get paid to march in parades or to perform at the concerts. It made us feel good to do it and it made the public happy to hear us!! U can't have that experience if you keep cutting the music programs!! Music and the kids interested in it, count just as much as the football team and the players. Music is how a lot of people, including myself express our feelings!! You take that away, and then what?? Some kids only have music as their only escape!! That may be the only way they find a way to fit into this world. It maybe how they learn to handle the pressures outside of school. Music is so powerful, if it wasn't, their wouldn't be soundtracks to movies or at ceremonies!! Music has always been my refuge. It's the one thing I know I'm good at, even if it's only good enough for my own ears. It still makes me happy!!

## **ALLEGHENY COUNTY**

### **Jaymee Boone**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Allison Park, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

How has music education impacted my life? Music has impacted my life in many ways. It is important to me because, for instance, it is educational. The fact that it is educational, is that it gives my a reason to actually sing, play, write, and even study music. Music is a huge part of my life. When I have any free time, I either play outside and open my window and listen to music that way or if nobody can play and they are doing their homework, I stay in my room and write random music notes on sheets and sheets of paper while listening to to the radio in my room. my neighbors are all taking music classes to and they thought it was going to be boring and hard, but after their first class they said they loved music class and were singing like crazy. That is how I started loving music. I think music is fun. In a matter of fact, it's so fun in music class that it's the number one class I look forward to at school. I love music.

### **Sarah Kosakowski**

Occupation: 9th Grade Student

From: Allison Park, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has helped me in many ways. Music education helped me by teaching me things that I never knew. It has helped me remember things, and has helped me focus. When I am in school I find it easier to focus on my classes with my chorus class in the middle because it gives me a break without actually giving my brain a break. When I go to my classes after chorus I feel like I could do anything. I get a positive attitude from chorus because I get to sing songs that I love! It helps me forget any issues that I might have been thinking about ,and helps me relax. If I was worried about a test I would stop worrying about it and focus on my music which calms me down helping me do better. Those are some of the important ways music education impacted my life.

### **Carly O'Brien**

Occupation: Sales Associate

From: Allison Park, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Band was the only program I was in during High school; sure I tried a few programs in middle school but none of them stuck. I ended up in the colorguard starting in 8th grade but I had been playing the clarinet and singing since 6th and I was also in drama. In high school anything that had to do with band I wanted to be apart of it was my life. It made me happy when I was having a bad day and it's all I looked forward to when summer came about. Now as I'm older I still remember everything that I have learned, I still catch myself counting my steps and walking with the correct foot or changing how I stand and band taught me these things. Band and my music education also gave me a 2nd family that I will never forget and also opened me up to a variety of music.

### **June Whitlinger**

Occupation: Paraprofessional

From: Allison Park, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Life without music education is sad. I was introduced to piano, flute, piccolo, saxophone and trumpet. Playing in jazz, orchestra, marching, and concert bands. Pep band, school musicals and honors bands. All were uplifting, meeting new people and performing for the pleasure of audiences. Playing for church services and giving lessons gives back to the public. Music is relaxing, uplifting and beneficial to all no matter what age, status or health. It brings pleasure to our lives, be it in movies, radio, tv, sports, etc. Imagine silence during your favorite programs or services.....kind of empty. Keep music education if we wish to enjoy and benefit from this art.

### **Daniel O'Keefe**

Occupation: Project Manager

From: Avalon, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a parent of a former marching band member, I have seen first hand the effect that being part of the marching band "family" makes for the students of my school. I can honestly say that a marching band is a more cohesive group than any sports team or club with which I have interacted. They say that music is a universal language and this plays out every day. Students who would normally not associate with each other in any other venue are brought together by a love of music and a love of performing. They encourage one another when it get rough, support one another when they are troubled and form lifelong friendships. This is all made possible through the common ground of music. Based on this experience, the question of how music education impacted my life could be answered in this way. Music, through my time as a marching band parent and chaperone, was the catalyst that expanded my faith in the good within the students in my community. The music allowed them to express themselves and be themselves without the need to hide behind a facade. It made them better individuals, stronger individuals and more confident individuals. I have faith that these students will go far and thrive because of the opportunity. I am also the parent of a former chorus/choir member, who had the opportunity to be a part of that organization from fourth grade through her senior year in high school. The impact on her life was an astounding amount of self-confidence. My daughter, who often had the opportunity to be a soloist, has gone out into the world with a positive attitude that will allow her to go far. Her experience in music programs gives her the confidence to be a presenter and public speaker in her field of expertise. The choir often took the opportunity to perform for senior citizens, disabled youth and the community. They were able share their talents and boost the spirits of many people though the simple act of sharing music. This sharing helped them become more compassionate people in that they often took time after the performance to lead sing-alongs or to just socialize. Based on this experience, the question of how has music education impacted my life would be that it helped me to raise my child to be a confident and caring individual. This experience goes way beyond what I could tell them through words. I would encourage any student to take the opportunity to be a part of the music program in their school. As a parent, I have seen nothing but positive outcomes from the music education in

our schools. As a last note, i must point out that music education provides a life-long benefit. Long after they have left schools and even as they get older, the students will have the skills they have learned. They can continue to play an instrument or sing for themselves or for others. Music education lives on.

### **Lexie Pollock**

Occupation: Student-11th Grade

From: Bairdford, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has a very big impact on my life. I have been singing since I was 3 years old. Music is important because when I am stressed out with other school work, singing helps me relax. It is great to have a music class in the school so you can have a more relaxed class doing something you truly love.

### **Laura Stumpf**

Occupation: Student

From: Baldwin HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has inspired me to pursue a career in music following my HS experience. The impact that music has on me allowed me to become a more creative, patient, and hardworking individual, and without the teachers that have encouraged me throughout my school career, I would never have learned of the influence that music can truly have. I learned the importance of hard work and patience that comes from practicing, and private instructors and public teachers alike urged me to rehearse in order to enhance my skills as a flute player. Naturally, the process did not come easily, but I feel as though due to the support that these people had, I know to be patient on hard days and to continue to diligently pursue my goals. These lessons learned pertain not only to my musical life, but they help my in my everyday life as well. Without music education and the teachers that inspired me as well as encouraged me, I would not have the skills that I do, nor the blessings that the emotions in music give to me.

### **Milt Barney**

Occupation: Band Director & Professional musician

From: Bethel Park, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I first knew my love of music in 8th grade. Hearing the local high school jazz band changed my life! I then focused on a life long love of music that turned into 2 careers: professional musician and music educator. Since that time I have traveled all over the world as a musician. I have performed for world leaders, U.S. presidents, supported national music stars, played for audiences all over Japan and the United States. I also have been fortunate to work with students in Japan as well as the United States. I have taught at the elementary level all the way up the graduate school level. I am currently a high school band director and enjoy mentoring and motivating students each day. What has actually happened to me is something of an unexpected blessing. While I have worked hard to mentor and challenge students, it is really the students that have done that very thing to me. I have grown as a person and musician because of my students daily interaction with each other and their band director. I feel like I continue to learn every year, almost to the point where I feel like I know so little! Teaching has provided me with a built in system for growing personally and professionally. For this I am forever grateful to my students!

### **Christine Elek**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Bethel Park, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has become my life, but not before it impacted my life. I was a student with above average intelligence, no athletic ability, and average appearance. My home life was turbulent. I was destined for mediocrity. However, in first grade, my music teacher noticed my singing ability and she kept me on her radar for the rest of my public school years. This resulted in my performing with choirs, bands, and taking piano lessons. Eventually, and with encouragement, I sang solos, and performed many roles on stage. With

the help of my music educators and grandparents, I found my niche in the world and my confidence soared. I studied at two universities and received both a bachelor's and master's degree in music education. There I had life-altering experiences with professors who loved their students and their art. Since that time I have had the opportunity to travel the world with community and professional choirs, and I have met outstanding professionals who continue to impact the lives of countless others. I have had the privilege of teaching amazing students and learning from them each and every day. My colleagues are among the best in the profession and I treasure the times that we share during professional development and music festivals. My ordinary life has become extraordinary because of music, music students, and the music educators that I have encountered. How has music education impacted my life? It has shown me beauty, goodness, and the world. It has opened a spectrum of emotion that resonates in bright technicolor. My experience of the world is heightened because music has kept me alive and full of life. My gratitude cannot be measured, but I know that music education has made my life worthwhile. In order for others to experience this deep sense of self and empathy, music education must continue to be a part of the curriculum in schools. Music education teaches us all about life and we must, for the sake of our society, bring music to future generations.

### **Emily Wardle**

Occupation: Music Teacher, K-6

From: Bridgeville, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education brought music into my life at a young age -- kindergarten in a public school... well, really, when my mother sang songs to me before bed each night, so from birth -- and has been a reliable constant and refuge ever since. Through being on the receiving and giving end of music education, my life has become exponentially fuller and richer. My music teachers showed me what it was to be passionate for and in love with a career, and musicians I've worked with demonstrate that music and music education are lifelong loves from which we can always learn. These fabulous musicians and music teachers inspired me to become an educator myself, and music ed is currently impacting my life by the fact that it is my chosen career. Music education opened my eyes to the arts, and because of music I am "plugged in" to culture. I actively seek out cultural experiences in and around Pittsburgh, from gallery crawls, plays, and concerts to food experiences and painting classes. Surrounded by the music world and artistic people, I approach new things with an open mind and heart and do not cast aside music, art, or dance simply because they are unfamiliar to me or are "contemporary." This nature of acceptance transcends the music world for me, as I believe I am more accepting of others because of my own experiences with accepting and "hearing out" new things in music. Without music education I wouldn't have felt comfortable stepping outside of my comfortable niche of the familiar, but because I feel welcome to express and explore creativity in music I feel comfortable exploring and trying other arts-related areas. Being in the high school chorus exposed me to other cultures as we sang songs from around the world and in foreign languages. Thirteen years later I still remember melodies and words from some of the songs we sang (and I'm by no means a memorizing fiend!) because they made such an impression on me and taught me how to love the art of sung music. Public education's music programs gave me a sense of belonging. I didn't have an identity crisis in my teenage years nor tried to fit in with any cliques because I knew where I was accepted and loved for being me: the band and chorus. I blossomed in high school with the marching band, and my core group of friends now -- 18 years after I started in the elementary school band -- are from band. I always felt welcome and accepted in the band, and being part of a team that strove for perfection and practiced relentlessly every single day were lessons in teamwork, focus, and determination. Music education impacted my life by becoming my life and my love. I am grateful for it and wouldn't change my experiences therein for the world. I am sad that some children might not have those same experiences because of budget cuts -- please support public music education!

### **Sandra Wilcox**

Occupation: Registered Nurse

From: Bridgeville, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education continues to prove to be a lifelong impact. During my school years over 30 years ago, participation in concert band, marching band & small ensembles taught me life skills of how to work with

others, how to lead, how to follow, cooperation, concentration, confidence, pride, self respect, loyalty, how to rise to challenges as well as how to deal with disappointments. It has brought me the greatest friendships that are thriving still to this day and countless hours of laughter and enjoyment. Music education continues to give back to me to this day as I have impacted future generations through my son, who has embraced the significance, importance and love of music so much that he has pursued this as his life's work. I get to "pay it forward" so to speak to many other generations by watching my son provide music education for several students each day. I see in their eyes and sense what they are feeling as I watch their performances; knowing all the while how long those experiences will stay with them as well as what they will do for them. Music education provides life skills and experiences that one can not obtain from a book. The benefits of music education are invaluable and transcend throughout lifetime which makes music education one of the greatest investments we can provide for our future; our children.

### **Devin Moore**

Occupation: Student

From: Chartiers Valley HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From a young age, music has always been a crucial part in my life. After joining the orchestra program in the 3rd grade, the teachers at Chartiers Valley helped me excel in my musical capabilities, alongside my private teacher, Roy Sonne. I have a strong passion for music and would essentially be lost without it. I plan to pursue a musical career in the future, whether it be performing, conducting, or something else life has in store.

### **Hailey Ann Oehling**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Cheswick, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is very important to me because I've always dreamed on being a singer, and I will have to get an musical education. Being a musician is very hard you will have to know the music that you are reading. You will have to know the lines and spaces. Next you will have to know the notes and beats. Also you will have to know the pitches. Music is inspiring to me and a lot of people.

### **Brandon Alan Anderson**

Occupation: Grade 10 Student

From: Cheswick, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music means a lot to me because it allows me to calm myself. The music I listen to has a direct impact on my life, and emotions. It's something that I revolve myself around, whether it be listening or playing music. Music is a daily thing for me, and it's something that I consider a part of me. It effects my mood and brings me the motivation I need to complete my tasks. Without our school's chorus program, I wouldn't have met half the people I call friends today. Singing is a hobby of mine, and I love it. With the government cutting our funding, the class is becoming much different. We used to have different periods for different classes, and now all of the choral program is just one big class. What we know as chamber singers is not even a class anymore. It's went from something you have to practice, and put your heart into to get into the class, to a more average class. The budget cut has basically for shamed all the work we put into to become chamber singers. This is what the music education programs have shown me, and I'm glad I've gotten to be a part of them.

### **Tara Brick**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Cheswick, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because it helps me learn not only what I might need to now but also in the future. Another reason it is important to me is because it is always brightens up my day along with Mrs.Henderson. Music always makes me more calm and relaxed when I'm down music brings me back up!

Music is important to me and I love music I don't know what I would do without it. Music is my favorite part of the day. For example, if I'm upset because someone has hurt my feelings I guess I could say I sing it out. I love music! Together we can bring back music! This is a way we can all express our feelings.

### **Cheyenne Burlingame**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Cheswick, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I think music education is important because it helps me be calm when I am upset. It is also important because it helps us students work in class instead of talking and goofing around. In our school music is not allowed to be played in the class rooms. The only music we are allowed to listen to is on our own electronic devices and some us students including myself don't have electronic devices such as a phone or a tablet, and etc. I think it is very important that we have music in every school public or private. When I listen to music i feel like I'm in my own little world and that feels good, but now that we don't have music in school i don't feel that way and I start to feel sad and lonely. I may get to listen to music in the car but I'm not in the car often. I want to be able to listen to music every day in the class room because it helps do all of the things in everyday lives of us students. Some music may have bad language in the lyrics. That doesn't mean that us kids can't listen to it. We may not now whats bad now so just tell us whats so bad about this song or these lyrics. We will understand why it may be bad or good.

### **Marcie Diana**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Cheswick, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because it helps us appreciate music more. Once we know how much hard work goes into one song, we realize that making music isn't that easy. Music education can also help kids decide what they want to be when they grow up. They may learn about music or play an instrument or even sing an a chorus and realize they want to become a musician. Music is fun, and some students, after learning more about it, may want to practice it and strive to be a famous musician or composer.

### **Maddy Heiferman**

Occupation: 8th Grade Student

From: Cheswick, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because without it I don't know where I'd be. Ever since I was little I have always been listening to music or have been around it. The first time I remember being in a normal music class was in 4th grade and the teacher we had I hated because she didn't teach music like it should have been taught. When I went into 5th grade that was when I started chorus and it just something happened in my brain telling me this is what I wanted to keep doing. But in 6th and 7th grade I did band just to try new things and I hated it. So now this year in 8th grade I am doing chorus and I love it so much. The chorus class I am in is so much fun and my teacher Mrs.Henderson is an amazing singer in my opinion. I want to write music when I get older so she gives us packets to help understand the notes and such. When Mrs.Henderson told us about this this book I was really happy to tell people why music education and just music is is important to me. She also talked about how schools don't have music programs at all. I was shocked because music is such a great thing and there are proven studies that music makes people feel better and and smarter. I hope that this book helps so that music education is not cut from anymore schools. I just love music so much and it has personally made me feel better and I have made a lot of friends because of that and I hope that people will realize cutting music education is not really a good idea. I used to always want to fit in and be like the other kids listening to the same music and clothes. But when I was little my grandma had every single one of the Beatles record on vinyls. That was kinda started my love for music. When I was about 11 years old, I'm 13 now a friend got me into a band called Black Veil Brides. I was really sad at that time because I was bullied but now I have changed a lot and I don't care what people say because the musicians I listen to say as ling as you are you it won't matter if you fit in. Other musicians like

My Chemical Romance have a quote "Stay Beautiful, Keep It Ugly." So all in all I hope that music education stays in schools and that people keep listening to music and that it stays forever.

### **Vickie Mazzoli Roof**

Occupation: Retired Elementary Music Teacher

From: Cheswick, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I couldn't even begin to share what Music education has meant to my life. It is the most enriching, comforting, creative essence in life. I have rejoiced with Music, I have mourned with Music, I have been comforted with and by Music. Every person alive should have the opportunity to experience Music, it can be the calm before the storm, the solace of disappointment, the excitement of newly found interest. Once introduced to the sounds and mixtures of Music one can only go on to embellish and create. Seeing how the young react to the sounds of Music makes you realize how lucky you are to be the one who introduced Music to them. Having them draw what the Music makes them think of while listening is so enlightening. It surprises even them! When second graders come into class saying they want to hear "The Hall of the Mountain King" again makes your heartbeat quicken! It makes what we do worthwhile! There is so much beauty around us and Music makes it all come to light.

### **Megan Dakota Winters**

Occupation: 8th Grade Student

From: Cheswick, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life on many levels. When I am having a bad day I can turn on my music and relax. Simple little things like such make a great impact on ones life. Music is my escape from reality. When I need a break or I am just feeling too stressed I relax to it. I know this is considered something to be done at home on my own but if it were not for chorus I do not know what I would do all day. I like many others, am not always allowed to put headphones in and listen to music while at school. Chorus is where I get my music on. I can sing and feel great it refreshes my mind and brings back my energy. I am a smart student but I do not excel far above and beyond in all my subjects. Chorus has made it all easier we may do simple things in musical math but it is that little extra work out that extra boost I need to help me improve. it is a reminder that if I work at it i can become better at anything. If you take music out of schools you are taking this away from all the kids out there like me. You are taking the opportunity for younger children to find a cope in music to find something that helps them to relax and they will constantly feel the stress of school and all around drama. I have recently been threw a perfect example of how music can help people out. I have just lost someone very close to me and the only thing I was able to find that helped me get out of the stress and the anxiety of losing them was a song we sung in chorus. the lines in this song made me think about what had happened and helped me realize it will all be okay. By taking music out of schools you are reducing the amount of music kids are exposed to greatly. You are not allowing them to see that may be type most hit song on the radio is not what there into, that there are many more kinds of music then what they are going to find on the radio station at a friends house or in the car. Music means so much to so many people and are willing to just take it away because they need to focus more on school. Music helps me to bring back my focus and keep on task and want to improve in school. Music in a school is much more then just us teenagers being stupid and feeling the need to break free from our parents and rebel against them. Music in school allows me to see the world threw some else's eyes it has helped me become friends with a lot of people and has truly mad a positive difference in my life.

### **Sarah Burkett**

Occupation: 7th Grade Student

From: Creighton, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I think music Education is important to me because it is powerful to the heart and people can escape your worries and shows you can do math with singing it helps you relax and create a beat with your heart so that's why I think music education is important.

### **Adam Davis**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Creighton, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education means I will learn what types of music there are. And what is the point of a protest if you don't know what you are protesting for. Because music was banned in our school but we protested for music. We need music. Music has picked me up at all time low. When the first girl I have ever had a crush rejected me I cried for two hours then I put some music. And I felt better. I spent hour on my dad's porch with him listening to firefly. One of my greatest achievements has been being able to rap the fast part in Eminem.

### **Haley Klingensmith-Pierce**

Occupation: 9th Grade Student

From: Creighton, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life dramatically in many ways. Even though many people don't understand music like the students, music education is still a passion of mine. The main reason music education is one of the most important things in my life is because it showed me many more ways to express myself and my life. Music education has helped me learn that words cannot express my emotions and my life as much as music. It has changed the way I see many things in reality and the way I look at life. My most advanced emotions were expressed through my music. It has helped me be more open with people as well. In the past (before I was in music education) my life was kind of boring, but now I have many friends, more imagination, and more creativity. Music education has impacted my life in many beneficial ways.

### **Steven Ostrowski**

Occupation: 10th Grade Student

From: Creighton, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a relief from my problems. Studying music in school gives me an opportunity to make new friends, travel around, and sing in chorus. I learn about culture in a way I would have never learned otherwise through the songs we sing. I am glad we have musical education in our curriculum.

### **Miranda**

Occupation: 7th Grade Student

From: Creighton, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I think music education is a major impacted on my life for many reason. The main reason is most people how take music classes mostly either has been singing for a while or playing for a while. Also some people want to grow up with the music they loved and want to share it with there younger generation. The most important reason why music education is a major impacted on my life because it is a time where I can show my teacher and friends what I love to do while having fun being myself. And the last reason is that it is a time when I can be myself and relax and let my anger go. These are a couple of the most important thing why music education is a impacted on my life and we should believe in what we want to say about music. Sometime I think music can make you friends. This is why music is important to me.

### **Christina Smith**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Crieghton, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because it dosen't just teach me what I need to know but what I want to know and I'm also in chorus but without music, chorus wouldn't be anything. I love music because it's inspiring to me and a lot of other people too and when I learn we get to show what we know about music and I have the most amazing music and chorus teacher Mrs. Henderson and she makes chorus and music so fun that's my favorite period of the day.

### **Chamari Willis**

Occupation: Student

From: East Allegheny HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I've always had a love for music ever since I was little. I joined choir in 5th grade and fell in love. The experiences I have had were amazing things I would never change for all the money in the world. Even making it his far in PMEA is something I never expected. Music is my life.

### **Michelle Hawkins**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabeth Forward HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been the one thing consistent in my life, and music education has enabled me to further my understanding of music and the impact it has on a group of people and the individual itself. Without music, the world becomes gray. Music adds life and color to the environment and people that make up the environment. Honestly, music makes the world one worth living in.

### **Tyler Prah**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabeth Forward HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my love, dream, and passion. I've been singing since the age of two and have been playing instruments since I was eight. My dream is to be on Broadway one day and share my love with other people. Music is my form of expression and has helped me to be more social. However, I would not be where I am today without my music teachers. They have given all the assistance that I ask for and I am thankful for the opportunities I have been provided with. All in all, music has changed my life and it will always be a part of my life, including the moments that have been effected by my educators.

### **Mayim Stith**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabeth Forward HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my light and my color. It makes everything wonderful.

### **Mattie Winowitch**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabeth Forward HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has shown me that nothing can stop dedicated students. In my school, there is minimal funding for our music program. As our school becomes more "technologically advanced", our auditorium/stage/music wing become more and more outdated. Nevertheless, our students and music faculty continue to love and participate in music-related activities. It has shown me that bleak funding and/or support from a left-brained world will never impair the creative world of music.

### **Nadia Dandashi**

Occupation: Student

From: Fox Chapel Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has taught me a new way to look at things and has broadened my horizons in a way that other subjects have not. For example, when studying music, we look at all perspectives of the piece: the composers, the singers, and the instrumentalists. It is a golden concept to learn and to see and hear how every note and harmony falls into place at the right time. It has allowed me to connect things harmoniously in

my life outside of music. Music in general helps me with everyday struggles and I value greatly being taught music.

### **Yelim Lee**

Occupation: Student

From: Fox Chapel Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My involvement with music began with piano lessons since early elementary school. After I started private lessons with my piano teacher, music education at school began with my participation in band since the beginning of sixth grade. I became interested in learning music theory after. I learned to play the pieces with emotion or certain style that matches the background of the music to the audience. Music education and the bass clarinet has offered various musical opportunities in bands and orchestras, which will become memorable experiences during HS career. Music education has provided opportunities in PMEA, and I am highly excited to participate.

### **William Schwartzman**

Occupation: Student

From: Fox Chapel Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a significant impact on my life. Going into HS, I was outgoing and I was involved with friends and several activities other than music. My mom and sister convinced me to join choir in 9th grade. Consequently, I joined musical and 9th grade ended up being the best year of my life. Unlike sports, which are always competitive and during which you only make 1 or 2 new friends, music education, for me, choir, was a way to make a bunch of new friends. Now I am involved in several music programs in my school, and I have made several life-long friends along the way. Music education gives me a chance to unwind during the school day, and I don't know how I would get along without it.

### **Thomas Swigon**

Occupation: Student

From: Fox Chapel Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I first entered into the field of music in fourth grade when I first picked up the trumpet. Since then it has become an essential part of my life. I find that I spend most of my free time either singing or playing trumpet. I suppose that had I not been involved in music, my stress levels would be a lot lower, considering how stretched for time I am with day-to-day musical activities. However I have never regretted it for a second. Music has taught me even more than sports how to be part of a team, how to work together to create something truly incredible. The other people in the music program are the most accepting people at school, and have grown to become some of my best friends. I find that music is a form of art, where one creates something magnificent, almost like a painting, by playing their instruments. Is there a greater feeling than receiving a standing ovation? Perhaps, but hearing people clap when you finish a particularly good piece is the greatest kind of exhilaration, almost like winning an underdog soccer game, or making a new record in a track event. But most of all, I find music to be the greatest way of giving back to the people that supported me. At least for me, I know that my parents truly feel proud when they hear an ensemble, that either my brother or I are part of, and when it plays an amazing performance.

### **Philip Swigon**

Occupation: Student

From: Fox Chapel Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was in fifth grade and first picked up my bassoon and started to sing, I had no idea that I would continue to make music throughout my years in school. Music education has been prominent throughout my life, from choir to band, and I doubt that I would be the same without it. Not only has music education impacted me in the strictly musical sense, it also helps me focus because there is always that break in the

day that I can devote fully to music without having to stress about the other worries throughout the day. This helps me earn better grades in school, and because of the freedom and relief found in music, I can fit AP classes into my schedule. Music as a whole also has impacted me by becoming an expressive sanctuary, where I am free to be whoever I want. This is because music has no restriction, since every interpretation brings a fresh look on a certain piece of music. Learning about music has also helped me understand the mechanics of playing my instrument, as well as how to play musically. Music has also taught me how to collaborate and work together for a common cause, be it the different sections in the choir or band, or the cast, crew, and orchestra working together on the musical. This collaboration also builds a sense of camaraderie and most of my best friends have been involved in music. That being said, the music department at my school is excellent, and the teachers phenomenal. Music has been a huge part of my life impacting my social relations and my academic standing as well as being able to make beautiful music and the only reason this is possible is because of music education.

### **Olivia Van Dyke**

Occupation: Student

From: Fox Chapel Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

More than anything else, the music education I have received in my years of school has given me skills that I can use not only in higher education, but also in a future career, whether it is music related or not. Through the opportunities I've been given to audition for various elite bands, I've gained confidence in myself that I didn't have before. These auditions also gave me a sense of competition that has given me the chance to become an ambitious musician. Now that I know where my talents lie, I can continue to grow as an instrumentalist. My triumphs and failures in auditioning have taught me that perseverance and thorough preparation is the key to success. Furthermore, as my private teacher always tells me, auditions prepare you for real life. The pressure you must function under in an audition is no different from the pressure you feel when you witness an accident, or have to choose between fight or flight. Now that I have undergone multiple auditions for various bands, I feel confident while under duress, such as during presentations and when taking difficult tests. However, the music education I receive isn't all a perpetual contest. At the band festivals I've attended, I've happened to meet many musicians who are now my good friends. Some of them I can relate to because we play the same instrument, and others have bonded to me simply by a shared love of music. I've also had the opportunity to meet people from assorted backgrounds and areas of the state, which further enriches my musical experience at other schools. All of these abilities—having confidence, being competitive, adapting to unfamiliar places, and being able to make friends easily—I can use these to my advantage in the future. Whether or not I choose to become a music major, these skills are universal in becoming a successful member of society. For this, I can thank the outstanding educators that have encouraged me to join the world of music. Without music education, I cannot say where I would be today—but I can say that I would be seriously lacking the innumerable gifts that music has given me.

### **Elianna Paljug**

Occupation: Student

From: Fox Chapel Area HS , Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has defined my educational experience. Not only did music allow me to create friends to last a lifetime, but it also enabled me to become a more sensitive learner and better person. Music creates empathy through experiencing the composer's outlook on life, or their approach to often deep subjects. By creating art through music, and then extensively performing it for a wide variety of audiences, I was to create undeniable bonds unlike any other discipline. Music Education enabled me to create empathy across gaps of age when performing for elementary schools and nursing homes, and across gaps of ability when performing with The Woodlands, a center for disabled young adults. I am so grateful for the opportunity to experience music education, and hope that others are able to have the remarkable opportunity that I was so lucky to have! I am eternally grateful for Music Educators and all those who support Music Education for not only drastically improving my life, but also bettering the lives of countless others and creating communities built upon caring, discipline, detail, passion, and empathy,

### **Madison Bauer**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Gibsonia, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because. It gives me the chance to learn all about music that may help me in the future. Music education is also important to not just me but everyone else because if someone is getting bullied they can escape bullying by listening to music. Music to me is a way kids and adults can express their personality by singing. Together we can have a good music education. We can bring back music.

### **Tiffany Feil**

Occupation: 9th Grade Student

From: Gibsonia, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in so many ways. When I first started to sing, I got nervous and wouldn't sing out. Now that I have learned that it's okay to sing out and let people hear your voice, I sing everywhere I go. My chorus teacher always gives a positive attitude and it causes me to sing out even more. This is just one way music education has impacted my life. Music education has helped me make some friends. When I started chorus I met two of the most wonderful people the world could have. I consider them my best friends because they help me with anything. These are some people that will be in my life forever. Music education has impacted my life in so many ways, but these are just a few examples.

### **Logan Kramer**

Occupation: 7th Grade Student

From: Gibsonia, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is important to me because, when I get bullied or of that category I am upset and angry. When I come to music I can sing and let all of my anger out. When you sing you get smarter to, you can learn different languages and different things you may not figure out in regular classes. Also when you sing you can relax. What person have you not meet and are never frustrated at any thing its not possible. So when you sing or listen to music you can settle down and calm down. Also when you're in a music class you can be with your friends. I hope that you read this note and think about how music helps kids now and in the long run. Think about it. Thank you.

### **Janet Massie**

Occupation: Music Teacher-Strings

From: Gibsonia, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I traveled many places I never would have seen, I have a profession as a teacher, I work and teach children music, I do what I love and have a passion for every day. My life is filled with joy because of music .

### **Halle Mathieson**

Occupation: 11th grade student

From: Gibsonia, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Take a second and look back at our history. If there's one thing that remains constant throughout millenniums, it's music and art. After spending a day of getting facts like that shoved down my throat, I should know. We students take class after class of things that don't always interest us. After an especially tough day, every student needs at least one class to blow off steam and give their brains a break. With the continuous cutting of music programs, I'm lucky to have two music classes in my day, one of which I can only take by giving up my lunch period. The problem is, the thing I'm most passionate about just happens to be an

elective instead of a core class. I can't help that. Gaining support for music education, however, CAN help that.

### **Shannon McGrath**

Occupation: 11th Grade Student

From: Gibsonia, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Having music as a part of my school is important to several students including myself. Music is something that I am passionate about and can express myself through. Some people participate in sports or clubs, and I am able to take chorus. Music is a hobby that allows me to have fun in class that will not take away from my time after school to do homework and other activities. In chorus, we learn much more than just how to sing correctly. I have learned the history of songs that I had never known before, and by singing songs in different languages, I am able to learn some of that language. I started chorus in eighth grade because all of my friends had told me how much fun it was. Performing does require a lot of hard work, but when I'm on stage, singing with my class, I can't help but be proud of what we've done.

### **Sonnet Robertson**

Occupation: 7th Grade Student

From: Gibsonia, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because it makes me smart. You can learn different languages by singing foreign songs, and expanding your vocabulary by learning new words that are in old or new songs. Also, it gives you a break from all the other classes like reading, and math. It also gives you a chance to relax, like if you and a sibling are fighting at home, you can let the anger out by singing. Where my cousin goes to school in Arizona, they have totally cut the art and music programs. For her this is bad because, she is a great artist, but she may not get to do it as much now that they have cut art too. Also if you like to travel or like history, sometimes you could go on a field trip to a museum about music. This just doesn't impact chorus and art, it can also effect band and strings to, which all are in the music programs. Parents like music to, moms or dads like hearing their children sing, or play an instrument on stage. By cutting music could lead to a loss of jobs, like a kid could get into an orchestra, or be a world class performer, but they might never know because their school cut their music programs. So next time you cut a music or art program think of all the people you made unhappy. Thank you.

### **Ashley Kolling**

Occupation: 9th Grade Student

From: Gidsonia , Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life a lot. I have loved music and singing since I was little and I have been singing for about four years now. Music has always calmed me down when I was mad or upset. Throughout these years of learning music and how to sing I have learned a lot, I have learned the different notes, and a ton of different music styles. Music keeps me focused. Whenever I sing I am always happy. Music is always there for you either when your happy, or sad. This is why music has inspired me

### **Kelsey Bares**

Occupation: Student

From: Hampton HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In my life, I have had several music teachers that have inspired me to be a driven, motivated, and inspiring person that helps others in my life, and has generally made me into a better person that will enjoy greater success throughout my life.

### **Maura Kardasz**

Occupation: Student

From: Hampton HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life in many ways. First, it exposed me to many wonderful teachers who showed me both how to play music and how to appreciate it. I was able to learn my first few instruments in elementary and middle school, and now I am continuing to play them at a HS level. Marching band has especially been a wonderful impact on my life. Through it, I have made many friendships and bonds as well as learned leadership skills that will help me later in life. Most importantly, music education has influenced my decision on what I want to major in college. My goal is to become a music educator myself so that I can inspire the young minds of future musicians as I have been inspired throughout my life.

### **Elise Orban**

Occupation: Student

From: Hampton HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in more than one way. First off, the experiences I have gained from the world of music I will keep with me forever. Music allows me to get away from the world for a few hours a day and brings joy to the people around me. It has allowed me to experience joys I never would have had without music and I am more than thankful for the teachers and musicians I have met through my musical experience.

### **Mark Despotakis**

Occupation: Music Industry Executive

From: Jefferson Hills, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It wasn't until I was in my twenties that I really started to realize how music impacted me personally. All throughout my school years, I was involved in music. I was in the band. In high school, I was in the marching band and that experience opened me up to so much in the world. From a very close group of friends (including many that I'm still in touch with), to traveling around the country, to experiencing many new social experiences - participating at that level had a huge impact on my life. After high school, I started to teach with a high school music program and I started to truly see the impact music had on the students I was working with but I was also able to fully realize the impact it had on me. As I began to see things through the eyes and experiences of the students I was teaching, I realized how participation in music is really life changing. I saw friendships grow. I saw kids experience things they'd probably never get to experience in their life had it not been for participating in a school music group. Some of those things many of us take for granted like: boarding an airplane, seeing the ocean, spending a night away from home and so many more things. And all of those things happen because of the common bond of music. It wasn't until I started working in the music industry that I realized that not all students had that chance to experience music and all of the social and emotional benefits that I received and that I saw my students receive. It became obvious to me that it's only fair and right for all students to have access to those same experiences. And I know that not every student out there will go on to be a professional musician. I don't feel that's the goal. There are many ways to participate all throughout life without being a professional and gain so much from the experience. It's not always about playing the right note - many times it's about the experiences and unquantifiable benefits that come from music. From my position now, I see programs where students are experiencing these life changing events. But, it pains me when I see students who don't have that opportunity because they happened to be born into a community that can't afford or chooses not to have the arts in their schools. I've seen how music impacted me and helped me grow as a musician, but far more importantly as a human. I can point to social skills, emotional growth, awareness of the world around me and the desire to help others that have all come from my experiences with music. My goal is for everyone to have the opportunity to experience music and take away those or any number of other benefits.

### **Eric Lauver**

Occupation: Teacher/Professor of Music

From: Jefferson Hills, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In today's world of college and career readiness, music education played a key role for me, as it became the focus of my college, and ultimately, my career. Today, I work with 315 sixth grade students over the course of the year. I foster student growth in my classroom, as many students have never played keyboards prior to my class. I watch the excitement they bring to the task, and the work that they do. In short, music education became my life.

### **Jayne McDonald**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Kennedy Township, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My music teachers made a huge impact on my life by believing in me and challenging me to go beyond what anyone might have expected. For that I am grateful and it changed my life.

### **Joe Diamond**

Occupation: Student

From: McKeesport HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a huge impact on my life. It has given me a great start in the adult world. It taught me how to be responsible of myself and of duties placed upon me. Music education has also given me a focus in life. I learned how to play trumpet, and I taught myself how to play a number of other instruments, including piano, trombone, and cello. I am strongly considering music as a possible career path for me. I would like to teach music, perform professionally, or compose music. It has given me a strong background to build upon for future success. It has improved my critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and decision making skills.

### **Ryan Becker**

Occupation: Student

From: Moon Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has radically changed and impacted my life. I can say with 100% confidence that I would not be the person that I have become today without the impact of music education in our school district. Looking back at the seemingly small decision back in my 8th grade year of whether to continue on with chorus in HS or not, I am so glad that I decided to continue with it. Not only has our choral program helped me to find my interest and passion for all different types of music, but has helped me to find myself, and develop a group of lifelong friends. Some of the experiences I have been through, including our performances, the opportunities to learn and perform music for PMEA district and region chorus events, the opportunity to perform in New York City and at Walt Disney World, and many others have been truly unforgettable and incredible. The memories that I have made and am continuing to make through our choral program are lifelong, and have most definitely shaped and will continue to shape me into the person that I am.

### **Dana Murray**

Occupation: Student

From: Moon Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has been a part of my life since I was in elementary school. It has shaped the way I think, learn, and act. Music opens the mind in ways that no other subject can. It taught me discipline by following scores, reading rhythms, and sight singing. It taught me to appreciate art in all forms. It helped to relieve my mind from the stresses of daily life, providing me with a feeling of freedom and happiness as I either made up my own tunes or sang what was in front of me on the page. It has also broadened my knowledge of a

multitude of composers, artists, poets, and authors. As I grow up and continue my life's journey, I know that music will always be there to lift my spirits and enrich my intelligence.

### **Noah Pinter**

Occupation: Student

From: Moon Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has transformed who I am as a person. In academics, I've become driven as a student. Music (mainly events like PMEA festivals) have taught me that, in order to achieve something, one has to work for it. When looking at my social life, the majority of my friends are also involved in some type of music education, and I have found a home with these people. I am the happiest I've been in my life because I am surrounded with people I love, doing what I love: Singing. Everybody has a niche, and music is mine. However, I never would have found it without the teachers and other educators opening doors of opportunity for me. I am ceaselessly thankful for these people that have encouraged and supported me through my journey of learning music. If they hadn't shown me the way, I don't know what I would do. Music is my anchor, and my passion. Music education has let me grow into a mature young adult. I can't imagine where I would be without it.

### **Phoebe Schoeneweis**

Occupation: Student

From: Moon Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Since a child, I've grown up with music. I participated in the Children's Festival Chorus of Pittsburgh at a young age. The ensemble gave me a deep appreciation for music. I had an amazing conductor in elementary school. Her passion for music impacted me so much and has given me the will to study music education after HS. Music is everything to me. Music in schools is a way of escape for me during the school day and without the amazing musicians we have working in schools to teach us, I truly believe that so many kids would be lost.

### **Mercedes**

Occupation: Substitute Teacher

From: Moon Twp, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music class was the perfect time for me to be able to express myself. I never played an instrument and had an OK voice at least for class and still was encouraged and felt comfortable around my classmates. In grade school I believe our entire class found excitement and fun in music. We put on shows and plays and little concerts for our families and had a ball. There was always full participation and everyone (at least in my memories) was involved and enjoyed it. Everyone going for a role in some way!! Also, during my student teaching, I followed the students to their specials and the music teacher I worked with was fabulous as well. Involving dance and culture and all sorts of exciting new things that the students just lived for... music day was THE day! I love music education and wholeheartedly support any efforts to keep it's presence in our schools- among other specials and especially former "core" classes such as science and social studies (which I devoted my master's thesis!!) Aren't we supposed to be grooming well-rounded people?? KEEP THE MUSIC ALIVE!!!!!!!

### **Maria Long**

Occupation: Student

From: Mt. Lebanon HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Practically ever since I was born, I have been surrounded by music. As an infant, my mother conducted my church choir. I guess you could say that that's where my music education started. Watching her for more than sixteen years, I learned how to conduct and how to maintain confidence under pressure. I began to conduct my church choir when I was fourteen, thanks to her. Since then, music education has been a

huge part of my life. In third grade, when we were asked if we wanted to play an stringed instrument. I chose the cello, the closest instrument to the human voice. Thanks to wonderful teachers, I have participated in both in-school and out-of-school orchestras, and am a principal cellist today. As for choir, I am a member of three different choirs in school, as well as my church choir, as I have previously mentioned. The wonderful thing about choir is that it gives an opportunity to students who don't know how to play another instrument to express themselves through music. Due to all of these in-school commitments, as you can imagine, I have very little time to spare. I often joke with my friends saying, "I have no life," but in actuality, music is my life. That is why music education is so important. If my school didn't have a music education program, I do not feel that I would be able to express myself to the extent that I can now. I have had so many wonderful opportunities, including PMEA. I would not give the experiences that I have had up for the world, nor would I ever deny another person these fantastic experiences.

### **Ziqi Meng**

Occupation: Student

From: Mt. Lebanon HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has allowed me to better understand not only the culture of European music, but also to understand the art and history of the 16th century to today, whereas without music I wouldn't even have known such intriguing history existed.

### **Reed Ulery**

Occupation: Student

From: Mt. Lebanon HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

What do you want to be when you grow up? In seventh grade, after attending a summer camp about nanotechnology, I was sure that I wanted to be a research scientist. I wanted to work in a university lab and study cutting-edge modern science and technology. But if you asked me the same question now, I would say, "a band director/composer/arranger." The change in career path may sound extreme, but the decision can be boiled down to my experiences with outstanding teachers, directors, clinicians, and conductors. Some of my favorite people I've met so far in my sixteen years have been through music events. I'm fortunate enough to participate in band, chorus, and orchestra at my school this year, and I've done so in the past as well. I've attended numerous "district band" style clinics in both PA and in Tennessee before my family moved here. I've been in several Broadway musicals and worked under directors ranging from a serious (maybe borderline crazy) HS director to a laid back abridged director through my church. I've been on many band and choir trips and tours, and I'm always excited when I get the opportunity to go on another. Once again, this all boils down to the people. The music educators in my life have left a lasting impact on me. In addition to learning chromatic scales, what a "divisi" is, and to not accidentally tune your entire cello section sharp before a concert (true story), I've learned respect, responsibility, the importance of giving my best effort, perseverance, determination, kindness, woodwind jokes, and friendship (music theory should be on that list, too, if I don't want my piano teacher on my case). These are all great things to have, and I've gained and retained them through music educators. I've had such a positive experience with music and the folks who are lucky enough to run it for a living, that I'd like to do so myself one day. Every day, I look forward to interfacing with my music teachers and directors at school, and my private teachers on the weekends. Every day, I also remember how lucky I am to have such enthusiastic, talented, and dedicated people in my life. I owe a lot to my various music educators, and the longer I stay in music, the more I'll meet and the more I'll be thankful for all of them. So, with as much sincerity and love as I can muster through a short block of text in this PMEA book, thank you. Thank you for your time, your energy, your sleepless nights, your personal help, your musicianship, your vision, and your dedication to both the arts and to students like me. Thank you for sharing the wonderful thing we call music with me and every other student you've touched. Thank you for water breaks at band camp and letting us sit down during choir rehearsal. But most of all, thank you for being your awesome, loved, musical, enthusiastic selves.

### **Jiawen Zhu**

Occupation: Student

From: Mt. Lebanon HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has changed the way I think about my life and the detail I put into other activities. It has also given me the opportunity to experience amazing festivals and perform in outside countries to learn about their music culture. Finally, I have made many new friends through music, and have become closer with a lot of them as well.

### **Christie Adamiak**

Occupation: Student

From: North Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From the time I was 6, music has been an integral part of my life. I began the trumpet that year, violin the following year, and french horn in seventh grade. Throughout my time being musically educated at my school, I have been able to gain experience working with a group, managing my time, focusing intently for a long period of time, traveling to other parts of the country, performing, creating relationships with the musicians and directors around me, being successful in a way no other art form can recreate, and countless other benefits. Music has taught me an innumerable amount of lessons as well. I have learned that helping other students express music with their instruments successfully generates an inimitable joy that cannot be matched. Working together with other students at a high level to create something amazing helps you create bonds with those people like no others in your life. It is important to pursue music every day to help life be just a little bit less chaotic, to escape the world full of such disturbing things, and to remember that there are beautiful things in this world. Most importantly, music has held together my life and given me friendships and opportunities that I would've never been blessed with without it and I am eternally grateful to the music programs in Pennsylvania, and especially to the fantastic directors I have been able to work under.

### **Brandon Falcona**

Occupation: Student

From: North Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I firmly believe that picking up an instrument and continuing to practice, learn and excel at it all throughout middle and HS has been one of the best decisions of my life! Everyone deserves at least an opportunity for music education and to learn a musical instrument.

### **Alexa Galdes**

Occupation: Student

From: North Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in more ways than one. At North Hills HS, our band program is more than just a class to take, it's a family you become a part of. The people I make music with are some of my closest friends who I would do anything for, and I know they would do anything for me, too. I love creating music with my second family and I love being a part of something so wonderful. It has taught me so much about leadership and trust. Two things I will always have with me when I grow up.

### **Courtney Labritz**

Occupation: Student

From: North Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is one thing that I absolutely love, and that is primarily because I've had such wonderful teachers over the years. I'm still learning, but they're always there to encourage me and help with anything.

### **Steven Liao**

Occupation: Student

From: North Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has been a huge part of my life. Since the age of 8 I have been playing the violin. Music education allowed me to focus on not just on the music itself, but the experiences it creates are wonderful. Music education has definitely had a positive impact on my life.

### **Eric Meister**

Occupation: Student

From: North Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am currently a senior at North Hills HS, and music has been a huge part of my life since 4th grade. My teachers have always been fantastic and supportive, and that has caused me to desire a career in music education. I have gone to many PMEA events, and the educators have been helpful and inspiring time after time. Music education is one of the most important parts of education, as it teaches the younger generations to appreciate the joy that comes from music, whether it be performing or just simply listening to and understanding music.

### **Hailey Seamon**

Occupation: Student

From: North Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Musical education has been a part of my life since I started school. But, I did not really involve myself in music until seventh grade. Until then, I had a very misguided and stereotyped perspective on band and music programs. When I decided to join band and play oboe, I knew right away that I made the right decision. Not only did I have a new hobby, but I had a new sense of responsibility to make sure I didn't let down the band. In addition, being in band opened so many doors for me. I was encouraged to join the marching band, where I learned to play flute and piccolo. In band, I also made some of the best friends of my life. We've shared many great experiences together and formed long-lasting relationships. Also, band has given me the opportunity to travel more. Through various trips, I have gone to Cedar Point, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Disney World, and eventually New York City! Finally, musical education changed the way I see things. Now, I can appreciate the finer things in life, like the music that has lasted through the centuries. I'm also more motivated to work hard and achieve my goals. In conclusion, music education has impacted my life in so many positive ways. I love to share my experiences with others, so that they, too, can experience the wonderful things I have through music!

### **Jake Stanton**

Occupation: Student

From: North Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me the chance to express myself freely. Without music education, I would have never been able to experience the magic of music. I know I would not be where I am today without the educators that have helped me along the way.

### **David Vevers**

Occupation: Student

From: North Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education impacted me because it truly taught me to love music more than any other person who is not in a music course can understand. I plan on majoring in music education to spread that love and help younger students understand it as well.

### **Amy Davidson**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Penn Hills, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My music education began informally at the age of three in church choir, and continued to build as I started piano lessons at age seven, played the oboe in school in fourth grade, and learned the saxophone in ninth grade. I was in choir, band, and small ensembles. Music education has granted me many opportunities throughout my life, including traveling to Europe with piano teacher when I was a junior in high school, but nothing can compare to what music has done for me as an individual. I was voted "the most quiet" student in sixth grade. I was painfully shy. Now I am a music teacher and sing in front of people daily. Music did not make me brave, but it made me understand key things about life that have enabled me to have an impact on others. 1. It's okay to not be perfect. In fact, beauty sometimes comes out of imperfection. however: 2. You should always strive to be the best that you can be. It is important to work hard and put forth effort to achieve a product that makes you proud. Music helps you see the result that comes from hard work. 3. How to deal with rejection and disappointment. You don't always get the part or the scholarship or the chair you desired. Sometimes it's a result of your effort, and sometimes it's not. It's okay. Move on. Look forward. 4. You're not nervous, you're excited. (Thanks Dr. Register) But most of all 5. You matter. To your ensemble, to your audience, to your teacher - YOU MATTER. I have been able to use these lessons throughout my life as an educator and as a performer. I have seen students shine when music class is the only place they can. I have had audience members come up to me after performances to tell me how much the music has moved them. I have had students come back to tell me how much music matters to them. And I have had many more students who have not come back - but I know that what we have done in music class together will be with them for the rest of their lives.

### **Courtney Campbell**

Occupation: Student

From: Penn Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life both personally and educationally. I have been involved in my school's music education program since I was in 4th grade, and it has taught me many morals and values that I follow to this day. I learned that perseverance is key to success, and you can't succeed at anything if you don't try 100% of the time. I follow this guideline when practicing for festivals, or when I'm studying for my classes. All in all, music education has shaped me into a better musician, student, and person overall.

### **Ross Ivey**

Occupation: Student

From: Pine-Richland HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I guess I could say, without music my life would be flat. (get it?) Music is my life. Without music, I would be a completely different person. It is how I have met majority of my friends, and it has encouraged me to be an all-around better person. Because of the high bar I set for myself in music, I strive to set the bar equally high in everything else I do. Music gives me a way to connect with my incredibly musical family and a way for us to spend time together. Through the incredible band program at our school, I have learned how to be a leader, how to stand out, and express my creativity. Music has truly changed my life.

### **Jennifer Laufmann**

Occupation: Student

From: Pine-Richland HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a huge impact on my life. I was always shy and felt like I didn't have a real group of friends or a place to fit in and just be myself throughout middle school. Like my older brother, I joined band in sixth grade. Of course I knew it was considered "nerdy" and not "cool." And it even bothered me for a little bit. But today, six years later, I am proud to say that I am in band. I love it. I'm in jazz ensemble, honors

bands, and am one of three drum majors for a group of more than 250 people whom I consider family. Band kids are such a diverse, yet at the same time universal, group of people. I moved from Kentucky to Pennsylvania between my freshman and sophomore years of HS. It was a really awkward time to move and of course I was afraid. But I have never felt so welcomed as I did when I walked into band camp that first day. I never looked back. These past three years were amazing and I credit it all to music education.

### **Will Newell**

Occupation: Student

From: Pine-Richland HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has provided for my life an entire dimension of activity and experience, without which I would be a less confident, hard-working, and happy person. The musician, through hours of practice, days of performing, and years of refinement learns that there is absolutely no way to success but through determination and dedication. And there is no realistic way to become a musician and to enjoy those benefits except through music education. The musician's work, despite its path of inevitable frustration and anger, is rewarded with the ability to produce music. This reward is worth every moment of work, every moment of difficulty, and every painful moment of error that we all face during performances. I have my music educators to thank for it.

### **Don Alger**

Occupation: Chemistry Teacher

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music (i.e., piano study and performance) has been a steady, enduring, and most influential aspect of my growth as a student, professional outside of teaching, and now as an educator with religious vows. The detail, discipline, nuance, expansiveness of ideas in studied and performed music draw a person profoundly into what it means to be truly human. Through instrumental music (piano, for me), I have a window to the human soul that celebrates and mourns, rejoices and grieves, welcomes and struggles, among others. The perseverance that music study entails becomes habitual, and I find it a very useful point of departure to instill a love for learning and stick-to-itiveness to my honors and AP Chemistry students. Music has also broadened by appreciation of life as it is lived by others. I can appreciate music genres that are not my preferred genres for study. Through them, I get a sense of others' pulse and what makes them tick. This understanding is the beginning of tolerance and harmony notwithstanding diversity. Music soothes the savage beast -- whether the beast is an unsettled class of high school boys, or the inner turmoils one faces alone. Repairing to music practice or study regenerates, re-informs, reinvigorates, and resets what hurts or lacks understanding. At least, music calms frayed nerves like a balm of sorts. On the other hand, music can excite, rouse, and lift spirits -- individually or communally. Whether it's a Sunday congregation or pre-game music minutes before a hockey game, the right music can pump you up and put players and spectators in the right frame of mind. It's safe to say that each person embraces music in a very individual way. Whether it's formal classroom music or what's embraced long after the early exposure to what's harmonious versus dissonant, steadily rhythmic or syncopated, sparse or richly voiced, music is universal because it is a manifestation of the life pulse each one possesses within.

### **Scott Boyer**

Occupation: Student

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made me into the person I am today. If it were not for my mother starting me in piano lessons in 2nd grade, I'm not sure what kind of person I would've become. Music has taught me to be responsible, respectful, humble, confident, and most importantly taught me live in the moment. Music education gave me so many opportunities, that I would not have received otherwise. I've traveled as south as Jamaica, as west as San Francisco, because of the relationships I gained being in a music education

program. I hope, after my education, I can give students the same opportunities and benefits I received as a music education student.

### **2015 Pennsylvania Teacher Of The Year Mairi Cooper**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted every aspect of my life. I was (and still am) a violinist but my school district did not have a strings program. Most of my peers did not understand my interest. Fortunately, I found a home within the choral program. Through the friendships that I made in that program, I developed social skills that have been critical in my adult life. While these skills have been invaluable to me, even more importantly, music education taught me how to think critically. I learned to analyze a problem, create approaches to solving that problem and then the discipline to work through the approaches until the solution was solidified. These skills are the ones that we all talk about in STEM programs. I learned them not in a science classroom but from my music teachers.

### **Internationally Renowned Opera Singer Marianne Cornetti**

Occupation: Internationally renowned opera singer

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Dear Legislators! My name is Marianne Cornetti, I am an internationally acclaimed opera singer. I was 12 years old and in the 6th grade chorus at Saxonburg Elementary School when my chorus teacher, Debbie Pakler, asked me to sing a solo in the spring concert! I accepted and sang I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing! I was so HAPPY to have been asked! What I was unaware of was Debbie Pakler had then called the chorus teacher, Evelyn Callender at Knoch High School, telling her to please watch out for me because she TRULY felt that I had a special talent. I arrived in Evie's class, and she immediately listened to my voice and asked me then to sing a solo in the fall concert. In the 8th grade she approached my parents about the possibility of taking voice lessons! Even though I was young to begin formal training, she thought my voice was mature enough! My parents and I consented and I began my formal vocal training with a WONDERFUL teacher. Starting with a VERY GOOD teacher was and is still VITAL to the development of a Young voice! My foundation was set correctly! From 8th grade through my senior year, I had so many opportunities to enhance my music education! I was encouraged to sing in the high school musicals from 9th grade to 12th grade! Every year I got a role and every year the roles got bigger. My senior year I had the lead in Funny Girl! Along with all of the musicals, I was encouraged to audition for honors, districts, regional and state choruses. Every year I placed very high and even had the honor of singing solos in these concerts! Evelyn Callender prepared me meticulously for all of these events! My other teacher, Don Orwald, prepared me dramatically for all of the musicals, and to this day I am using the skills that were taught to me at Knoch high School by Evie and Don! Might I add that each one of these concerts and musicals were building blocks for my confidence and development! Evie not only taught chorus, but also Music Education! I learned theory and harmony and solfege and composition in 7th, 8th and 9th grades! Because I had such an AMAZING high school background, I immediately was accepted into the FINEST conservatories in our country. I am now considered one of the FINEST VERDI MEZZOS IN THE WORLD TODAY! I have sung in all of the Major opera houses in the world, The Metropolitan Opera in NY, La Scala in Milano, Vienna, The Royal Opera House in London, just to name a few. I TRULY BELIEVE IT'S BECAUSE MY MUSIC TEACHERS WERE THERE TO GUIDE ME AND THE SCHOOLS WERE THERE TO GIVE ME THE OPPORTUNITIES! I would HOPE you NEVER take music education out of our schools! BUT INSTEAD ENHANCE IT AND ENCOURAGE IT! I AM LIVING PROOF THAT MUSIC EDUCATION IS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY!

### **Alan A. Cugini**

Occupation: High School Instrumental Music Teacher

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Experiences not only direct us in what we do as a career, but who we become as people. Music has been an ongoing life experience for me. From the days of singing "Country Roads" in the living room as a small child to becoming a high school band director, music has been tightly woven into the fabric of who I am. Throughout my twelve years as a student in a Pennsylvania public school district, either intentionally or unintentionally, turned to and found music as a place to thrive. I still remember some of the silly songs we sang in first and second grade, and learning the 50 states by way of a hoedown. I was always excited when we got to try new instruments in music class. As I got older, listening to the Glenn Miller Orchestra and Paul Desmond inspired me to join the school band in fifth grade. Yes, I chose the saxophone. This was the single most important decision I made during my school years. From the first day with my new horn, I was inspired to learn. It was a triumphant moment when I finally learned how to play "In the Mood" on my saxophone, a song that was born before either of my parents. As a sixth grader, I felt like a rock star when I had the chance to play in the Junior Aardvark Funk Band (yes, that's really what they called it). Throughout high school, the marching band and symphonic band were my primary motivators to achieve in school. It was where I thrived both academically and socially. It became my school home. It was my inspiration to become a music teacher. Since becoming a teacher, I've watched many students enter my band classes in search of an identity, and exit as strong independent young adults. I've seen students who struggle to get through the rest of the day find forty minutes when they like being in school. I've seen students that find frustration at every turn in every other academic area realize "advanced" achievement in music. These are the reasons why, as a teacher, music education is still impacting me to this day. These are the reasons why music must remain an integral part of Pennsylvania's public schools. I've been fortunate to be able to have music, musical instruments, and music instruction readily available throughout my lifetime. It has led to a career that, in spite of its many challenges and uphill battles, has been more rewarding than I could ever have imagined. Music has enriched my life and the lives of my students in countless ways. And now, as a father, I get to watch my young daughter learn to enjoy listening to music, playing her toy instruments, and dancing in the bleachers at a fall band show. Music has been important to me all my life, and now I get to enjoy watching it become important to the next generation.

### **Melissa Lessure**

Occupation: Musician; Administrative Assistant

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am a flute teacher and have been a flute player in the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra for 20 years. My children are in the North Allegheny school district, and I am so pleased that they have an incredible music education program here. Both of my kids have been in orchestra, band and chorus, and they love music. Music has helped them become more confident people, with chances to perform several times per year. My music education growing up in Michigan was much more limited. I finally transferred to the Interlochen Arts Academy for my senior year of high school to pursue my interest in music. However, my flute teachers over the years were all wonderful and inspired me to continue playing the flute. It's important that everybody have access to music education in today's fast-paced electronic world.

### **Susan Medley**

Occupation: Professor of Music

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a crucial part of my life for as long as I can remember. I began studying piano at the age of five, and my school music teacher gave me the opportunity to accompany the school choir beginning in fifth grade. These early experiences shaped my life immeasurably. I wanted to share the joy of music with everyone, and I chose to major in music education in college. As a public school music teacher I saw time and time again students for whom learning was extremely difficult. The only place they excelled was in

music. I would hear other teachers talk about discipline problems with these students, when for me they were model children. Music got them out of bed in the morning and was the reason they came to school. As a college professor, I now work with students every day who come out of strong elementary and secondary school music programs. They might be majoring in political science, biology, accounting, or history, but they are in my choir, they take music appreciation and music literature courses, and they keep music in their lives. They tell me routinely that choir is the class that they most look forward to. It is their outlet. When their lives are stressful and they feel overwhelmed, coming to rehearsal centers them, allows them to get in touch with their artistic side, and gives them a sense of fulfillment. These are the people who will be filling the seats in the concert halls in the future. These are the people who will keep the arts alive. If they had not been exposed to music during their elementary, middle and high school years, it is unlikely that they would have taken an interest in it in college. I was talking recently with a woman who sings in the community choir that I conduct. She is a physician and she spends every day reading mammogram screenings, looking for imperfections that, when found, can save a patient's life. I told her that what she does was so important because her work was literally saving patients' lives. Without missing a beat, she said, "I keep people alive so that they can enjoy the music you create." I was speechless. What more powerful testimony could there be to the value of music?

### **Daniel Pegher**

Occupation: Corporate Auditor

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music impacted my life by teaching me the true value of hard work, practice, and teamwork. Music also taught me how to create art not just for the sake of creating it, but for the sake of sharing it. Music gave me the confidence to offer something up to the world, receive criticism, and use that feedback as an opportunity to improve myself.

### **Steve Rickenback**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music gives flight to emotions which would otherwise have no other vehicle in which to travel. Every detail that I discover about it provides revelation about myself, my world, and my God. Without music education, I would exist in a world of black and white, left only to imagine what a world of color would look like, or why someone would even care which world they inhabit in the first place.

### **Olivia Ames**

Occupation: Student

From: Pittsburgh CAPA, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I first started lessons with my dad on trombone when I was 8. I immediately fell in love with music and the trombone. Half a year later I started private lessons and music became an integral part of my life. When I came to HS and started playing every day I realized how music was a huge part of me and I really needed it to thrive. Music education is so important because it helps to bring a warm, friendly environment and to many places where there is not another creative outlet.

### **Jimmy Cunningham**

Occupation: Student

From: Pittsburgh CAPA, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was four years old, I started violin lessons. My father is very active in the Pittsburgh music scene, and I have been immersed in music all my life. Naturally, my parents wanted me to continue my musical journey with the opportunity to go to the Creative And Performing Arts middle-HS. I experienced my first orchestral playing in 6th grade, and quickly fell in love due to the great enthusiasm and encouragement of all

the music educators teaching here. Soon, thanks to the head start in the CAPA orchestra, I got into a younger youth symphony here and then excelled in the viola section into the more advanced symphony and made the principal seat this year. In short, my life has been totally shaped by music and the wonderful music educators at my school started all of it off.

### **Marie Vater**

Occupation: Student

From: Pittsburgh CAPA, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to be involved in enjoyable activities which foster an environment of learning both in and out of the classroom. It also has allowed me to appreciate the arts.

### **Heather Lash**

Occupation: Dietitian

From: Pleasant Hills, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has been a big part of my life. I played the trumpet and participated in marching and jazz band. This helped with social skills and expressing emotions through music.

### **Luke Streussnig**

Occupation: Student

From: Plum Borough, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music was the best thing that i ever chose to pursue. I've come to love music, and I've even taken up arranging a few songs for Marching band, and Pep Band. Music has also taught me that you must be able to get along in a big group setting to succeed. Music teaches Discipline, and that is a great trait for the field I am looking to go into after high school, which is becoming a PA State Police Trooper. I've been playing trumpet since 4th grade, and i will be playing until the day of my death. Music is like a good tattoo, you can never get rid of it, nor do you want to get rid of it. Thank You to all the music teachers who are out there helping kids follow their dreams!

### **Karen Polak**

Occupation: Educator/Musician

From: Raised in McKeesport, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am 52 years old. I graduated from McKeesport High School in 1980. I now live in Las Vegas, NV. Music education was extremely important to my life. I was in both band and orchestra all through elementary, junior high, and high school. Because of PMEA, I had many opportunities to represent our school at many festivals both on the district, region, and state levels. I was a member of the ALL-Eastern Orchestra, which had students from all up the Eastern seaboard, then I was a member of the McDonald's all American Band. It is because of these experiences of traveling and representing my school that I have such a well rounded education. Since I began playing an instrument in a summer program at school when I was 4 years old, I learned the discipline needed for being successful in academics early in life. If anything, you should not be cutting music education, you should be making it available in earlier grades. Even though I now teach technology to other teachers, I am still a professional musician and have my own quintet. There is a lot of research out showing the connection between learning music and doing well in other subjects. Being able to perform in front of people also boosts self esteem, which is lacking in so many of our young people today. Pennsylvania has a much better music education system than my present state of Nevada. I sincerely hope that you keep it that way!!!

### **Lena Ison**

Occupation: Student

From: Riverview HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has changed my life. It has opened many opportunities to me. I am currently a member of the Orchestra, Select String Ensemble, Jazz Band, Marching Band, Concert Band, and TRYPO (Three Rivers Young People's Orchestra). I have been able to participate in Allegheny Valley Junior High Honors Band, Junior High PMEA Orchestra, and Sr. High PMEA District and Region Orchestra. The experiences that I have from these festivals and classes have influenced me to continue playing an instrument through the rest of my life. I have also had the opportunity to connect with students from all around Pennsylvania who are also interested in music.

### **Natalie Babcock**

Occupation: 7th Grade Student

From: Russellton, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has definitely has a major impact on my life. Music is really important to me because in music class I can just relax, hang out with my friends, and not even think about what other people say about me. Also chorus is the one period of the day I look forward to every day when I wake up. Music actually helps me focus when I am in class. When you think about it being in a music group, especially chorus, you have to have good health to be able to play or sing and perform your best so you can't smoke or anything. Not that should, but just in general. The music teachers work there butt of every day and when their cut to half time or even fired they don't get as much money and if they have kids they won't be able to buy as much stuff for them. Music is really important to me and I don't want it to be taken away from me.

### **Charles Balaan**

Occupation: Student

From: Sewickley Academy, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has enriched my life in a number of ways. It has provided an excellent outlet for creativity and artistic expression, as well as mental relaxation. It has enabled me to expand and develop my critical thinking skills and become a better problem solver. I have had multiple opportunities to meet people and travel to many new places on band trips and for concerts. I cannot imagine a world without music, and I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to make music and share it with others.

### **Emma Balaan**

Occupation: Student

From: Sewickley Academy, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a very important part of my life. My entire family plays music and it has always been very important to us. Music helps me be creative and learn how to work with others towards the common goal of creating something beautiful and amazing. Participating in music programs has helped me foster relationships with many different kinds of people and expanded my understanding of what it means to be a musician.

### **Janelle Sands**

Occupation: Student

From: Sewickley Academy, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a huge part of my life, growing up in a musical family and participating in my school's music program since lower school and PMEA festivals since middle school. Playing cello is a way for me to challenge and express myself. I especially enjoy playing in orchestras because it means being a smaller part of something larger than myself, and I am so grateful for the friendships I have formed from PMEA events and orchestra.

### **Adam Bleil**

Occupation: Student

From: Shaler Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is and should be an important part of every young person's life. For me, not only has music education provided a basis for my future career, but it has positively affected my social and academic aspects as well. Based off of my experiences through this important subject, I think that it is important for any and every student to become educated in music.

### **Tori Lorenz**

Occupation: Student

From: Shaler Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Being able to perform through music has been such a blessing. It brings me closer to friends, family and God!

### **Zachary Marshall**

Occupation: Student

From: Shaler Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Musical education is probably one of the biggest parts of my life. I now go to a public school but I did not always go to public schools. From kindergarten through 6th grade, I went to a Catholic school. It had a band and only a band. I played clarinet for four years until the school decided to get rid of its music program. This was the final straw for private schools, so my mom took me out and placed me in a public school in seventh grade. Here I started choir. I never really found my place until Choir. Choir gave me a way to feel like I belonged and also that I was able to do something seeing as I am not into sports much.

### **Paige Milavec**

Occupation: Student

From: Shaler Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been singing my entire life, or at least as long as I can remember. Learning all I can about music has greatly impacted my life and all I do. Music is in all parts of my life and I try to incorporate it into everything I do. I hope to work in some field involving music when I enter the work force and I appreciate all of the opportunities I am offered through the PMEA festivals. The things I am learning will help me a lot in my future.

### **Jordan Schreiber**

Occupation: Student

From: Shaler Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life by allowing me to pursue my passion for live performance through the knowledge I need to succeed in the theatre world. My director has given me education and feedback on both music and the voice which I feel is essential to me as a performer and as a person. Without music education, I would not be able to chase my dreams and have the confidence to move forward.

### **Catie Strout**

Occupation: Student

From: Shaler Area HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in a monumental way. Growing up, I was always singing and dancing, but I mainly focused my energy towards playing volleyball and basketball since all of my friends participated

in sports. However, when I went to HS, I found myself surrounded by so many different opportunities to pursue my passion towards music, such as participating in the choir, marching band, and spring musical. Through all of these activities, I met tons of people who were interested in the same things as I was. I am happy to say that these people became my closest friends, and I would not trade my experiences within the music education program for anything. There is no doubt in my mind that they have helped mold me into the person I am today.

### **Wyatt Mauti**

Occupation: Student

From: South Fayette HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by giving me a safe place. It has taught me to be respectful and how to work with many different people. Also it has given me the knowledge to get through life everyday and to know that there is always someone there to listen.

### **Danielle Bianchi**

Occupation: 9th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has made a huge impact on my life. One of the main reasons why it is important to me is because it expresses my emotions or it changes my mood. If you listening to a slow sad song then the song might bring you down a little bit, but if you are listening to a song that's really upbeat and happy then it is most likely going to change you mood and put in a good mood. The great thing about music is there are a lot of different kinds. There is pop, country, rap and many many more. You can learn so many things from each type of music there is to listen to. When you learn about music in music class, or chorus or band. you see a whole new side of music. that's one of the best things about learning about music.

### **Mia Burford**

Occupation: 7th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

if i'm sad I could listen to music to make me feel better. I can also relate to many songs so that's why they make me feel better. Also to some people music is an escape so they can be relaxed or less stressed.

### **Ty Cannon**

Occupation: 12th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me by being one of the only subject in school that can tap into the more emotional side of my brain. Just about every other class involves simply doing work, whereas music you actually need to feel to sound good. Be it physical feelings or mental ones, music is one escape where you can let emotions, good or bad, out. It has done wonders for me from a mental standpoint and I'm fairly certain I am not the only one. Music should be a part of every student's well rounded curriculum. The fact that the funding has been cut to music and the arts in general is not something that should continue as it can hurt us even academically. Without music a lot of band, choir, and music students wouldn't keep up properly in other classes without that fun release of a music class. If these cuts continue I would not be surprised if there is a dip in just about everything, from standardized test scores, to overall GPA's, to even graduation rate. The stress of an 8 or so hour day can be killer without a fun class or two mixed in and I know many people who find music classes to be their favorite and most enjoyable class they partake in on a daily basis. I know for a fact I was a messed up kid before joining choir. I made very poor decisions that hurt me and others around me. Almost as soon as I joined my first choir when I was a high school freshman changes started and I began to take care of myself both mentally and physically. As I moved through my high school career the people I met through choir up through this, my senior year, are some of the most wonderful people

I know. This chorus and many others throughout Pennsylvania are families. These people I know through choir pick me up when I am down whether they know they do or not. Choir and music in general has been the greatest thing in my life and I hope that children for generations are allowed to get the same feeling of belonging and being a part of something as wonderful as making music for people to enjoy. I hope someone reads this and realizes music is not just some fun class people can take. It is almost like a way of life. You learn to belong, you learn to work with others, you learn how important it is to give your all knowing the people next to you are doing the same. You learn to be uniform and to wear that proudly. And lastly, you learn that you belong and are worth something, even if it does not seem like it. There is a bond made between students who do band or chorus that just doesn't exist in other classes.

### **Laci Dezern**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is most important to me because I love to sing. Music to me are feelings in a tune, explaining anything beyond everything in the world. Singing is like exploding your thoughts and feelings into a tune singing about anything in the universe and it sound amazing. It's my world. Its not just about singing, its about learning about the first creators who invented this wonderful piece of art and up the chain, learning about how people used music in many different ways, whether they were happy, sad, it was their job, or just for fun. I believe that some people naturally have the talent, and music is their thing so learning music and singing in school is about the best thing ever. Its a big impact on everyone whether they like music or not.

### **Victoria Ferrante**

Occupation: 8th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I love coming to school and getting to learn about many different types of music pieces, then getting to sing them. I think every student should experience what the chorus and music students experience. If I am ever having a bad day, once I get to chorus class, my day always gets better. Singing with my friends and wonderful teacher really helps with stress and emotional problems. As we grow, many people get tired of stuff they have been doing for a while, but I will never get tired of chorus and will do it as long as possible. Although music has taught me many, many important things, I think teaching us that it is okay to make mistakes is the most important. Everyone makes mistakes, and that's perfectly okay because then you know what to work on more, and like they say practice makes perfect. Chorus has made a huge impact on my life and if the schools took that away from me, a part of me would be lost.

### **R.T. Golgan**

Occupation: 6th Grade student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my my life by making me feel better when I'm sad or down. It sometimes reminds me of great times, friends and family when you haven't seen them in a while. I listen to it whenever and wherever I can.

### **Rahanna Jones**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Chorus lets me sing in front of an audience because I know im not going ti be on Broadway when it get older . I love to sing I used to put on little performances for my family and to be able to sing in school that means a lot because i just love to sing. In school we get to have fun and improve my singing. i get to talk to my friends and have a good time . I love chorus and this is why.

### **Katelyn Kearney**

Occupation: 11th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has played a significant role in my life. Choir has always been a class I have looked forward to during the school day. It is an opportunity to do something I love while taking a break from all of my academic classes. It gives me a way to express my creativity and bond with people that have the same love for singing as I do. Throughout my seven years of choir, I have developed several valuable friendships with people I would not have met, otherwise. Seeing as how chorus class, for me, has been present every year since middle school, it has become a part of who I am. I have realized that, without it, I might not be who I am today. Choir has brought out my true personality and enhanced my creativity. Music education is truly a joyous thing. However, I have noticed that, over the years, the music department in my school has started to suffer. It has been limited on how many music-related trips we can go on, and it is possible that, in the near future, choir may be eliminated. It is a sadness that future students may not be able to experience the amazing opportunities I have had. Every student should have the chance to have a class where they can express themselves, bond with others, and enhance their creativity.

### **Jordan Marshall**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because learning music is important if you ever wanted to become a song writer or a composer. Music education is also learning about the past famous composers and song writers. It helps you with writing notes like bass clef and treble clef. It can help you with tone and there are only seven notes and they are A-G.

### **Abbey Punchard**

Occupation: 7th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a very important part of my life. When I am singing or listening to music, it offers me relaxation. I feel free, and not stressed out about things that are going on at home. Studies have shown that music also helps improve test scores and grades. My grades have gotten better and better because part of my day is taken up by music. Music also never fails to put smiles on faces. I'm always in a good mood when I leave the chorus room, and all of my friends are smiling. Also, when I am older, I to have a career in music. I want to write songs, play piano, and possibly teach a music class at a preschool. Reading and math aren't going to be super helpful when I go to college for music (even though I will obviously need them in life, too). I think that music education has absolutely impacted my life, and I want it to stay.

### **Miranda Elaine Schellman**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because it gives children a chance to be their selves and the way they are. people need music because it helps people show their real selves. I think we need music because it helps me relax, when I am stressed music takes me to a happy place and it helps me work and concentrate on a test or if I am trying to study. If we don't have music in the world it won't be creative or people won't think out side of the box. In my opinion if we don't have music people would be gloomy all of the time or won't be able to concentrate or be able to focus when they are trying to do something. If we have music in the future the world and our schools won't be a happy place so help me and other students try to save music and to save our world and the future.

### **Havannah Schellman**

Occupation: 7th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because it gives us kids a chance to try different things with singing and instruments. It gives us kids a break from working to sing and play the instrument we have chosen.

Sometimes I am stressed over a test or homework and when I sing it helps me relax and calm down.

Singing and playing an instrument helps you learn about music notes and beats of a note. Sometimes chorus has math or reading involved with it, like in theory lessons. Singing and playing a instrument also helps build up confidence and perfecting a piece. Music inspires people to do and say things, that can change the world. If you sing or play an instrument you can become famous and you will be someone's role model. So be inspired to sing or play an instrument and help save music for everyone.

### **Caitlyn Smith**

Occupation: 9th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways and it is very important to me that it stay in our schools. I moved in 6th grade to the school I am at now, I was kind of socially awkward and only had one friend for a little while here. But chorus helped me meet new people, and break out of my shell a little bit. I overcame my stage fright at our first concert, and it felt great! A lot of days I would wake up in the morning and really not want to go to school. Not because I didn't want to learn or do school work, just because of some students there. But I got to look forward to chorus where I didn't have to be with them and where I could let my feelings out when I sang. But that's not all it means to me, I've also learned so much about rhythms and beats and measures and notes. It's helped me out more recently when learning how to play instruments. So I already had a little bit of an idea on what I was doing. Besides chorus, they also offer strings and band at my school. I'm sure everything they learn and do in that class means a lot to them too. I'm a lot happier now than I used to be and I honestly think chorus is a big reason why. Now why should anyone not get that opportunity? That's why music education is important to me.

### **Mara Van Thiel**

Occupation: 8th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in a huge way. Before I joined chorus I had no clue how much I really enjoyed singing. By joining chorus learned the notes on the staff, how many beats each note gets, how to read music, and so much more. Chorus made me more confident, better at math, better at pouncing my words, and a better person. Through chorus I've even gained friends. If joining chorus had not been an option I would not be who I am today. Chorus helped me realize my dream of becoming a singer. I was always interested in singing. I constantly sang anywhere and everywhere, but chorus made me realize that there is something I can actually do with singing. I have gained so many skills in chorus, and I plan to use them when I grow up to make a living; Whether I'm going to be a world famous singer, or a first grade music teacher. Chorus in a huge part of my life! I constantly think about the next class, and I just can't wait to be there. During chorus I can forget about my problems and focus on singing. If chorus were to be cut my life would change drastically. I would not be the same person.

### **Zoe Weaver**

Occupation: 11th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is in one language. With that being said, there are many different languages out there in the world, some forgotten or dying, and some thriving. Teach people a new language and we'll still struggle to communicate; teach people to understand or read music and communicating would be easier. Music isn't just

a sound or a beat. It's a form of therapy for most or even a voice. I may not know everything there is about music, but I know enough and it has made me a better person. Where do we start? Music education. If we can teach music, then we go from there.

### **Lisa Werner**

Occupation: Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because it allows me to express myself in the way I want. Sports players and sports teams get to have the freedom to express themselves in their sport yet the school wants to take away our freedom. It just isn't right. There are days where I just want to break down, but when I get to chorus class all of my problems disappear and I go into a whole new world where everything is perfect and nothing can get to me. That's the effect singing has on me. It has made me more confident in myself.

### **Cloe**

Occupation: 8th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many different ways. I think every student should have some type of music class everyday. Music is proven in many studies that it helps your mood and makes your brain work more than other students who don't participate in any type of music class. Chorus is definitely my favorite class. We don't have to sit in a chair all period and be quiet. I enjoy learning new styles of music and being able to sing it. It helps my mood so much. If I'm having a bad day all I have to do is sing and I feel so much better. There are many reasons to why every school should offer a music class.

### **Isaac**

Occupation: 10th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education is very important to me because of its overall effects. My classes allow for me to escape the everyday problems that show up in regular academic courses. I feel as if by taking a musical education course I am able to learn, but also relax and enjoy some time with friends. Also we get to make something that other people enjoy thus helping to make the community a more cultural place. Without these classes children like myself will not like coming to school as much in my opinion, and future possible job options may not become as available. Or it could be harder to obtain a job in a field that you like because of your new found lack of experience. I do not want my future classes possibly in college to be hard, or for me to lose the ability that I have with these classes being available. With this I hope that the musical education will continue and students after me can have a fun and fulfilling high school and middle school experience.

### **Alexis Balog**

Occupation: Student

From: The Ellis School, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has affected the way I think and learn - all for the better. The patterns I see in music allow me to find patterns more easily in other parts of my learning: in math, in chemistry, in language. I have been blessed with wonderful music teachers all my life, so that the lessons of even the teachers I no longer see are still present in my mind. The breathing techniques I learned from one help the flow of my music. The chord progressions I learned from another help me to memorize my pieces. At any rate, every music teacher I have ever had has supported me fully, so I have been able to grow as a musician and a person. Music education has helped me to get through some of the hardest experiences of my life thus far. Whenever I feel overwhelmed by something, I know that I can play for a while and make sense of what is happening. My teachers have never let me down when I needed help getting back on my feet. Perhaps this is overly sentimental, but music education and the joy and skills that have come from it have been an absolutely

essential part of my life. Were it not for music education, I would be an entirely different person. And, most likely, not a good one.

### **Erin Lazar**

Occupation: Student

From: Thomas Jefferson HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In short, once I entered elementary school my parents divorced. Because of this, I felt lost and alone. And quite frankly, I was mad, upset, and had a hard time coping with shared custody. In second grade I started to take piano lessons. In fifth I started learning trombone. And in seventh grade I began vocal lessons. These three hobbies became my outlet, no sports to accompany. Practicing, learning, experiencing the limelight, and sharing the stage or field with my fellow band members were sensations that took my mind off of the adversities I have faced throughout my time as a student. Learning so many genres and styles of music over the years had me leaving the negative realities I have faced. I seem to enter a fantasy where I can be expressive and say how I feel without having to say any words at all just by pressing the black and white keys my fingers touched. Music has become my stress reliever and my best friend, my most difficult challenge and my favorite portion of my day. Because of this I would like to thank all of my music educators that have taught me not only how to play my instrument but to become a stronger, expressive individual. Without music education, my life would be flat, and I wouldn't be the person I am today.

### **Lindsay Buono**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper St. Clair HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a student at Upper St. Clair, I have been very fortunate to have such a wide variety of music opportunities throughout the years. Because of my school choir classes, school musical, PMEA festivals, etc., I have been able to build friendships that will last a lifetime. These friendships are special, as they allow me to connect with the people on a much deeper level, through music. I've learned that music has the ability to form bonds that are so much more than just a simple friendship. Besides developing these bonds, music education has taught me so much as a vocalist, which has always been a passion of mine. I have been able to learn techniques, breathing, theory, etc. that have truly made me a stronger musician. I feel so fortunate to live in an area that appreciates music enough to give me the opportunities that I have had as a singer and especially as a HSer. Because of my education, I have not only grown vocally, but also as a person.

### **Carly DeCock**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper St. Clair HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music in my life, to be honest, I'd be a really boring person. Music is a great way to express oneself and helps to be a well-rounded individual. I appreciate music to an extent that is unexplainable, and anyone who has the opportunity to be exposed to music is truly fortunate.

### **Devon Garcia**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper St. Clair HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I feel as if music allows me to connect with my family in ways that I wouldn't be able to if I wasn't involved with music. I do not live close to my father, sisters, or aunts and uncles, and when I see them once in a while, I am able to share a bond of music with them. As well as this, I know that I would not have met some of my best friends if I had not been involved in music, whether in marching band or in choir. I'd like to thank music for some of the wonderful connections that I have developed over the years.

### **Megan Jones**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper St. Clair HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has taught me how to stay dedicated, introduced me to wonderful new friends, and it helped me realize my true passion in life. Participating in festivals and recitals takes a lot of work, so practicing every day is necessary. In addition, I have met almost all of my friends in music classes, church choirs, musicals, or festivals. I imagine that I will keep those friendships for the rest of my life. Lastly, nothing makes me happier than music. When I began singing, I realized that I want it to be a part of my life forever. I am in the process of deciding which college I want to attend as a vocal performance letter. My goal is to become a professional singer.

### **Tom Maddigan**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper St. Clair HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is something that is extremely under-appreciated. I've always loved music; it comforts in times of need. Music is truly the only universal language. It can be used to communicate stories and ideas and can be created and manipulated in such a way that it can change lives. The fact that we can share this through education is astounding. Every single person likes some type of music. Why not delve into it and explore new sounds? Anyone can listen to music, but only some can create it; everyone has the ability and potential to create it. It's allowed me to pursue a career in something that I love to do. Music does not hurt anyone. It is only a tool used to express feelings. Music transcends time. Having the opportunity to share this to young minds inspires me. I want to show someone how much I love music, and inspire them to discover their love for music. I think it's important that every school has a music department and educates kids in the beauty of music.

### **Noah Manalo**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper St. Clair HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has been a huge part of my life since I was four years old, about the time when all other things that also impact my life began. I started taking piano lessons with my grandmother, who had studied in the Philippines and could sight read and play all of the classics. She was my first and biggest inspiration for music. I then started taking music classes in choir and took private lessons for guitar. It wasn't until sophomore year, however, that music became a core focus of my life. I joined the band, playing trumpet, saxophones, and trombone. I took voice lessons for the first time the summer after junior year, and I finally felt like a real musician. Music education has expanded my scope as a human. It has allowed me to develop more refined and broad tastes, not just in music, but also in the other arts. It has been the best outlet for me to express my emotions. It is when I sing that I have been so moved by a song that I will cry out of joy. It has broadened my spiritual life. I have joined my youth praise band and become more involved in the choir. Finally, it has provided me with an outlook on the future. I think, in addition to medicine and clergy, that music education may be a good way to make a career.

### **Cassidy Poerstel**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper St. Clair HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is the light in the darkness of the world. It brings everyone happiness and joy in the world. It brings smiles to everyone's faces on matter what the age is. Without music I would not be singing and I would be a very boring and depressed person.

### **Eva Schenker**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper St. Clair HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education, in short, has impacted my life through giving me a sense of emotional creativity. In life, there are infinite ways to express one's self. Although many people choose to express themselves through art or word, it was clear from when I was young that music was my path to expression. I have been taking piano lessons since I was 5, and I have been studying music theory since I was about 12. To me, music is a second nature; I'm not sure how I would survive without having music to fall back on. Although I was privileged enough to experience the benefits of music early in my life, there are many children in underprivileged schools who may not ever feel the joy in learning to sing or play an instrument. I believe music education is nothing but beneficial in modern school districts because it allows children to be themselves. To many children, music is almost like a sanctuary; a place to escape to after a bad day at school or a safe place when the world outside looks dangerous. There is infinite beauty in music: not only is there beauty in the expressive aspect of it, there is also beauty in the interpretation of music. It is imperative that students learn the joy in appreciating classical music so that the art form of music can survive through generations of children who are being taught to appreciate it less. I believe that life is all about perspective, and even though there are hundreds of schools who don't see the value in musical education, I am sure that a life without musical training would not be a sufficient life. I love music because it allows me to be myself. Without this sense of creativity and spiritual individuality, I would just be another faceless student in a nameless school. Music education, though it seems like a waste of time, money, and budget, builds more than musical education; it builds a sense of pride and belonging, and why should students be stripped of their identities just because they do not have the privilege of musical education? I believe musical education is nothing but beneficial to students like me, or students who are struggling to find an identity, because they can always find an themselves in music.

### **Jonathan Summers**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper St. Clair HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life more than most other things. It has helped me grow in many ares of my life, such as the arts, school, and even athletics. It has shaped me into the person I am today.

### **Izzy Tarcson**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper St. Clair HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life immensely. I used to play sports. Sports! Basketball, softball, swimming, track and field but nothing really made me happy. I wasn't the most athletic girl on the teams, I wasn't the fastest swimmer or had the best swing on the softball team. I didn't know what was wrong, my parents had me going to every practice, trainers, you name it but I was never good enough. I was sometimes even the reason my team lost the game. It started to bring me down, how I was never as good at pitching or running as the other girls. Then I participated in the 7th grade musical and everything changed. I finally found a safe haven where I can be who I want. The choir room became my home. The past 3 years with Ms Milovac as my director have been a dream. I've broken out of my shell and I have so many friends, I work so hard and I practice the music. I'm never the person who screws up now. Music education has also gotten me to go places I would have never been before. I've been to Washington DC, Disney World and this year I'm going to go to Boston for the first time. Music education has made me want to better myself. I've lost weight and become much healthier because choir is what makes me happy. I'm never going to give up singing, and I'm never going to forget about the time I've spent in the choir room. Music education has changed my life and turned me into the person I always wanted to be. If the 6th grade version of me, sitting on the softball field picking grass out of the ground, could see who I've become, she would be extremely happy.

### **Dr. Kenneth Jerich**

Occupation: Professor Emeritus

From: Urbana, Illinois, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

An outstanding public school district music program in PA provided me with the foundation to pursue a life time career of over forty years in music and education. As a life long teacher, professor and researcher of music and education, numerous academic studies confirm the core and absolute curriculum value and contribution of school music programs for all students nationally in P-20 Educaion.

### **Margaret Caballero**

Occupation: Student

From: Winchester Thurston School, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has transformed my work ethic. Now, when I reach a difficult point in my work whether it be music or schoolwork I try and try and try again until I am satisfied with the outcome. Also, music has taught me that mistakes are not the worst thing in the world. I learn from and use them to help myself improve.

### **Maria Brucker**

Occupation: Student

From: Woodland Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to make friends with similar interests or priorities. Having a band class during the school day is the greatest way to relieve stress for me. I have also met many amazing people from other school districts through the PMEA festivals, that I never would have met otherwise. As a senior, I cannot imagine my HS career without music. The educators themselves are an incredible resource. They have always been there to help me, even if it was a great inconvenience to them, and they have greatly influenced who I am today. I am convinced that without having had music education in my life, I would be lost in school, and even life. I never would have made the friends I did, which brought me to the other activities I am involved in, and those caused new friendships to blossom and grow. I am so grateful for the opportunities I have had to showcase my talents. There are few feelings that can compare to performing a solo perfectly at your school concert. Many people take music classes for the wrong reasons, such as getting an "easy A." My director does not give out 100%'s often, and, somehow, I have put in enough effort and impressed him so much, that I have had straight 100%'s since the end of freshman year. In fourth grade I began playing the clarinet, completely against my will. My mother forced me; I cried that day. I have never been so thankful for being forced into something, because it has become a major part of how others see me, how I see myself, and even how I see others. In my freshman year, my director encouraged me to learn oboe. It has been an incredible, but painful, experience. As a junior, one marching band instructor allowed me to use his English horn for our musical. My director had challenged me to play oboe and English horn for a very difficult Sondheim show. So much hard work and dedication are involved with becoming a decent musician, let alone a good one. Both of these double reed instruments were very difficult for me. I needed so much help from my band instructor, and he met with me in his own free time, without any complaint. So when I made it to PMEA All-State Concert Band, he was so proud, and that is another feeling that is impossible to describe. I do not intend to impress others with my musical capabilities; I simply want to make proud those who have pushed me to be the best I can be. I am proud to be a product of their work, and of music education.

### **Kenneth Pollick**

Occupation: Student

From: Woodland Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I do not think it is possible to explain in 500 words or even an infinite number of words how music has impacted my life. I have met so many people, have marched at so many competitions, played with my friends in their Pop Band, played, now, in the PMEA District Band, and going to play in the Region Band. I truly love the experiences I have been through because of music. I cannot explain the joy it has brought to my life.

### **Leah PrestoGeorge**

Occupation: Student

From: Woodland Hills HS, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life for as long as I can remember. My mother is a voice teacher and I have been taking lessons since I was seven years old. As a junior, I am thinking about my future. I am planning on majoring in musical theater and would love to do a minor in music education. It is very important to me that I get an education in college that will help me to succeed in life and in music. I have learned so much over the years and plan on learning as much as I possibly can. I have also been so fortunate to go to a HS where music is greatly appreciated and respected by the entire district. My directors here are very well educated in music and continue to share their wealth of knowledge with me everyday that I will use for years to come. I feel that people who want to and do study music are more aware of life, more focused, and overall happier because they are doing what they love to do and are passionate about it. Music has always been a part of my life and I am hoping to keep it in my life until I die.

### **Hunter Gilley**

Occupation: 6th Grade Student

From: , Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is very important to me because if there was no music life would be boring.

### **Sam Woloszyk**

Occupation: Student

From: Gibsonia, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music affects every aspect of my life. It gives me the freedom to be whomever I wish to be. In school my music education is priceless to me. When I walk through the door to chorus everyday, I leave all of my stress and worries about everything else at the door. It is the one class that I can simply enjoy myself in and not freak out about tests and homework or about giving an incorrect answer to a question. Music has also given me an opportunity to make friends outside of my normal group of friends. I would have most likely never talked to some of the kids in my chorus class simply because they are older than I am; however, chorus gives me the chance to and I am definitely glad I had that chance. My music education is something that I will continue to use for the rest of my life, and without it my life would just not be the same.

### **Alexander Rowden**

Occupation: Student

From: Pittsburgh, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has provided me a safe haven and a light when I was lost in the metaphorical darkness and disorder of my other classes. It has been a firm ground to stand on. PMEA festivals were always the highlight of my year and helped me to strive for success in a friendly manner. Music has instilled in me the importance of using preparatory work (eg. studying and practicing/rehearsing) in order to truly learn and get better. Without music education I would not be in the college I am today, would not have been in the choirs I have been graced with, and would not be as emotionally put together. Music is my own therapy and without the music educators in my life it would not have developed as it has I would be a worse person for it. I would like to end this with a thank you to mine and to all music educators... You guys change lives, maybe not in the normal way, but think about your connection to music. You help others develop that feeling in others. You make music happen and you pass it on. Thank you for all of your hard work.

## **Cory A. Neville**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Pittsburgh (Moon Township), Allegheny County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Every good opportunity that has presented itself in my life has come from music. As a child, I was good in school, but good grades didn't make me feel accomplished. I didn't experience "accomplishment" until I started taking piano lessons. I was painfully shy as a child--even though I excelled at the piano, I hid it from everyone. I didn't want to draw attention to myself and didn't want to make myself stand out, though deep down, I always hoped for positive attention. I got this attention from my music teachers. My elementary music teacher gave me many opportunities to excel in class and was the first to call my parents to say "you need to get your son piano lessons." My middle school music teacher urged me to perform in front of the class. It literally took her months of persuasion before I could muster the courage to play piano for an audience. The reaction I received from my peers was life-changing. For the first time I was somebody: recognized for being something other than the shy, smart kid. The school chorus and band teachers became aware of my musical abilities and made it their mission to get me more involved. By the time I graduated high school, the choir director had me accompanying three school choirs and two school musicals. I became a better musician, a team-player, and built my confidence. The band director taught me percussion. I took to it immediately and joined the high school band. I became drumline captain, then later drum major in my senior year--all the while having to be prodded by my music teachers to take these opportunities that I didn't think I was ready for or worthy of. By my senior year of high school, I was attending PMEA festivals, meeting other students like me, attending summer camps, taking music theory classes and preparing for college auditions to major in....music. Being the drum major changed everything for me: it helped me realize that I needed to become a music teacher--I wanted to lead others through the same journey that I'd benefited from. In music school, bolstered by years of good experiences and encouragement, I was brave for the first time in my life. I took every opportunity at my disposal. The entire time, I was not only improving musically, but socially. I met my future wife (a violinist) because she needed an accompanist for a recital in our junior year. When we graduated, we got married, got jobs and started "real life." While some people our age are just getting started, or wondering what to do with themselves--wandering aimlessly--we've been married for 7 years, have a beautiful child, a house and gratifying, meaningful work as music educators. It's not lost on us that we owe all this to our music education. The progression of how music education has shaped my life is the progression that, as a music teacher, I know is possible with every student who walks through my doors.

## **Molly Begeman**

Occupation: 7th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important to me because it helps me a lot in everyday life challenges. Music helps me focus on other classes. Music also helps me in math by adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing notes and rests. With that I can get more complicated problems done faster. Music is also very relaxing and helps you let go of your feelings. If you feel frustrated you can sing or play louder or try your best to let the frustration out. Music also helps watch your health if you are doing drugs or not very healthy you can not play or sing as well or at all. Another reason why my music education is so important to me is because of the teacher cuts. So many of the music and arts teachers either go cut half-time or cut completely. So many of the art and music teachers work very hard at all of the classes they do and get paid less money than they deserve. The teachers that got cut in half work extra hard to prove that the music and arts program should stay alive and keep on going and go back to full time. All of the art and music teachers are so great and their students love them by what they teach and how they teach it. The music and arts teachers in my school are so much fun and always helpful. Sometimes the arts teachers help me more than my other teachers and help me understand what I am learning a little bit easier to comprehend. Music is so important to me and I think that it should stay alive.

### **Gabrielle Cunningham**

Occupation: 11th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is an escape. It relieves stress from my daily activities but also enhances comprehension and understanding. Music helps me express my emotions in various ways and without it I wouldn't have composure and strength to continue through my day. Many schools are cutting the music and art departments. Why take away something that makes us individuals? Why take away something we love and that we can prosper in?

### **Kylee Osselborn**

Occupation: 12th Grade Student

From: Tarentum, Allegheny County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a joyful break from a long hard day at school. You get to come in and sing out your emotions. Its like a stress ball except more fun. During the day you're stuck in a room writing, and it is extremely boring, music education has put fun back into my day, and it gives me something to look forward to. It's a way for me to express my feelings and emotions in a good way letting me live my life in a more positive way.

## **ARMSTRONG COUNTY**

### **Rachel Sproat**

Occupation: Student

From: Apollo-Ridge HS, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education my life in numerous ways. I have always wanted to play the flute and I am excited to have several opportunities for improvement at PMEA. Band class allows to me to unwind and enjoy creating music.

### **Troy Dinga**

Occupation: Student (Sophomore at Allegheny College)

From: Ford City, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always given me an outlet that let me express myself in ways few languages would ever have been able to. It taught me just how far dedication, practice, and diligence could take you, and just how much deeper you can look into your art if you simply take the time to understand what it is that you're creating for others. When working with music, there's never a point of perfection; there's always more to learn, and there's always an improvement to be made. These are incredibly important lessons to take to heart, no matter what your passion may be. You're also exposed to incredible variety of different music styles, languages, and cultural tales and ideals. A wider perspective is something that is practically unavoidable, so long as you have the openness of mind needed to consider gaining it. Aside from all the technical benefits I've gained from my music experience, and of course all the times I've enjoyed so dearly, the greatest gift being involved with music can give you is a family all your own. Choirs, Bands, Marching Band, Orchestras, Ensembles, Show Choirs, and all of the rest of your preferred designations all bring together completely different people who all have at least one thing in common. This one piece of common ground can build up a friendship, a trust, and a bond that you just don't find very often in today's world. You have a sense that you belong, purely because you all know that you're there for a very specific reason, and that is to help one another make something beautiful. That's what I realized after being in a Chorus for my high school for four or five straight years (continuing on to keep doing Choir every year since this revelation), and its one of the countless reasons that I will never stop trying to practice music, using my voice for this talent that I've been given, and appreciating the skill, dedication, humility, and camaraderie that such pursuits will always require.

### **Stephanie Bragiel**

Occupation: Student

From: Freeport Area Senior HS, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It lets me get away from the bad things of everyday life, and it kind of lets me have a place where I can fit in.

### **Elizabeth Cramer**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Kittanning, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My Catholic High School offered Chorus, Music Appreciation and private lessons during the school day and Orchestra after school. Band experience was offered through our "brother" school one night a week! All of these opportunities enriched my high school years and paved the way to a music education degree and teaching career in Maryland and Pennsylvania. I'd say music education gave me a future of my own and, I still share the joys of music making and learning about all types of music with students, friends, family and the greater community when I perform with community groups, school shows and worship services. Music Education touches everyone's life in untold ways. And, 99% of the time it is wonderful!

### **Denise Gamble**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Kittanning, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a fifth grade student, the band director asked me to play the French horn. Although this was not my first choice, I said "o.k." Today, I am so happy that I did not play my first instrument choice, the flute, because I fell in love with the French horn and knew from that day forward that I wanted to share my love of this musical experience. It has made me a more confident individual. It has given me opportunities to travel and to meet people from all parts of our world. It has given me a career as performer, educator and advocate. It has allowed me many opportunities to collaborate with professional musicians that not only benefit my own life, but that I can and have shared with my students and friends. Music is a way of life. Do not remove this experience for others. Keep music in our schools and in our communities. Professionals rely on it, semi-professionals enhance their lives with it, many make it a hobby and others simply share the joy of music as part of their everyday lives. The world would be silent without it.

### **Cassie Clouse**

Occupation: Student

From: Kittanning Senior HS, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in ways that are hard to write on paper. I can remember the first day I ever got my instrument out of its case and attempted to play a quick tune before ever having any lessons. As soon as my lessons began, I was hooked. It wasn't until my HS years with my favorite director of all time that I really began to take music seriously. I never knew how much simple chords could move you and bring you to tears with absolutely nothing sad in your mind. This feeling that I will never forget could only have been possible with music education. Without it, I would never really even know my abilities with my musical talent. But other than just being good at playing my instrument, music education has helped me to mature and grow in turn making my essential classes much more easy to focus on. I know that being in band and playing an instrument has made my focus so much greater helping my grades to become higher. I can't imagine ever going through HS without it.

### **Sarah Dunn**

Occupation: Student

From: Kittanning Senior HS, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life significantly. Music has taught me to work hard to be successful and to never settle for mediocrity. Through music, I have made some of my best friends with the common interest of expressing ourselves. Music is my passion.

### **Kendra Hale**

Occupation: Student

From: Kittanning Senior HS, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me in and of itself as well as through those who advocate it and spread it to those willing to learn. My band directors throughout the years, especially, have helped me to develop and grow as a student, musician, and a person. The discipline that comes with playing an instrument can be applied to academics and everyday life and I appreciate that more than anything. Music allows me to achieve in all aspects of my life and without music education, I wouldn't be where I am today.

### **Elizabeth Murray**

Occupation: Student

From: Kittanning Senior HS, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life greatly whether it be by making new friends, learning new instruments, or being able to express myself in a more befitting way. I've made another home in the band room at my school. This band has helped me through so much and I'm glad to have been with most of them for the four years of my HS career. It has also inspired me to continue to my music career and focus on becoming a music education major on saxophone. I just feel like helping people learn music will help better not only their lives, but mine.

### **Ashley Zolocsik**

Occupation: Student

From: Kittanning Senior HS, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been a large impact on my life ever since I was in fourth grade. In band I have met lifelong friends and people that I can relate to. Music education has also helped me achieve academically. Without music I would be lost in life.

### **Sarah Williams**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: New Bethlehem, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

For as long as I can remember, I have been making music. Music is my life! I eat, sleep, and breathe music. When I was in 4th grade, I was given the option to join band. I had already decided that I was going to play trumpet. The first time I played my trumpet, I was very excited! It was at that moment that I knew I was going to be doing this for the rest of my life. That is when I decided that I was going to become a music teacher. There is very little else that is as important or has made a bigger difference in my life. I grew up in music education. I am the person I am today because I was involved in band. Music Education is my career, music education is my lively hood, music education is my passion.

### **Sarah Herrington**

Occupation: Student

From: Yatesboro, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It is safe for me to say that if I wasn't involved in music education I wouldn't be who I am today. Music has made me a better person. I was in band my every single one of my jr. high and high school years. I was in marching band for 4 years. It taught me values such as teamwork, being on time, perseverance, and the meaning of family because for me the people I was in band with were my family. I learned how to express myself through something I love. Music education is one of the most important things to have because if it gets taken away, how will music lovers express themselves. It would be highly wrong for these programs to get cut things such as sports will continue to be funded. I can say that music was always there for me. When I had a bad day that was the one class that could make it all better. Music education is vitally important to any community. If there is limited to no music education then there will be many musicians that will be unable to learn and provide music for our enjoyment. So I make my point by saying if music education is lost, then life will be a lot less enjoyable for many.

### **Morgan Ellenberger**

Occupation: College Student

From: Apollo, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I didn't have many friends in school. So participating in the choir and PMEA events was an outlet for me. I love music, and I love singing. I made friends through these events, and I felt like I finally had something in common with other people. If not for participating in the choir and PMEA events, I might have just been that weird dorky girl that everyone makes fun of. But, because I got the chance to participate, I was the outgoing girl who go up on stage and shared my talents with people. Choir not only helped me make friends and connections, it helped me get through those years of adolescence that can be terrifying and awkward. I cannot stress enough how important music programs are. Taking them away is like taking away a piece of a person. If someone loves to make music, what better place to do that than within our education system?

### **Leslie Lightner**

Occupation: Biology Teacher

From: Dayton, Armstrong County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Throughout my elementary and high school education, I was an active member in both chorus and band, the percussion section. I even assisted with playing piano in elementary and middle school chorus. I attended county band in elementary school and county chorus in high school. Daily interactions in music classes and especially attending the county events are some of my fondest and most vivid memories from my elementary and high school years. Though I was an excellent student academically, these experiences provided an awesome break from my stressful academic environment. To this day, listening to music calms me. And, when I attend a sporting event or parade with a marching band, I cannot help but reminisce about my own experiences and it always makes me smile. I cannot imagine my life without those unique experiences!

## **BEAVER COUNTY**

### **David H. Bufalini**

Occupation: Recruiter/Human resources

From: Aliquippa, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has enriched my life in so many ways. I do not make my living as a musician but I have been performing as a trumpet player since high school, over 35 years. I perform in a world class Blues band and my experience in Jr high and high school as a band member and my overall music education has helped lead me where I am today. I became good friends with my Jr high and high school band directors because they cared about

us. Music education is VERY important and I feel it needs to be supported to retain or attract new students. Not everyone is going to compete in sports and these creative students need an outlet. Thank you!

### **Emily**

Occupation: Cashier

From: Ambridge, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is something that is extremely important to me. Getting taught music is the highlight of my day. It has impacted me so much to the point that I want to major in music ed in college. Music is something that completely moves me, and without music education I would never know about my passion.

### **Rashaud Olson**

Occupation: 8th Grade Language Arts Teacher

From: Beaver, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my educational career for as long as I can remember. It was also one of my favorite subjects. It horrifies me to see how much music programs are reduced in school districts across our state. As a child, music class was one of the few ways I was able to creatively express myself in school. From learning to play a recorder and make music, to eventually performing in both the middle school and high school, music education has been a major source of enrichment to my education. It's already been proven that students that consistently stay with music performance increase their math scores, but I also feel that students gain a richer experience of life by not just listening to, but performing music. The concentration skills gained alone are an invaluable supplement to regular education classes. With the dissolution of music programs, and the lack of participation by our current generation, I've watched students' concentration skills drop significantly in reading class, along with their imaginations. The music they listen to, or rather, the music they can tolerate, is so simplified and unsophisticated, that it affects how they experience the rest of the world. Today, students would rather consume than create. They would rather be told than to imagine. I feel the loss of music programs are a major part of that loss of creativity and autonomy. Our kids spend most of their day regurgitating information, instead of applying their brilliance in performance art. They do not express themselves; they merely repeat what they are told. We need our music programs in schools.

### **Nikki P**

Occupation:

From: Beaver, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has made me the person I am today. It has allowed me to express myself and not be afraid to be who I am. I went to college for Music Education and ended up keeping the minor in music because Clarion had decided to put the program on suspension. I am proud that I was so involved in the arts growing up. I wish that everyone could experience the arts like I have because I would not trade my personal experiences for anything. I loved my experiences in the ensembles, classes, and multiple festivals during my school years. Joining so many different music opportunities was the best decision I have made in my life to this point and will always be in my heart. Support the arts. Support music education!

### **Hillary**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Beaver, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I didn't always feel included in school. I was a good student and did well in my class but didn't feel included with other students. I feel like music is a way to connect everyone. It's a topic to discuss and a language to learn and a way to learn traits needed for a successful life. My music teachers inspired me to always reach higher. In high school I went to regional band and orchestra and made friends there that changed my outlook in life. When we all played together it was a moment we all belonged in. I also learned traits such as motivation, responsibility, punctuality, and how to push myself to be better. As I went through high school my

musical experiences, I also gained confidence and self esteem that I was always missing. I even became drum major my senior year showing more confidence than I ever had before. Music education gives students a way to develop character traits necessary in the real world and give us all a creative way to express ourselves. These are the traits we seem to be missing from younger students and music and the arts will get kids back on the right track for success.

### **John Paul Grabowski**

Occupation: Student

From: Beaver Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been the only constant thing in my life after many different moves. Musical education has allowed me to express myself, and come out of my comfort zone. It has allowed me to share my musical talents with others and got me into many different things such as Tri-M, musical, chamber choir, and Choir Festivals.

### **Sabrina Knapp**

Occupation: Student

From: Beaver Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Being involved in music education has impacted my life because it has made me more confident as an individual. Music gives me a way to express myself and show my gifts. Before music education, I did not know what I was good at, and my life seemed meaningless. Now, I have the joy of doing something that I love in my daily life, and additionally being rewarded with many things such as festivals and extra curricular activities (such as show choir). Music has become my passion by not only being a hobby, but a lifestyle. It is something that I work on daily. Music requires focus. It is something that I am willing to focus on and when you are focused, you become passionate, and when you are passionate, you can succeed, and when you succeed, you become confident. Music education has opened doors of joy in my life that would have never been found. Music is who I am. It's what I love. It makes me strong. Music is my confidence.

### **Olivia Larson**

Occupation: Student

From: Beaver Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in a big way by allowing me to have a creative outlet to escape everyday stress.

### **Ryan Maloney**

Occupation: Student

From: Beaver Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was young, I always believed that music was not really important to me. I had tried a few instruments, been through a few private teachers, but nothing ever really connected with me. My brother was always musically inclined, playing the cello and piano from an early age, but I never thought I would share his interests. I proved myself wrong when I decided I wanted to try to play the drums. At first I got private lessons, and immediately enjoyed it. I joined my middle school's band as a percussionist, and began to truly understand what it felt like to be the heartbeat of an ensemble when playing those rhythms. However, I ended up moving on to playing the drum set, and stepped away from the traditional band percussionist role. It was a new feeling, but with the help of my private teacher and the band director at my school in the jazz band, I picked it up quickly and loved it. It was the first time I felt as though I had something with which I could express myself. When I moved into HS, a friend pushed me to join the school's musical. I had never considered it before, and in all honesty I thought that school singing and chorus was lame. However, I decided to give it a try, and I was shocked by the fact that it was the most fun I had all freshman year. Performing on the stage was fun, and I found that I had more of a natural inclination for singing than I realized. This experience was also my first time really meeting my choir director, Susan Metelsky. After

musical, she encouraged me to join the school's show choir the following year. When I did, I found I enjoyed that almost as much as the musical. I was becoming more confident in my singing, so my junior year I finally joined my school's concert choir. My only regret now is that I did not join sooner. The concert choir has been such a helpful experience for me, not only helping me become more musically articulate and sharpening my skills, but by showing me that sometimes the biggest help can come from the most unexpected places. Three years ago I never thought I would actually enjoy singing in a choir. Now, I could not imagine HS life without it. I have met so many of my best friends through all of these experiences, and I have learned more about myself than I ever thought possible in this setting. Throughout my life I have been surrounded by music, but in the last few years, music education has literally helped to show me who I am and who I want to be. It has helped me not only become better musically, but I truly believed it has helped me become a better and more confident person. That is something for which I can never be thankful enough.

### **Meghan McLaughlin**

Occupation: Student

From: Beaver Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education gives me something to push myself and grow. I always have something to practice and that gives me structure to work towards achieving great things. I love going to band class and making music with an amazing director who teaches me so much, music and non-music related.

### **Kathryn Sewall**

Occupation: Student

From: Beaver Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has taught me the value of being responsible team member and a strong leader. I have become more involved musically and otherwise in my community because of music education.

### **C.J. Shroads**

Occupation: Student

From: Beaver Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in a number of ways. One of those ways is that it has taught me a completely new subject and way of expressing myself. By learning my instrument, the string bass, I have learned how to express myself through the music in which I play. Not only that, music education has given me an opportunity to meet many new people and cultures and learn about the people and places. I now know more about the different types of music in the world than I have ever in my life. With that, music has helped me with my education in my other classes, like math and reading, even my history knowledge has improved. Math has been improved because, obviously I'm counting all the time, reading because I'm now able to look at something for the first time and understand, and history because when learning the music, we also learn the history behind the piece. My "life skills" have also been improved as well because music education forces me to work with people I otherwise would not have known. With that, music education has allowed me to be with a group of people that I have come to enjoy being around. Almost like a second family because I'm with these people everyday, doing the same thing that they all do and having fun with them in the process. Finally, and most importantly, music education has given me the opportunity to do something that I have come to love, playing my bass. It has given me an option for the future because, I think I'm pretty good. Growing up, I never liked music that much. But now, music education has "opened my eyes" and let me see a brand new world that is music.

### **Haley Weeks**

Occupation: Student

From: Beaver Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life because it has allowed me to learn a new skill. It has taught me different skills not just in music but skill that will benefit me through my whole life. As I further my education in music, I have learned patience and and good practicing skills.

### **Jennifer Newman**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Beaver Falls, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. My parents always sang and played instruments growing up, but they were self-taught musicians. The strong music education I received in my public school helped me to go beyond learning by rote, and actually begin to read the language of music. When Mr. Spagnoli (my music teacher) began to actually teach me how to read notes, rhythms, and play an instrument - my world was entirely opened up! I had found my niche. I came from a family of five children, and had the blessing of being the middle child. My music teachers helped me to discover my musical abilities, and I was able to stand out in my family! Upon entering high school, I had the privilege of representing my school at various chorus festivals at the local, district, regional, and state levels. When I achieved the State Level for the first time as a Sophomore, I was automatically invited to participate at the All-Eastern Chorus Festival to be held at Eastman in Rochester, NY. This was truly the culmination of my learning at these festivals. The emotional experience alone of performing at the Eastman Theatre with 360 of the most talented students in the Easter United States, was one that is hard to describe in words. The guest conductor was a reknowned conductor and composer from California. She not only taught us the notes, but also had an amazing ability to teach us how to feel the music as we performed it so the audience would also have an emotional experience through our music. This gift of truly performing music, is one I so want to pass to my own students. The music education I continued to receive at the high school level, helped me to develop into the music educator that I am today. I am so blessed to be able to share my passion and love with my own students now. This is a gift which I do not take lightly. We as teachers have the ability to influence our students in the most positive way! A kind word, action, or encouragement can make a student's day. Teaching music to my students is not just about notes and rhythms, but about being human. Music has the ability to help people to connect to each other (and the world) in ways that nothing else can. With music, the most immense joys, the deepest love, the most sadness ever felt can be put into a song and finally felt and understood in a way that words can never truly express. With music, people can come together in any language or nation and perform a song that expresses their deepest patriotism. My hope is that everyone will come to realize how important music is in our world, and that everyone will see clearly that we are all impacted by music in a positive way. I cannot way enough about the wonderful impact it has on me.

### **LaMar Lester**

Occupation: Student

From: Big Beaver Falls Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Since I was about 5 years old, I have been impacted by music in general with dancing and singing, but it wasn't until I got into school that I was truly able to build on the foundation that I started with my family. Over the years, I have learned so much with singing and I have really enjoyed the different learning experiences through HS with things like county and district chorus and even being able to perform with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Throughout the years, I have really keyed in on my singing, learning the best techniques of singing, and trying to lean basics to music theory in whatever classes were available to me. My love of music and the impact that music education has had on me has driven and challenged me to do things that I never thought I would want to do or could do. Without the things I have learned through my chorus director, I'm sure I wouldn't have been able to make it as far as I have this year with making the PMEA

District 5 Honors Choir and now making it into Regional Choir. My hope is that throughout my life I would be able to further my education in music and someday be able to make a living from the music I produce.

### **Aleena Milinski**

Occupation: Student

From: Blackhawk HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has allowed me to meet new people, create discipline in my life and develop a lifestyle I enjoy.

### **Noah Schiemer**

Occupation: Student

From: Blackhawk HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has provided me with the opportunity to meet people I normally would not be able to meet.

### **Alex Bowman**

Occupation: Student

From: Central Valley HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had one of the biggest impacts on my life. From being one of my favorite hobbies to meeting many people, it has changed my life. Music tells stories and pursuing music has led me to experience those stories in a whole new way. It will be something I pursue in the future. Maybe I will join a chorus or even pursue it as my career. It has had such a great impact. I can say music will be in my life forever. I have also met so many great people from music. Many mentors I have met through music have become people I look up to. Also it is hard to find people in music that you will not get along with. Everyone you meet along the way has a great heart and is very nice. I have never had a part experience along my musical path and I do not suspect one to come. It has made a great positive impact and I cannot wait to experience what is still yet to come.

### **Nathan James**

Occupation: Student

From: Freedom Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been in my academic day. It certainly is one of my greatest joys and bright spots in my school day. Having music as an option in school has driven me to do well in all areas. Many musical techniques have directly impacted my reading and math skills. Keep music education in schools

### **Kameron Mayhue**

Occupation: Student

From: Freedom Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been in my academic day. It certainly is one of my greatest joys and bright spots in my school day. Having music as an option in school has driven me to do well in all areas. Many musical techniques have directly impacted my reading and math skills. Keep music education in schools

### **Rob Raso**

Occupation: Student

From: Freedom Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been in my academic day. It certainly is one of my greatest joys and bright spots in my school day. Having music as an option in school has driven me to do well in all areas. Many musical techniques have directly impacted my reading and math skills. Keep music education in schools.

### **Kristy Sturgess**

Occupation: Student

From: Freedom Area HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been in my academic day. It certainly is one of my greatest joys and bright spots in my school day. Having music as an option in school has driven me to do well in all areas. Many musical techniques have directly impacted my reading and math skills. Keep music education in schools

### **Jared Griffin**

Occupation: Student

From: Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in a great way. I plan on majoring in music in college and eventually becoming a professional musician. The education I am receiving at the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School has changed my life. I feel like I have gained the knowledge necessary to become a college music major and succeed at the professional level. My participation in PMEA sponsored festivals has enhanced my education, affording me the opportunity to rehearse and perform with students my age from other schools.

### **Taner Hall**

Occupation: Student

From: Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in a great way. I plan on majoring in music in college and eventually becoming a professional musician. The education I am receiving at the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School has changed my life. I feel like I have gained the knowledge necessary to become a college music major and succeed at the professional level. My participation in PMEA sponsored festivals has enhanced my education, affording me the opportunity to rehearse and perform with students my age from other schools.

### **Lori Luurtsema**

Occupation: Retired High School Band Director

From: North Sewickley Twp (Beaver Falls, PA), Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My entire elementary, Jr. High and High School days were always filled with many opportunities and I took advantage of all of them. Music brought joy, comfort and fellowship with my fellow students. At home, my father had one desire and that was for me to learn to play the instrument he so desired to learn himself but growing up as a child of a poor immigrant family, they're wasn't any money left a piano or piano lessons. He would sit in the living room and listen to me practice (in between working his 2 jobs) and encouraged me when I was discouraged. He even took piano lessons when I was young from the same teacher I was studying with. He always enjoyed listening to me especially as his end drew near (at 93) when he was living with me. The more I involved myself in music into High School, the more I knew that I wanted to bring this kind of joy and passion to other students. By the time I was a sophomore in High School, I knew what my career was to be. I taught all levels and in a variety of positions. I saw my calling as not only a way to have students learn about the history and technicalities of music but mostly about the passion and the life long skills and friends that would become theirs through music which transcends all situations. My students would tell me that no matter how the rest of their day went, they knew they would be ending their day doing what

they loved most - even though it usually required more work and energy than the rest of their day's activities. They didn't mind the very long hours especially at certain times of the year. I cannot not imagine the void that would have been in me, had I not had the opportunity as a student to shape me. I cannot imagine the lack of comfort, friendship and inspiration for either myself or for my students who of course became part of me. That's what happens with when students are involved in a very active music program. They think of themselves as an integral part of a "family" that continues long past high school. That bond of music introduces them to other "family" members even in their adult years. Many of my students have gone on to pursue careers in the music field as well as in music education. To make sure they knew what they were getting into, I would usually ask them why they wanted to pursue such a demanding profession and they would always respond that it was the part of their day that helped them the most, taught them the most and gave them the skills they would need for the rest of their life. But most importantly, that they wanted to share this passion with everyone they came in contact with. Music is what makes life worthwhile. Keep the passion alive!

### **Anonymous**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Pittsburgh, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was abused as a child and as a result felt inferior and unimportant. I had musical talent and was able to use the music classes as an expression of my pain and joy. I found healing in the songs and in my association with other musicians. Teachers and students were patient as well as encouraging as I vocalized my way through a rocky childhood. I learned how to redirect my troubles into constructive outlets such as composition, lessons and performance. Through these positive means of expression, I have been able to come to love myself and seek after others in need of being uplifted and encouraged. Life is difficult for all and music is one powerful tool that assists us in becoming whole.

### **Austin Cornelius**

Occupation: Student

From: Western Beaver HS, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life, in the same way that the sun affects our planet. Ever since I have begun to really study music, it has brought light, warmth, life, energy, and a center to it, My grades improved, as did my understanding of my classes, my ability to focus, to learn, and to comprehend new things. My directors, along with many other music teachers have inspired me to be a better person, and not just better my musicality, but myself as a whole. They have inspired me to be a better person, brought out the best in me, made me a leader, filled me with confidence and pride, and expanded upon my horizons and exploring life. Now, because of them, music, as the Earth revolves around the Sun, music is involved in everything I do, but not just the music, the dedication and morales taught to me through my instructors. It has made me greater than I could ever be without it. It gets me through the rough times, and amplifies the beauty in the good ones. Through my music educators, I have had the opportunities to give back and make a real difference in my community. I have made unbelievable bonds and made friends through life due to the programs that are offered to me in our music department. Music brings out the beauty and potential in us that we don't even see in ourselves, and I have seen it make me grow, as I have seen it grow me and my peers. It is necessary for life.

### **Carly Belich**

Occupation: Student

From: Aliquippa, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life greatly. From the moment I stepped into music class in elementary school, I knew that music would always be in my life some way or some how. I went to junior high with the love for music and decided to play the alto saxophone. I loved it and stuck with it. Now currently I am a freshman and

I have made the decision to major in music and wish to teach it. I know that people think the arts, especially music are not important compared to reading and history and all the mandatory classes, but I believe that it is just as important because without music so many talented musicians would've have never had that chance to make a difference in culture. Music is a huge part of culture and I wish that people could a appreciate it more because without it life would B flat.

### **Kristina Graham**

Occupation: Orchestra Director & String Specialist

From: Beaver, Beaver County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been my world since I was a small girl. I remember listening to my sisters practice Bach inventions on our baby grand piano while our Sheltie dog sat underneath and howled along with them. On Sunday morning, my mother cooked a big breakfast while Handel's Messiah was on the stereo and the beautiful morning light flooded our living room through big, lead-paned windows. Everyone played an instrument and everyone practiced. With 4 kids in the house, it probably sounded like a cacophony of scales, etudes, and Suzuki repertoire during certain hours of the day. Learning to play the violin was hard. Sometimes it was really hard. In fact, it was the most challenging part of my day for years. Occasionally my private lessons went so badly my dad felt sorry for me and took me to Wendy's for a Frosty afterwards. The incredible thing is, I never seriously thought about quitting. I had experienced those moments of joy, sacrifice, accomplishment, and literally communed with my instrument, the sounds, the music, my partners and actually created real, living, breathing music. Now I am a music teacher. I work day after day to open those doors for my students. To hand them the keys to hard work, joy, sacrifice, challenge, and exquisite moments of music making is a privilege and a calling. It means I have to bring out the best in them, give them courage to struggle, persevere and eventually experience their own glorious moments. I don't make a lot of money; I make a difference.

## **BEDFORD COUNTY**

### **Jacob Black**

Occupation: Student

From: Bedford HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life greatly. I love playing music and learning it. It is my favorite thing to do in life.

### **Rosalind Clark**

Occupation: Student

From: Bedford HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in more ways than one. It has taught me passion, self discipline, how to express myself in ways which words cannot, how to feel, and has given me something to look forward to every single day. I wish I could explain how music really makes me feel in such a way that you can't help but feel it too. Every musician has their own unique description of how it makes them feel. To me, it is like how children get excited on Christmas morning hoping Santa has come. To me, it is the first flower that blooms in the spring, such a beautiful thing full of life and promise. To me, it is the cold sip of water after a long day in the sun. There is so much emotion that can be packed into even the shortest of songs, it's truly magnificent. I feel as of music is one of the only things that you can drown yourself in after having a terrible day, or pour yourself into after having the best day of your life. Music is the sweet serenity of an everyday life and the magic that we see all around us. I never really knew why I wanted to do with my life until I dedicated myself to music. But now, I can't see myself pursuing anything but music, whether it be a band director, composer, music therapist, or even part of a symphony. I know that no matter I choose, I will be happy. Music education has impacted my life for the better and I couldn't be more thankful.

### **James Horne**

Occupation: Student

From: Bedford HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has given me something to take pride in. Without my music teachers pushing me I wouldn't be nearly as skilled as I am. My teachers have taught me everything from voice, to guitar, to euphonium, to piano without these special people the world would lose the arts.

### **David Kravets**

Occupation: Student

From: Bedford HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always had a positive impact on my life. Ever since I had started taking piano lessons when I was five, till i started on the trumpet, music has always helped me make connections with people, making friends and learning new things.

### **Dane Mohr**

Occupation: Student

From: Bedford HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has, in the shortest was possible, become my life thought my HS career. There are no other ways to explain it.

### **Joshua Wagner**

Occupation: Student

From: Bedford HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music speaks. It speaks in a voice understood by every nation and people. I now speak this universal language, and I cannot imagine my life without music. My school's music program has shaped my life and has enabled me to become who I am today. My mother once told me that music would take me places; she had no idea how true that statement would be. I have traveled with band to Orlando, Florida; Sandusky, Ohio; Williamsburg, Virginia; Toronto, Canada; and many places in between. In each city, people listened to what we played. People stopped what they were doing in Disney World to listen to the Bedford HS Marching Band. This is what is truly amazing. Band has given us a voice, and people actually want to listen. Band has not only taken me places geographically. I now can appreciate music fully. After playing music composed by Sousa, Grainger, Holst, Fillmore, Ticheli, Stamp, Mackey, and numerous other composers, I am now partially fluent in the musical language. People who went through HS without being enriched by a strong music program will never value the emotion and power of music. They are blind in a musical world, and they will never see. Many social skills can also be learned in a musical setting. Imagine one hundred-and-forty playing the same note, at the same time, at the same volume, and at the exact same pitch. This is the ultimate team building activity, and band students do this every day. I am also the president of my HS band. As president I have learned many leaderships skills. I have gained experience working with community leaders, peers, parents, and teachers. My HS band program has shaped who I am, and yet I do not even plan to pursue a music major. Music is a valuable commodity. It is a language, a skill, and a vehicle to success. I am in the top five percent of my class, the president of band, the Technology Student Association, and Envirothon, as well as the captain of the scholastic scrimmage team. All of this can be attributed to my participation in the music program. Thank you for supporting such a worthwhile program.

### **Matt Zubak**

Occupation: Student

From: Bedford HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in a variety of ways, the most notable being the elation in playing it. Besides that it has gotten me through many a hard time just by the pure sounds of good music. Without its beautiful sounds and its flowing rhythms I would not be the person I am today.

### **George Zubak**

Occupation: Student

From: Bedford HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Throughout my entire life, music has been there for me. Its unceasing presence gladdens me in times of sorrow, and comforts me during periods of stress. The many boons provided by music could not be possible however, without the unceasing efforts of music educators who provide the experiences that allow me to have grown to love music. My music director was the first one to show me the true beauty of music. I, like many others, had often listened to music, but rarely FELT the music. My band director showed me that music is an art—a compilation of thoughts and emotions. In essence, he showed me the difference between hearing notes and hearing MUSIC. Likewise, as time went by, he taught me how to make my own music. I have grown to love making music. It allows me to share my feelings with the world, to give the gift of song to others. The smiles and radiant joy that appears on faces of audience members during a concert piece are truly sights to behold. Perhaps that is one of the products of music making that is so addictive—the ability to bring happiness to others. Without my music educators to start me off well however, these joys would never have become available to me. In addition, all of the times I have spent with friends on trips, on festivals, and at football games would have been nonexistent. Thanks to organizations such as PMEA and the PA All-State Lion's Band, I have been able to travel to many locals and perform in a variety of concert halls in my short life. Their dedication and hard work have allowed me to have enjoyable festivals, to have met incredible people, to have gained a sense of responsibility, and much more. Overall, music education has been more influential to my life than nearly everything else, school included. For that, I thank music educators everywhere. Without the gift of music brought by you, our world would truly be a much more dreary hovel.

### **Abbie Costigan**

Occupation: Student

From: Chestnut Ridge HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me experiences just like Region Chorus and grow to become a better musician.

### **Brennon Miller**

Occupation: Student

From: Chestnut Ridge HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Of all the things in my life that have been inspiration to push forward, music has been the most influential. Band and chorus both have always given what are possibly the best experiences during my HS career. All of my directors have been both teachers and friends for all the years I've worked with them. I've also met some of the most incredible friends through musical programs; some of the most amazing people I know are in band and chorus with me. As for the music itself, it's always been a huge source of encouragement. Anytime I'm making music, I know that it's something I'll always have with me. It has always been emotionally inspiring, and has always been a source of comfort in times of stress. A life without music may as well not be a life. It's something no one can ever take from me, something I can never lose. It will always be one of the most important parts of my existence.

### **Diana Lee**

Occupation: Retired Music Educator

From: Everett, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In a recent interview with the great opera singer Andrea Bocelli the question was asked, "Is it your goal (through recordings) to bring opera music to the masses?" He replied, "My goal is to nourish the Soul. Music feeds the soul." I could search for more original words, but I believe Mr. Bocelli's sentiment succinctly and perfectly captures the essence of the importance of music in the lives of those of us who are passionate about it. I can't begin to imagine how my life would have turned out had I not had a mother who, when I was very young, recognized that I had a musical gift and sought the best piano teacher for me. I can't imagine Elementary school without the joyous weekly visit of the music teacher, and the daily morning routine of group singing. By fifth grade, I was the accompanist for those sing-a-longs! I remember that, as early as fifth grade, I knew what I wanted to do when I grew up! I wanted to be a musician and I wanted to be a music teacher. There was never a time when I wavered from that dream. Our rural High School prided itself on its music programs, and my band and chorus directors saw to it that I was given every opportunity to hone and use my talents. I was much too busy with marching band, concert band, jazz band, chorus, show chorus, I.U.P. Summer music camp, and all the district and regional music festivals etc. to think about being an awkward teenager! Music was my refuge and my source of confidence. Kids involved in music make so many lasting friendships and have great memories of school!! I can't imagine myself.....my formerly shy self.....having endured High School without daily immersion in my passion! I was a very good student academically, but I have to wonder if I would have had the same desire to succeed had there been no music in my daily schedule. Fast forward to January 2015. I realized my fifth grade dream! I never doubted that I would! I am now retired from my long career as an elementary music teacher. As I reflect on these years I know that I have been blessed in so many ways. Blessed by my Creator to have been given a wonderful musical gift, blessed to have had people in my life to teach and guide me, blessed to have made so many friendships and great memories through my involvement in music, blessed to have been able to earn my living doing what I love to do. Music has sustained me for nearly all of my 62 years, and continues to do so in retirement as I continue to teach (privately) and perform. It has truly nourished my soul.

### **Emma Burke**

Occupation: Student

From: Everett Area HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life because it has taught me to dedicate myself to something and puts a little more meaning to my life.

### **Bionca Johnson**

Occupation: Student

From: Everett HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have learned all different genres of music. I have made life long friends and now have a life long passion for music.

### **Caitlyn Williams**

Occupation: Student

From: Everett HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life because it lets me have something to do and its where I have met most of my friends.

### **Judy Conrad**

Occupation: Assistant Band Director

From: Fishertown, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

School music has been a source of joy in my life. I have retired from teaching music after 40 years and still come to school almost every day as a volunteer to work with the band students and maintain my position as assistant band director. Many music students say they come to school just for band and chorus. I believe that to be true. I'm now working with students whose parents and grandparents I've had years ago and delight in seeing their children show the same enthusiasm for music. Music provides an outlet and medium that enables students to learn the language of music and the joy of performing alone or in a group while building self esteem, cooperation, and appreciation of the talents of others. Much research has been done as to the effects on the brain for cognition, spatial reference, and mathematical skills. I'm not a scientist or researcher, but I have repeatedly observed that students in music are for the most part high achievers, intelligent, and all around good school citizens. Beyond all that, performing music well creates a emotion--a sense of feeling of purpose and connection to the rest of the world that can't be explained by data. I can't imagine going through a day without music and I'm certain my students feel the same way.

### **Parletta Davis**

Occupation: Retired teacher

From: Lovely, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was in tonette band in third grade. From there I became a lifelong piano student and was able to participate in school chorus. Much of what I know about classical music and composers was learned in school music class and even in a college class. I resent that budget cuts always target music and the other arts and hope pmea can change this tide.

### **Taylor Leach**

Occupation: Student

From: Northern Bedford Co. HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I grew up in a musical family. We weren't professionals, nor did we have any formal instruction; we just love to sing. Music has always been a part of my life; as will it remain to be; and it helps to inspire me and keep me going when I need it.

### **Ryan Wertz**

Occupation: Student

From: Northern Bedford Co. HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in so many different ways. I have been in band and chorus for over 6 years so I have experienced many things through out my time in the programs that I would not have experienced without it. I've competed in Hershey, went on a trip to Florida, participated in regional chorus and now band and I am going to represent Pennsylvania while preforming in Hershey next week for the national fair queen competition. I have also met some of the greatest people I have ever even known like my chorus director and my band director. They both try their hardest help us advance our musical experiences. Even though it is my last year here in HS, my life way greatly impacted by music.

### **Brett Leavelle**

Occupation: Student

From: Tussey Mountain HS, Bedford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education is a special quality that special people possess. Not everyone can teach music and be as passionate as the directors of PMEA. The education that I have received has inspired me to pursue a career

of Music Education, so that I may bestow the joy that I experienced in HS while making music to my future students.

## **BERKS COUNTY**

### **Jeremy Earnest**

Occupation: Student

From: Berks Catholic HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been an amazing part of my life. I have found a passion in it, and it has made me a better person. Ever since I was young, I was amazed by the versatility of music and the tremendous effect it had on people. I have learned several instruments, and I am also interested in composition. Music education has had a tremendous effect on my childhood, and it will continue to have a positive effect on me in the future.

### **Aidan Giles**

Occupation: Student

From: Berks Catholic HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Growing up, I can't think of a time when I didn't have music. As a really little kid, I would hum and sing without end. It was something I always just knew how to do. As I got older and I learned how to refine and improve the music I made, it came to mean something more than just a way to pass the time. It became a passion and a true love. Music became something I could turn to in times of overpowering sorrow, joy, anger and excitement. When I started participating in choirs, it became a type of community, where many could share the joy of the powerful, unstoppable force that is music. Learning the techniques and skills associated with music sharpened my mind and removed self-inhibitions keeping me from being honest with myself and those around me. It is the love of my life, and I hope to keep it a part of me for years to come.

### **Cole Werley**

Occupation: Student

From: Berks Catholic HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has provided a means for me to express myself in ways that aren't usually achievable in other ways. Music allows me to be creative on so many levels. The best thing about music is that you can not only enjoy it yourself, but bring it to other people to enjoy. I think that is what makes music so extraordinary.

### **Amy**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Blandon, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Being a musician for my entire life has taught me the value of hard work, perseverance and the ability to work with others. As a music teacher, I now get to provide the opportunities for my students to develop these skills along with many more. Music is a universal language that is shared around the world to express a variety of emotions.

### **David Mayrhofer**

Occupation: Student

From: Brandywine Heights HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has taught me how to think in multiple fields, both within the arts and without. It has taught me how to withstand criticism and receive compliments; it has shown me the value of practicing and hard work. Music, in fact, has taught me more about studying material than any academic class has. It has allowed me to meet so many wonderful new people that I would have never gotten the chance of knowing without. In essence,

music has made my public school experience far more enjoyable and beneficial than it would have been without it.

### **Charlotte Wood**

Occupation: Student

From: Conrad Weiser HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is one of those things that you simply can't describe in 500 words. It has impacted my life in so many ways. As Drum Major of the marching band, I feel like I have a whole new family, and I can talk to any member at any time, about anything. In concert band, I have so much fun, and practicing the music at home gives me something to do. Music gives me a topic to talk about that I truly care for when teachers give us a 'pick your own topic' project. My director is easily my favorite teacher in the school, and I've known him for years. He can tell when something's wrong, and I don't know any other teacher that has such great relations with their students in my school. Music is really influential, and without it, I'd probably be bored, and not have the great friends I do now.

### **Isaac Duquette**

Occupation: Student

From: Exeter Township HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life. It gives me the academic challenge with the stress relief and the personal expression that allows me to develop the person I am and will become. It helps teach discipline and patience as well as many other principles that can be transferred and used in everyday life. Music education is vital to my education, and development as a member of society. The person I am today would be very different without the help of the gifted individuals who have helped educate me along the way.

### **Nicole Farnham**

Occupation: Student

From: Exeter Township HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

We are so blessed that Exeter Township School District had wonderful music programs. Music made kids to be better person. Both our children are not music major, but music will always be part of their lives, also help them doing better on their studies. Our sincere thanks to all the music teachers at Exeter Township School District.

### **Cassandra Sedlack**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Fleetwood, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I value the music education I received in the Allentown School District as a student. We were taught music appreciation in class and on many field trips, which included trips to hear the Allentown Symphony and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Through music education, my knowledge and experience in other areas, such as art, literature and language were enhanced. Music education gave me valuable background information.

### **Leah Grafe**

Occupation: Student

From: Fleetwood Area HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My music education has taught me how to better work in a team setting. No one person is ever more important than another and people must always be respectful of this concept. This has helped me in various other ways outside of music, including in my social life. I respect everyone equally and do not treat anyone as if they are unimportant. Everyone plays an important role in everyone's lives just like everyone in a band adds something more to a particular piece of music. In either the social or musical aspect, some people are

meant to teach others lessons in life while some are to garnish it and make it beautiful. The fact that no one is unimportant, as well as more important, than others has changed my outlook on life and I believe I would not have learned this lesson had it not been for the music education I have received from amazing music educators. They have taught this to me through example and how they treat the people around them as well as through the music they choose that has so many different parts, whether big or small, all being needed to make the piece a work of art.

### **Aubree Kilp**

Occupation: Student

From: Fleetwood Area HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been greatly impacting my life since I was little. When I was in elementary school, music class helped me discover my passion for singing. In third grade, my music teacher recommended to me a choir outside of school by the name of Berks Classical Children's Chorus. Ever since then I have involved myself in anything related to music, including school musicals, church choirs and voice lessons. Thanks to the music teachers and classes available to me, I have continued to improve and mature my voice. If it wasn't for music education, I may have never truly discovered my love for singing.

### **Matthew Masenheimer**

Occupation: Student

From: Fleetwood Area HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been a huge part of my life ever since I began organized music in middle school. Some of the most meaningful friendships and memories I have are through music. The teachers who have touched my life the most are my directors from both school and from festivals. Because of their influence I have decided to go to college in order to pursue a degree in music education on hopes that I can touch the lives of people the same way my teachers touched mine.

### **Matthew Bowers**

Occupation: Student

From: Governor Mifflin HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by making me dedicated towards music and all of the fun opportunities it has. I have become a better musician from the experiences and advice that my private lesson, band, and orchestra teachers have given me. Overall, their enthusiasm for music has rubbed off on me, dedicating me to try my best both in music, and in other aspects of life. I have been aided by my music teachers in getting music pieces ready for County, District, and Region band, as well as numerous scholarship auditions and local ensemble performances. In addition, music education has impacted my life by giving me learning and life skills in these classes. Playing music has taught me commitment, responsibility, teamwork, patience, organization, and most importantly, how to have fun. Without music teachers/ education, I would never have been given these great traits. Without learning about music, I also wouldn't be as skilled in playing music as I am today. Music is a true hobby, activity, and lifestyle that I enjoy, and it has gotten me involved with other students around my age. In conclusion, music education has impacted my life by giving me life skills, and a fun hobby/ lifestyle. Without music education and music teachers, I would never be as musically-inclined and skilled as I am today. It has made my life full of amazing experiences, opportunities, and fun times with others.

### **Suhana Jagadesan**

Occupation: Student

From: Governor Mifflin HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Most musicians agree that music is beautiful. However, to me, it is the ability of music to redefine each musician's perception of beauty, that is truly intriguing to me. Music has connected me to many people and

friends whom I hold very dear in my life. In a sea of personalities, they might be undeniably different, yet we find an island of common ground through music. Music has shown me that I am not invincible. There are times in which I might face a classic Italian libretto, and simply focus all my might into concentrating on singing neat runs, or maintaining a clear tone. When I am faced with a piece that I cannot master in a mere half-hour lesson, it is a humbling experience. Music is beautifully frightening. I cannot tell you how petrifying and exhilarating it is to be a soprano. When you are perched on the end of a piece, with only a C two octaves above a middle C left to sing, it can leave your impression to the audience as either utterly missed despite the valiant effort, or beautifully achieved in a seemingly flawless manner. Music has taught me the sweetness of bereavement. Every time I perform, it seems as though I am simply bidding adieu to the practiced piece. As soon as I've sung the first note, I've released the song to the audience as their, relinquishing my temporary, nevertheless meaningful ownership of the piece. Most importantly, music has shown me who I am. As hackneyed and cliched as it might sound, music has become such an integral part of my life that I cannot imagine life without it. Music humbles me and gives me hope. It frightens me with its intensity, leaving me curious to explore. It beckons me to begin a journey, in which there will be no end, only a perpetual path of learning.

### **Jayme Kraft**

Occupation: Student

From: Governor Mifflin HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a huge impact on my life. It has taught me valuable skills including team work, dedication, and leadership. Through music education I have formed many friendships that will last a lifetime, as well as been given many opportunities that I would not have had without my music background.

### **Sabrina Popa**

Occupation: Student

From: Governor Mifflin HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a huge part of my life since age 9. Without music educators, I would be a completely different person. My teachers have showed me a world I never would have discovered on my own. Music has taught me the importance of a strong work ethic and given me a desire for self improvement. Without music, I do not think I would understand that hard work does indeed come with rewards. Being a part of the Region V band is definitely considered a reward in my mind. I have been blessed with amazing educators who have molded me into the person I am today. Without them, I would not be as confident in myself and my abilities. I am beyond thankful for them because they push me and encourage me every single day. My school's music program is a family that I am immensely grateful to be a part of. I've made lifelong friends and learned many important lessons.

### **Drew Snyder**

Occupation: Student

From: Governor Mifflin HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to have many different experiences that have impacted my life greatly. They have affected my career ideas, my friends, and my overall quality of life.

### **Hannah Schreffler**

Occupation: Student

From: Hamburg Area HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Middle school and HS can be incredibly difficult for teenagers. As I grew up, I wondered who I was going to be. I had taken piano lessons for years, but it wasn't until I started to sing that I realized how much music meant to me. I enrolled in as many music classes as I possibly could, and each class helped me piece together the art that is now so comfortable for me. It has given me an escape, a passion to pursue,

something to love that makes my emotions race. Music education is my desired career choice, thanks to everything I have learned and continue to learn. It is a vast and beautiful art form that needs more recognition. I intend to glorify the art as I follow where it leads me.

### **Skylar Moyer**

Occupation: Student

From: Kutztown Area HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has done so much for me as I've studied it starting in 3rd grade, has shown me the importance of work ethic and motivation, and allowed me to learn amazing pieces of music and meet people who play. The friends I've made in the music program and at different festivals are some of my most important, and the experience I've gained will stay with me for a long time. Music is more than just something to play and enjoy, it's like a feeling, and it's my passion.

### **Michaela Ryan**

Occupation: Student

From: Kutztown Area HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life for the better. Both my parents and teachers have inspired me to grow a love for music that has opened my eyes to opportunities with vocal and instrumental festivals, musicals, concerts, and travel opportunities that have allowed me to see different parts of the world.

### **Rachael Williamson**

Occupation: Student

From: Kutztown Area HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been apart of my life practically since I was born. As a toddler I spent the majority of my time dancing on my coffee table and belting songs such as Shania Twain's "Man, I Feel Like a Woman". My first opportunity to participate in a choral ensemble was in elementary school, and by the time I reached middle school I was singing not only in chorus, but in jazz choir and show choir as well. In seventh grade my music teacher encouraged me to audition for Berks's junior county chorus, and to my delight I made the ensemble. From that moment forward I began to take my musical education very seriously. I sang in choir ensembles all throughout middle school and HS, participated in the school musical and landed leading roles, joined Tri M Honor Society, and made the senior county, district 10, and region V choirs. As a little girl I could not have imagined the extent to which I would grow through my involvement in music. Not only have I learned to appreciate fine art, I gained an immense amount of confidence through auditioning and performing. Music taught me who I am, what my limits are, and most importantly how it is possible to achieve the impossible with hard work and dedication. I cannot begin to express my gratitude to those who have both directly and indirectly guided me towards success. As a HS senior I will soon make critical decisions regarding college and my career. I know that music will play a part in that process and is something I will continue to carry with me for the rest of my life.

### **Lia Criscuolo**

Occupation: Student

From: Oley Valley HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music education, I would have never discovered the love I have for creating beautiful music. Ever since elementary school, I have enjoyed participating in different musical activities. I have played the violin, cello, recorder, flute, and piano, as well as singing throughout my life. With help from my music teachers, I was able to narrow the list to solely to the cello, piano, and vocal music. I take private lessons from outstanding teachers for cello and piano to improve myself as a musician. Music teachers have supported me in many ways, including refining technique, critiquing an audition piece, or giving me the opportunity to perform. They have always encouraged me to do my best and to never give up. Most importantly, music

teachers have inspired me to follow in their footsteps and major in music education in college. I hope to motivate and support children to become musicians, and for them to become as passionate as I am about music.

### **Elizabeth Lengel**

Occupation: Student

From: Oley Valley HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has drastically changed my life. Since beginning piano lessons at 6, I have fallen in love with music and performing. Since then, I have taken piano, vocal, and trumpet lessons, and participated in concert band, jazz band, marching band, full orchestra, choir, and select choir. Music has become an outlet for me; it is a means of expressing myself and I continually strive towards musical proficiency. Performing in multiple ensembles has taught me to collaborate with other students, and I strongly believe that music has improved my aptitude for learning and increased my test scores and grades as well. I have made so many friends through participating in different festivals, and most of my best HS memories include performing in some capacity. I cannot imagine where I would be without music and music education. While I am not planning on majoring in music in college, I plan to continue to play the trumpet in the symphonic band and sing in the Gospel choir. Music will always be a major part of my life, I cannot imagine living life without it.

### **Julianna Pierdomenico**

Occupation: Student

From: Oley Valley HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In middle school, I had no intentions of pursuing music. I had other interests such as sports, or anything besides music. I never practiced my clarinet. Everyone at the HS knew that, and at the top of my first marching band packet in HS, one of the seniors wrote "better be practicing." Ever since being called out, I have put nothing but hard work in. Being a part of music has taught me not only dedication and hard work, but passion as well. My exceptional band director has shown me this passion so much so that I now want to major in music. However, my parents are making me double major with a STEM major ensuring that I will have a job out of college. It upsets me that I am not allowed to simply do music and pursue my dreams. I have consistently argued with my parents over this. I know that there aren't many jobs out there for musicians and it's hard to be successful, but none of that matters due to the influence music has had on my life. That is why there are so many aspiring musicians, and why I continue to object to my parents. I would have never dreamed of hoping to major in music four years ago, but there is some unexplained phenomenon within music that speaks to me like words can't. Music is a universal language that speaks worlds to people. Being able to express myself through the passion of music in all different ways is the most rewarding experience that I have had in my HS career. I am more than happy that music has come into my life, and I cannot imagine my life without it.

### **Michael Repko**

Occupation: Student

From: Oley Valley HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in the most wonderful way possible. Through my music teachers I am able to learn about music and be able to participate in music festivals. I have the greatest times at music festivals and when I am learning about or making music. Music is the most influential factor in my life and I am grateful that I was exposed to it at a young age.

### **Bethany**

Occupation: Student

From: Reading, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Allowed me to meet friends I would have never met otherwise. Taught me the importance of professionalism, dedication, having patience towards myself and others, and taught me basic time management skills. Introduced me to a passion and hobby that further led for me to pick a career as a music therapist.

### **Hector Echevarria**

Occupation: Student

From: Reading HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has affected my life in so many ways, but the one that sticks out the most is that it keeps me from being outside on the streets and away from all the trouble. Music education has also given me a sense of a better maturity and responsibility level. For instance, paying more attention to what people have to say or being on time to a rehearsal. I really don't know where I'd be if it wasn't for all my teachers that have taught me. Music education for me is an essential, it creates life and helps relieve stress. Most importantly though, it has helped me grow and be the person I am today.

### **Danny Garcia**

Occupation: Student

From: Reading HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me in many ways. It has impacted me so much socially in way where I wouldn't be where I am today. I wouldn't have as many friends, I wouldn't be able to sing with precise rhythm and also I wouldn't be able to sing so many styles of music. I wouldn't have as many friends because most of my friends are musically talented and intelligent as well as me. I wouldn't sing with precise rhythm because I wouldn't know how many beats are in a specific note. I wouldn't be able to sing so many styles of music because there's a certain way you're supposed to sing when it's a certain style of music. So without all of these things I wouldn't be in Region Choir. Music Education has impacted me profoundly in so many ways. I don't think I can live without music in my life.

### **Abi Young**

Occupation: Association Management

From: Sinking Spring, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Both of my parents majored in music education. Although they both ultimately headed down different career paths, they kept music a central part of our family. I learned to read music before I learned to read words through starting piano lessons at age 4. We even had a short stint as "The Bauer Family Singers" - or whatever quirky name my dad could think of whenever we were asked to share music somewhere. Through my childhood years I was educated in three different school districts and in all three I took advantage of as many opportunities in music that were available to me. In elementary school general music I was required to learn all verses of the National Anthem, America the Beautiful and the Battle Hymn of the Republic - and many of those lyrics have stuck with me. In middle school I took participated in band and chorus, sometimes even accompanying the choir. And in high school I took as many music electives, in addition to participating in the band and chorus, as I could as they were the classes to which I looked the most forward. Now I'm a mom with two daughters (ages 5 and 2) and its my turn to surround them with music. My youngest was recently diagnosed with cerebral palsy on her right side. At that appointment with the pediatric neurologist, the doctor, after examining my daughter, said the exam turned out much better than expected as she had reviewed my daughter's MRI brain scans first. Those scans showed signs of brain bleeds that occurred when she was born (we will most likely never know what caused them), mainly on the left side. I truly believe that God has blessed us, and also that music has played an integral part with keeping her brain active and helping the damage to not be nearly as

severe as it could be. I now hope that both of my daughters will have the same musical opportunities in school as I did.

### **Tyler Gransden**

Occupation: Student

From: Tulpehocken HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was little I always used to sing along with the radio with my mom. My mom told me that I had a talent and I should be using it. So that is how I got involved in the music program. I started off in chorus then expanded to show choir, musical and all the different groups I am in today. Without music education I honestly would not want to come to school most of the time. Singing is a passion for me and I never would have been able to take advantage of it without those stages of music education. Music education made me realize that I love to perform for people and gave me the passion I have for music today.

### **Christina Koenig**

Occupation: Student

From: Tulpehocken HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by providing a place for me to express myself. Without music education, I would find school much less rewarding and more of a burden to attend. I look forward to all of my music rehearsals and my music courses. Music education has led me to my choice of a career as well. I have decided to become a music therapist and without music education, I most likely would not have learned about this specific major.

### **Alyssa Lahoda**

Occupation: Student

From: Twin Valley HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life tremendously. Ever since I was younger, music has been a huge part of my life. When I started playing the violin, I have become very passionate about it and dedicated most of my time into learning more about music along with reaching my goal to play in a professional orchestra. Music education has given me confidence, and taught me the ability to use criticism to improve my playing skills. I have learned that music is much more than playing notes on a page and that you have to use expression. Overall, if I never had education about music, I would not have been able to experience the many types of music. I strongly believe that music education should never go unnoticed and to continue impacting other people's lives also.

### **Ian Roth**

Occupation: Student

From: Wilson HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has allowed me to use my God given strengths and created beautiful memories, friendships, and works of art. I am an athlete, and will be playing baseball in college, but I plan on keeping music in my life because it has had such a positive impact on me. The memories and strategies I learn in the chorus room are bound to help me in my future life.

### **Louis Kim**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyomissing Area HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Not only has music helped me to learn orchestral and classical pieces, but it has helped socially. Going to these PMEA festivals allowed me to meet similar people who are all very talented. The first time I ever went to a District festival, I was humbled by all the better players out there. Knowing that someone greater is out

there striving to their best inspired me to work hard towards a similar goal. Also, these festivals give me an opportunity to play original music I may never get the chance to play. Music has filled an essential role of my life.

### **Alan Lu**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyomissing Area HS, Berks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My Life's Crescendo When I reflect back on my childhood, I cannot imagine it without music. I have played the violin for 9 years now, having taken weekly lessons ever since third grade. As I have grown older, the violin has been one of the few constants in my life. It was one of the first things to show me the results of hard work as after playing for many hours, I went from playing unintelligible screeching to music. I remember the excitement I felt when I first picked up my cheap rental violin in third grade. The entire day I was anticipating playing the violin for the first time, and when I awkwardly picked it up and brought it to my shoulders, my eight year old self was indescribably happy. It was as if I had discovered a new toy, though one that required practice and skill. Even though my playing back then was awful, I stuck with the violin because I enjoyed playing it no matter how badly I sounded at first. Little did I know, that moment when I first picked up the violin began a passion that would stick with me for the rest of my life. The first time I played the violin was nine years ago, but I remember the moment in such detail because it has so affected my life. Much of the type of person I am today I can attribute to violin. I studied harder academically because I saw my violin playing improve exponentially with practice and saw the benefits of hard work. Without a doubt, many of my academic successes like my perfect SAT score or 4.0 GPA can be attributed largely to music. Playing in youth orchestras, I became more competitive and driven to be the best player possible. When I was young, the violin gave me purpose. I set many goals for myself which now as I reflect, I realize is a large reason why I am so ambitious in everything I do today. Whenever I am stressed, I play the violin, and it instantly relaxes me. For an hour or two, I forget my big test tomorrow and focus on making music. Playing the violin has also allowed me to meet many people who share the same interests as me and make great friends as a result. Since orchestras can only be successful through collaboration, playing in so many has allowed me to develop collaboration skills while also making friendships at the same time. I have probably met thousands of different people while playing in dozens of orchestras from youth orchestra to summer camp. I would never have had these experiences without the violin. It is interesting to me that I only play the violin today because on a whim I decided to play in elementary school. Now, nine years later, I am infinitely glad that I stayed with violin. I can confidently say that without the violin, I would be a completely different person today.

## **BLAIR COUNTY**

### **Kelly Craver**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Altoona, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Being a music teacher, music is involved in every aspect of my day. From teaching elementary students to play their first notes on an instrument to directing high school choir, music is all around me. Music wouldn't play this special part in my life if it weren't for the passionate and dedicated music teachers that I have had the pleasure to learn from. They have taught me about teamwork, passion for my art, discipline, organization, and creativity. Making music allows me to create something truly beautiful and unique, whether it be alone or in an ensemble. The life lessons I have learned through being a musician has made me a more well-rounded person, which is something that everyone needs in order to be a positive contributor to society. Having the opportunity to share music with my students is one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, especially watching them create, love, and relate to music.

### **Jonathan Mountain**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Altoona, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Growing up as an only child who moved quite a few times in my early elementary years, I never felt like I had a solid social group until high school. The one thing that helped me through those years was music. Music helped me find a way to communicate my feelings, but it also helped me find something to do outside of school that could take my mind off of the things that were bothering me. While I obviously have a career in music education (which I entered due to the enormous impact my own music teachers had on my life), I feel comfortable saying that the mental discipline I learned from music could have aided me immensely in any other career of my choosing. The amount of dedication expected from a student to perfect and perform a piece of music to a high standard is astonishing. The skills that music teaches go beyond what happens in the classroom. Patience, perseverance, and intuition are just a handful of the characteristics that music education can nurture in young minds. Skills such as those can lead to high achievement in limitless areas outside of music.

### **Jillian Brannan**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. I have made many good friends that I can share my love of music with. I have been given many opportunities to play at school and around the community. It helps me learn time management and gives me something to do when I do not know what to do with my time. Without music, I would not be the same person I am today.

### **Allan Buchness**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education connects me to the world of sound in a way I never would have understood it. Since my first class in 4th grade I have been able to listen to music and appreciate it more than I would have without marching band, jazz, and orchestra.

### **Austin Cheers**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music gives me something to look forward to and is a way for me to let me express myself. I need music to let feelings out.

### **Breanna Corle**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has deeply impacted my life in so many ways. Not only has it helped me meet some of the most intelligent and caring people I know, but it has also helped me gain an appreciation of all types of art, not just music. I think that all musicians grow to develop a deep appreciation for all forms of art, because we all have our own art form that we use to express something with. It has also given me a healthy way of putting my emotions into something meaningful, and it has given me an outlet to get rid of the stress from school, home, or other problems that may have arisen in my life. In addition to that, it has also given me the motivation to work harder in all aspects of my life. To be a good musician, one must work day in and day out to perfect one's craft. A musician is never perfect; there are always things that a musician can be working on, and they can always strive to be better at something. This has carried into my academic life, because being a

musician has showed me how to be a disciplined person in all of my schoolwork. It has also given me the opportunity to go places that I would have never been able to go and has given me memories that I will never forget. My favorite memory of my whole HS career was going to Myrtle Beach with my school's music department to perform for judges and get feedback. I loved getting to work with the judges in both my elite HS concert choir and my regular concert choir, because I was so proud of the work that we had done on the piece. It is so exhilarating to be able to perform something that my peers and I have worked so hard on, and being on that stage with all of the lights on us is something that none of us will never forget. Being a part of my school's music program has really given me a sense of community within my school because I got to meet people who love the same thing that I do, and that is something that I would never trade for the whole world.

### **Sarah Dell**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by allowing me to express myself through various types of music throughout my school experiences. The music program has allowed me to socialize and to make many new friends. It has also shown me how to use my mind for creative purposes.

### **Emily Dell**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in a more positive way than many of the other things that I have done in my school career. I have been able to express myself through the music I have played and all of the time I have spent learning how to improve my playing ability. Also, being in the music program has given me the great opportunity to meet my best friends and spend time with some of the greatest people I have met in my life. I don't know what I would be doing or what I would do in the future if I did not have music, and especially band, in my life.

### **Rachel Downs**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by changing me as a person and giving me an experience that I wouldn't change a thing about. Being in the band led me to meet new people that are great people and my best friends. Also, I have made relationships with the band directors. Music gives a person something to love and admire and be proud of, a sense of security almost, something a person can rely on. Music also gives me the opportunity to have new experiences and go to new places. Music is very important in my life.

### **Timothy Estlow**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a way for me to escape and it makes me feel accomplished with something. You can't just hand an instrument to someone and they play it. You need skill and with that skill I have made it through districts, a pep band, church bands, a brass quintet, and other extracurricular activities. Making music is my favorite thing to do and I don't know what I'd do without it. With education in music, I have learned how to play 3 going on 4 instruments both brass and woodwind and I have learned to transpose to a few keys. Just listening to a piece of music, I can figure out how to play it given a little time. When I play music, everything melts away and I have no stress or worry and I forget about issues apart from music.

### **Samuel Houk**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has inspired me to set high goals and strive to be the best I can be. Throughout HS especially, music has been a wonderful outlet for me to not only enjoy being part of a team with some of my closest friends, but also compete with other students from around the state. Without my two band periods, I would not make it through the school day. Instead, I am excited to go to school to learn and play music. My music education has also brought me closer to my family. My mom played violin when she was in HS and competed similarly to how I do now. PMEA has been a great way for her to be inspired by what I spend my time doing. Nothing makes me happier than knowing that by doing what I love, others are happy.

### **Noah Katcher**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I feel that the superb music education I have received in Altoona has expanded my opportunities far beyond I ever expected. Today, I use music as a job: playing in pit orchestras and local jazz gigs. As a HS student, I get paid over twice what my friends make with minimum wage, and I get the satisfaction of musical fulfillment with it. While I do not aspire to study music in college, I will value the opportunities it has provided me and continue to play for my own entertainment (and maybe even for a couple extra bucks!)

### **Seth Rouzer**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has allowed me to share my love of music with other people, and grow as a musician.

### **Kyle Siskron**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to find a class that I love. If I could, my entire schedule would be filled with music courses! Music education has also inspired me to become a music teacher/band director. It is extremely important in schools. I believe that music class is more important than most classes offered in HS.

### **Michael Stumpf**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

There are many ways music has impacted my life. The biggest and probably most important is that it gives me an outlet for my emotion. If I feel depressed, happy, or angry I can play music that reflects my mood. The second is that it gives me something to do. There are quite a few kids my age that think music and the arts are stupid and a waste of time, but if i didn't have music I could be off selling drugs or wasting my life on video games. The third way is that I can be creative and be myself without being judged. I have been picked on since the fourth grade but music has always been my safe haven where I could do whatever I want and not be worried about what people have to say about me. That is how music and the arts have impacted my life.

### **Bryce Whitfield**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music alone has made a difference in my life. Music education has made an even bigger impact. It is great to have a teacher/director that you see everyday and have a close relationship with that teacher. I know my director will help me with music, but also with anything I come to him with. I love music and learning about music. I love performing. I know without a doubt that music has made me a better person and gives me more structure in my life in the sense of practices for multiple hours in school plus many days of after school practices. I have respect for my director and every other director/music educator.

### **Eric Yarnell**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

PMEA music festivals have greatly impacted my life. They have made me a better overall musician, and I have made many friends and have created many memories throughout the festivals.

### **Thaddeus Zitsch**

Occupation: Student

From: Altoona Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has taught me things that no other subject could teach me. I have learned that being myself is something that is okay to do. I have learned that perfection is only something that is achieved in music.

### **Emily Estright**

Occupation: Student

From: Bellwood-Antis HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. It has expanded my love and knowledge of music. It has given me lots of opportunities through chorus festivals and various school musicals and music events. It has taught me skills like preparation, competition, and patience. It has given me friends who share my love of music.

### **Lain Hall**

Occupation: Student

From: Bellwood-Antis HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life by broadening my learning abilities in other languages and also in the field of music. Music has allowed me to show my true colors and express things that I can't express in words.

### **Emily Hoover**

Occupation: Student

From: Bellwood-Antis HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in some many ways, it's almost hard to put into words. I have learned so many new things, and met so many new people. I don't just go to these festivals just to go, I go because I love them, and love to sing.

### **Revel Southwell**

Occupation: Student

From: Bellwood-Antis HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without Music Education, I would not be able to participate in the festivals and activities that I do today. Music is everything that I do and it is fantastic that our school has the program that it does. After HS, I also plan to major in Music Education at PSU. Its opened multiple doors for opportunities and festivals. That is how Music Ed has affected my life and everything I do.

### **Randy Zitterbart**

Occupation: Student

From: Bellwood-Antis HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life greatly. When it comes to singing, it is like a release for me. It helps calm me down during trying times. Whether I am playing music on my guitar or learning a new song on piano, it is a way to express myself and let go of whatever I am feeling and just play and sing. When school work becomes stressful, I sometimes take a break and listen to my music and then when I go back to my school work, I feel refreshed and ready to finish. It also allows me to bring people together. Take for example, my church. We sometimes do special music and people are able to go up on stage and sing a song that may relate to the message the pastor is giving or could be just a song of encouragement. Whatever the song may be, it brings the people of my church together and focuses on the message that is about to be given. Music has been a positive influence on my life, and it will continue to be one as well.

### **Sarah Feather**

Occupation: Student

From: Claysburg-Kimmel HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me a creative outlet and improved my precision and academic performance. Learning and playing music in school and during these festivals is a great way for everyone to work together without competing - it's just good fun and good sounds.

### **Olivia Brockman**

Occupation: Student

From: Hollidaysburg Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by teaching me that no matter who you are, where you come from, or what your background is, music is a universal way to communicate emotions.

### **Valentina Cracchiolo**

Occupation: Student

From: Hollidaysburg Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life immensely. Through my school's amazing program I have made so many close relationships and friendships with the people in it. I have become such a better musician and I have had so many amazing experiences that have shaped me as a person.

### **Jesse Ottaway**

Occupation: Student

From: Hollidaysburg Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It allows me to express myself in ways that my schoolwork and multiple sports don't allow, and I find peace in it.

### **Molly LaPorte**

Occupation: Student

From: Tyrone Area HS, Blair County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in so many ways-- even ones that I may not myself be aware of. Music gave me something to care about when I was younger. It helped me foster friendships that I am confident I will keep for the rest of my life. It taught me how to be a leader. Music has given me a reason to be proud of myself and gave me a creative outlet when times were tough. I don't know what my life would be like without music, and I don't want to try to imagine that life. An old band director of mine once told me to "Run with the song of your heart, and dance to the beat of your soul" and because of the influence he and music has had on my life I will never forget to.

## **BRADFORD COUNTY**

### **Pearl Hess**

Occupation: Student

From: Canton Area JSHS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has helped me with challenges in my life and relaxes me through stressful times. Working with music has also helped to teach me to persevere through difficult assignments. Music is what I turn to when I feel lonely and it makes me feel joyful.

### **Jessica Gardner**

Occupation: Student

From: Northeast Bradford HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life in a positive way. I pursue the career of Performing Arts on Broadway. I learned about the different instruments and about my voice at a young age. Music Education has helped my inspire my goals in life and learn more about music. I have learned about my voice and how to control it. I have learned about how music helps you academically in school. Without the power of music, I would not be the person I am today. Music has been there for when I felt sad and it cheered me up to look positive in life. Music education has allowed me to explore different genres of music and open up to music. I have learned to respect the different genres and realize there is always a story behind the lyrics. To create song sounds easy, but in reality it is very difficult. Music education has inspired me to pursue my dreams and to work hard to accomplish my goals.

### **Kristen Johnston**

Occupation: Student

From: Sayre Area HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Life, as it seems, is a large, faceted object. Each cut side is a window into a different aspect of your life. Some of the windows are larger and more colorful than others. The window in my life that has been most ornately designed by experience and pure enjoyment has been the window of music. As a child, I loved music of all kinds. I had a special fondness for instrumental music however, from growing up with musicians as parents. I remember going to town band concerts in the park as a young girl and sitting in the grass to relax and listen to the music. I knew even before then that I wanted to be able to make music like that one day. Before I had technical training, I would sit at the piano almost every evening before dinner playing improvised songs using chords I knew nothing of except their sound. This was my starting place. From there I grew older and my mom, the band director at my school, started me on french horn. Since then, music education has been everything to me as a person. With my mom as my director and the love of music set firmly in my heart, my path to become a music educator myself was forged. Music education has given me the ability to make music like that of what I heard as a child. More importantly than that, it has given me a

physical and emotional outlet I can always fall back on. The life experiences and overall skills I've gained through my school's music program (leadership, patience, passion, hard work, etc.) are more treasured than most lessons I've been taught in many of my other classes in school. It has given me purpose and talent beyond what I could have imagined as a child listening to beautiful works written by my favorite composers from Mozart, Tchaikovsky, and Haydn to Ticheli and Samuel Hazy. The impact music education has made on me is so much greater than I ever could have hoped for. It fanned the flame music had already kindled into life inside of me and has fueled it into a bonfire that continues to burn with every attack and release in the pieces I play today.

### **Adriana Romano**

Occupation: Student

From: Sayre Area HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a major influence in my life for as long as I can remember. My parents were always exposing me to different genres of music. My father always plays jazz CDs when he's working around the house and my mother played me classical ballet compositions when I was just starting to show an interest in dance. From my first memories of song to now, music is an integral part of my everyday life and has taught me even more through musical education in my school. At the earliest opportunity, I chose to be a part of the concert band in my elementary school. As I grew as a musician and received more musical opportunities, I was learning valuable life lessons too. Being on the leadership team in our marching band has taught me about responsibility, organization, and how to work effectively with others towards a common goal. Jazz band gives me a chance to experiment with music and helps me to pay closer attention to all the details that go into a bigger picture. Concert band has let me create art, explore my abilities and taught me about the importance of hard work and perseverance. My education from music doesn't end with music; it's also about the people I've met and worked with because of my opportunities from joining the band. My role models are the seniors from the band that have become some of my closest friends all because of music. The people I meet from other band festivals have inspired me with their talents. Music is such a colossal subject; there is so much to explore and experiment with. I will always continue to grow and evolve with music through my life and feel so blessed to have been given so many more opportunities from my musical education.

### **Emalie Shaffer**

Occupation: Student

From: Sayre Area HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education turned my life around. When I was thirteen years old, I was diagnosed with a rare neurological disorder called Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome which affects my legs – it was devastating to my life as I had been a competitive dancer for 10 years. I struggled in school as I spent a great deal of time at hospitals and treatment centers. Having a band or chorus class in the middle of the day was a relief as I could put down my crutches, and spend time in the best environment I could dream of. The way some people deal with their problems is through sports, which are highly supported by schools. While I think it is great to watch a game of basketball, in reality no one can play basketball forever – or any sport for that matter – as I have learned this firsthand. Music is something anyone can do regardless of handicaps or age. Beethoven was almost completely deaf, Paul Wittgenstein is an incredible piano player who is a left-handed pianist as he doesn't have a right hand, Stevie Wonder was blind, for years my HS band had a wonderful percussionist with Down syndrome, and I am a flute player with a rare neurological disorder. Music is a lifelong study that helps people all over the world emotionally, physically, and even socially. Without music education, students who rely on music and have an incredible passion for it are denied their right to do what they love. For many years now I have dedicated myself to my studies of music as it is a reminder of what I am still capable of. Music education has given me new life, as I create my own dance every time I make music.

### **Allen M Fink**

Occupation: English Teacher

From: Towanda, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music was the only reason I went to school willingly as a child. It is the reason I graduated and went to college -- at first as a music major. It was even the reason I met my wife - as a fellow student in Jr. High Lycoming County Band! Ultimately I changed my major to English, but continued to study music and finish my minor in it. Throughout my teaching career, I've kept playing, worked music into my lessons, and stayed in touch with the music teachers in my schools. Now, I have an even greater reason to do so: all four of my children are involved in music. The impact of music on our students is immeasurable - though studies have shown positive academic impacts. In this day and age, especially, it is more vital than ever that our children have a creative outlet that brings true beauty rather than another set of data points. Works of art are some of the only finished products we ever see completed at school. Allow our children to continue to learn music and become the next generation of performers, composers, and conductors that bring true joy to our lives. Keep music in our schools!

### **Vina Miller**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Towanda, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been important to me all my life. Not just from great teachers at school and private lessons but at home. Music was taught as a form of entertainment, relaxation, motivation and worship. We listened and played every genre of music at home and music class was the favorite class at school. So much that I chose it as a career.

### **Tyler Sheets**

Occupation: High School

From: Towanda, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has made me see things in a new light. When I was in 8th Grade, my friends convinced me to join chorus, even though it was halfway through the year. That was probably the best decision of my high school career so far. It opened my eyes up to a new perspective, and it made me feel the exciting feel you get when you perform before an audience. After our Christmas concert for chorus, I decided to do the school musical. We did a musical called "Changing Minds", and I got a lead!!! I had a solo song and everything. After that I was set on making music and performing arts part of my life. During my freshman year, I was chosen to attend the County Chorus music festival. I was so excited. Unfortunately, the actual performance was cancelled because of bad weather. This year I am a Sophomore, and I was also chosen to attend the County Chorus festival again. It was a beautiful concert filled with amazing songs that really showed off our ability to grasp difficult dynamics. I also auditioned for District Chorus. I did not make it this year, but will try very hard to be able to attend the festival next year. Auditions are coming up for the District Jazz festival, and I will hopefully be attending.

### **Trevor Ward**

Occupation: Student

From: Troy JSHS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has brought so much color into my life through awesome experiences with people, places, concerts etc. etc. Music, whether it be band or chorus, is blatantly the most fun and most challenging/rewarding thing that I can think of in my life. I can solidly say that I wouldn't be as responsible without my experiences through music and it never ceases to inspire me and motivate me through HS and hopefully the rest of my life.

### **Wesley Ballard**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyalusing Valley HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a fantastic impact on my life. The music teachers in my school and elsewhere motivate me to do something worthwhile with my life. I've learned a lot about what it means to be a responsible, disciplined person and musician through what these people have taught me. I will always be thankful for everything I've learned about music.

### **Erin Canfield**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyalusing Valley HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has taught me responsibility. You need to practice on your own not just in class or rehearsal. It has taught me independence. You can't rely on anyone else to learn your music. It is my escape. When I play, sing, or listen to music I am able to forget about everything that is going on around me and focus and really feel the song and really understand what the song is really about.

### **Lucas Gibbs**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyalusing Valley HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a part of my life, being an outlet to turn to when I need it and being an inspiration for endeavors I attempt. Having a music education has brightened my educational career, and has made me, in my own opinion, a more creative person. Any arts related education gives the most positive impact on a young person's life, and that is how I believe that a music education has impacted my own life.

### **Courtney McComb**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyalusing Valley HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music plays a large role in my life, and the importance in education for all kids is something I wholeheartedly recommend. I have found direction from music, as well as happiness. It is my current goal to attend a university for a degree in Music Therapy, a type of therapy that uses the psychological benefactors of music to help others. I have found my own talent and prosperity in music, and it is important for other kids to get the opportunities I have received. Through music I have found some of my closest friends as well as future for myself. I honestly could say the old cliché of "music is my life" and be sincere. Music has taught me dedication and confidence, something important in today's world.

### **Maggie Poost**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyalusing Valley HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As the youngest child of a family heavily involved in the arts, music (and music education) has had an impact on my life since the time I was born. Through involvement in community theater at an early age, I actually learned to (crudely) read music before I could read words. Unlike other teachers, music teachers have the opportunity to stick with children for many years - through several grade levels. Because of this, it seems to me that music teachers are always some of the best and kindest teachers, as they get to know their students and watch them grow. Music education teaches many skills- you need rhythm, math, history, and science, etc; however, music education is more than the sum of its parts- through learning music, kids gain something indescribable that no other subject can provide.

### **Sydney Saxe**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyalusing Valley HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. It has thought me how to have self confidence. Music education has given me so many opportunities to meet new people and get to know the people I already knew even better. It has also thought me how wonderful it feels to set a goal for my self and then achieve that goal. the feeling I get when I have finished a performance that I have worked months on and to have everyone in the audience clap for you and truly appreciate what you have done. I am so appreciative of the music education in my school and I would not me the same person without it.

### **Bretny Seamon**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyalusing Valley HS, Bradford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is extremely important in my life. It is the only reason I enjoy coming to school. The teachers involved in the music department are some of the most amazing people I've ever had the pleasure of meeting. I am constantly inspired and learning new things. Everything I learn is important for furthering my music education and contains lessons that will stay with me for the rest of my life.

## **BUCKS COUNTY**

### **Alex Lewis**

Occupation: Food service, music education and performance

From: Bucks County, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has inspired me to promote the wellness of all people through art. I feel that art is one of our greatest tools for wellness. It can promote emotional health, and this will in turn support the health of your mind and body. In order to serve beneficially, music must be vibrationally aligned with the audience and the performer. Music education has enabled me as an educator and performer to align people with their music.

### **Maggy Simon**

Occupation: Student

From: Central Bucks HS East, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music education in my life, I wouldn't be the person I am now. Both my parents are music educators and have actually inspired me to become one myself. Every music teacher I have had throughout my music career has helped me and given me valuable advice that I will cherish forever and carry with me as I continue my journey as a musician. All music teachers have a different and unique mindset. They decided to persue a career that they not only love, but want to teach others their gift. You can tell that every teacher loves teaching their students, but music teachers have a different relationship than an academic teacher would. I have known my orchestra teacher since 6th grade. She has seen me grow as a person and is always there to give me advice about music and life in general. When I have a music class (music tech, orchestra, choir, music theory) I feel very safe and comfortable. I feel like I belong there. The teacher makes me feel like I belong there, along with the other students in the class. The setting is also different than an academic class. Music educators are creative and teach things that make you think in a different way. Thta's what I love about music; that you can find yourself in a whole different word. I would notg have discovered this feeling without music education and the oppertunities it has provided. I've discovered myself through it and I got to see how fun the music world is. I've gone to trips through choir and orchestra to Dorney Park, Disney World, and New York City. Ive also learned immensely from participating in pit orchetras and rock concerts. Through each experience, I've learned to overcome challenges and appreciate music for what it is. Overall, I love music and I can't wait to become a music educator myself.

### **Carolyn Kirshe**

Occupation: Student

From: Central Bucks HS South, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I never was a music kid. Neither of my parents were musical at all, in fact, my dad was a sports nut. Growing up, I did intramural sports from the age of 5 and took piano as a fun little thing on the side. But in middle school, all of that changed. I tried out for my junior high jazz ensemble on a whim and, to my shock, made it as a seventh grader. From there my friends convinced me to audition for our select choir, having never taken a singing or choir class in my life. When I joined choir, my life got turned upside down. I fell in love with music and music theory, it soon became not a casual interest but my passion. By the time I entered HS, I had quit sports altogether and been in several musicals and select ensembles. Now a Junior in HS, I am in both select choir ensembles and have been selected to be the Assistant Music Director in our spring musical. I will be taking AP music theory in the fall of my senior year, and hope to continue my love of music and singing into my college years. My passion for music has completely changed my interests, ambitions, and my path. I couldn't be more thankful for the impact it has had on my life.

### **Emily Rittenhouse**

Occupation: Student

From: Christopher Dock Mennonite HS, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life on a daily basis. Taking piano lessons when I was younger was the foundation for my being able to teach myself songs, which has been very helpful. Singing in children's choirs when I was little and taking voice lessons in more recent years has helped me develop correct singing techniques and has helped me not to damage my voice.

### **Jennifer Catalano**

Occupation: Student

From: Council Rock HS North, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Since music is such an influential part of my life, music education has able to foster my love for music and has allowed me to express my passion with others who feel the same way. Music is the one thing that connects everyone in the school. Whether you are an athlete who happens to sing in the shower when you think no one is watching, whether you are a shy wallflower who seeks peace when your earphones are in and your music is cranked up, or whether you are a choir enthusiast like myself who gets a thrill by listening to a new arrangement, music education has an impact on everyone. Becoming involved in choir has really opened myself up to new things, new people, and new experiences. No longer am I a shy wallflower who enjoys music by herself, but I can now share my passion for music with others. Although music education has recently been threatened in many schools, it should definitely remain because it has a magic ability of transforming a disjointed group of people with different interests into a cohesive unit of friends who feel comfortable enough to share their passions with one another. Music education has definitely impacted my life for the better, in addition to the lives of all those at this festival, so I can definitely see how it will continue to have an amazing impact on all young people of the future who seek solace in the warm embrace of music.

### **Emily Day**

Occupation: Student

From: Council Rock HS North, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have moved multiple times, and everywhere I have been there has been a welcoming musical community. This community has made my multiple transitions between locations easier. Also, the musicians that I have met have made me feel at home wherever I go.

### **Emily Goulazian**

Occupation: Student

From: Council Rock HS North, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. I am so thankful to have been given the opportunity to sing in a choir with students who feel as passionately about music as I do. I hope music education will continue to be an important aspect of student education because it has impacted the lives of so many students.

### **Madeleine McCullough**

Occupation: Student

From: Council Rock HS North, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Through music education, I feel I have achieved a better understanding of how to multitask. I can read music, sight read, sing and listen around me all at the same time. My skill in all of these individual activities have also increased. Learning different musical techniques has thirdly made me realize how complicated of a process music making can be, and has thus given me a new level of respect for anyone who has a career in the music world.

### **Alexander Miller**

Occupation: Student

From: Council Rock HS North, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since I was two years old I have been reading and tapping out rhythms with my mom because my bother was in piano lessons. When I was four I started taking actual piano lessons and from that point forward music has sculpted my life. In elementary school, I was given the privilege of accompanying my fifth and sixth grade choirs. This was all due to the music education that I was started on as such a young kid. In middle school, the piano background that I was given allowed me to quickly pick up other instruments like the trombone and baritone, with which I was a part of the jazz band. I was also able to use my ability to play piano in order to play for my choir in a song commissioned as a tribute to the students who died at the Sandy Hook shooting. I didn't really start singing until HS last year when Mr. Williams, the greatest teacher I have ever had, got me started on choir. He encouraged me to try new things and audition for groups that I never dreamed of being good enough to make it into. The best thing about music education that I think everyone should be thankful for is that the music educators give such a gift to the people they are educating, and those people are able to give the gift of music to everyone else in the world. Music is such a good reprieve from all the stressors of life. With all of the school work and home work and swimming I do, I am always so stressed out over life in general and music is such a great way for me and many other people to escape from that. Music educators are the ones who provide this opportunity. I would be lost without music in my life, and I owe that to every music educator who has ever been in my life.

### **Grace Chu**

Occupation: Student

From: Council Rock HS South, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was introduced to viola, my secondary instrument, in third grade through my school music program. If not for that, I would never have considered picking up a second instrument after piano. Without music education, I would not have had so many inspiring experiences such as participating in District and Region Orchestra as well as attending youth orchestras in Philadelphia.

### **Cecilia Rabayda**

Occupation: Student

From: Council Rock HS South, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As many students often do, I began my musical career as a pianist, which provided me with fundamentals of music reading that aided me in pursuing other instruments through my school music program. Not only did I pick up violin, but I also played clarinet and sang in various choirs. School music exposed me to other instruments, and without it, I would not be as serious and engaged in my music as I am now. I have the opportunity to connect with kids who have the same passion as I do and the opportunity to participate in festivals like PMEA.

### **Robyn Aheimer**

Occupation: Musician

From: Doylestown, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is the source of my inspiration. I currently work in hospice for the past 3 yrs, playing/making music for the elderly (piano/voice/guitar), nursing home communities and senior programs. Music connects us to our feelings and memories and it is a joy to share in the experience that comes through sharing it with others.

### **Abby Marchione**

Occupation: Music Education Student

From: Doylestown, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My middle and high school's excellent music programs not only made me a better musician and led me to my chosen career path, but taught me how to be a good person. My experience in Holicong Middle School choir under the energetic direction of Jim Glaser will always be cherished. From "Dies Irae" to "Bohemian Rhapsody", I was exposed to a range of repertoire that is still difficult for me to fathom. It was here that I first began to realize the huge impact that music educators leave on their students. In high school, legendary choral director E. Scott Teschner showed us that he had the highest of expectations for his students. We became an excellent choir, but more importantly, we worked together to become kind, compassionate, well-rounded individuals. He cared for the choir as whole, but also for each student. At the year's end, it was a bittersweet goodbye as our well-loved director, "Tesch", entered his retirement, but his impact led me to be sure in my career choice. I, too, wanted to be a music educator. Chris Villante continued Central Bucks East Choir's legacy of excellence as the new director, and his emphasis on working hard to improve ability readied me to be a music education student at Elizabethtown College. All of my choir directors played a huge role in shaping the course of my life, but halfway through junior year, I found something lacking in my musical experience. I wanted to take part in an instrumental ensemble, but the only instrument I had any formal instruction with was piano. I approached our band director, Jason Morehouse, to see if there was any way that I could take part in the ensemble. By the end of senior year, I had moderate French horn abilities, something that I never imagined I would have. This willingness to allow me to try a difficult instrument among students who had been playing in bands for years is something that I will always be hugely grateful for. Kindness. Collaboration. Practice. Compassion. Hard work. Selflessness. Determination. I am endlessly thankful to my middle and high school music teachers for instructing me to value these traits. Without the music programs, I would be a much lesser person, and I have no idea what I would be pursuing in college. Thank you for continuing to value Pennsylvania's incredible music programs and the teachers that make it possible.

### **Amanda Schwarz**

Occupation: Student

From: Doylestown, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I love to sing and dance, but I've never been great at either. Music education provided me a safe space to explore music and express my creativity. I shared my love of music with like-minded individuals, and I truly

enjoyed my experiences. I think music is extremely important to have in schools because students need a creative outlet. I would not be the person I am today without my music education!

### **Dr. Raymond J. Boccuti**

Occupation: Superintendent of Schools - New Hope-Solebury School District, New Hope, PA  
From: Langhorne, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

After achieving a B.M. degree in music education, an M.A. degree in jazz performance, and ten years of teaching K-12 music between the School District of Philadelphia and the Neshaminy School District, my career was not initially geared to prepare me for my current position as Superintendent of Schools in the New Hope-Solebury School District. However, as I moved through the administrative positions of Assistant Principal, Principal, Supervisor of Fine Arts K-12, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction K-12, Assistant Superintendent, and now Superintendent of two different high performing school districts, I have come to appreciate and highly value how much music education has genuinely impacted my personal and professional life. When I was in high school, while I attempted to always be a diligent student, my motivation to do well in school was to ensure I had the opportunity to play my saxophone in school every day. As a music educator, I learned the importance of dedicating long hours beyond the school day in the very best interests of my music students. When I was asked in my first administrative interview if I was prepared for the "long hours of administration," I respectfully replied that the question would really be whether or not the long hours of administration would surpass the long hours of a dedicated music teacher. As Superintendent, it is so very important to be highly visible and to share the insights into my own passions, deep seated principles, and values. To this very day, I frequently achieve that through music. For example, each December in our school district's final winter concert of the season, I have been so humbled and proud to be invited each year to guest conduct our high school choir and orchestra in movements of Handel's Messiah as the grand finale of the concert and now an established tradition. In the spring, I join our high school instrumental music students for a full week as a member of our pit orchestra for our annual high school musical. Finally, at many formal events where I am asked to speak, I often request to say just a few words and then dedicate a musical performance on one of my woodwind instruments. Music and the fine arts have always been the passion that drives my personal and professional life and will continue to play an important role in whatever I pursue. In so many ways, music has always defined who I am.

### **Adam Victor**

Occupation: Student  
From: Neshaminy HS, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has shown me the best thing in the world (music), and for that I am grateful.

### **Samuel Krivda**

Occupation: Student  
From: Pennridge HS, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been the center of my life. From my earliest memories, when songs from the TV program "Barney" made me drop my toys and freeze so I could hear every note, to last week, when I worked until 2:30 a.m. on a school night to arrange a new medley, music has been my everything. Performing, listening, composing, conducting – I love it all. But that makes music all about me, and that's not enough. My goal is to make music that improves others' lives. In my limited experience, I can see how music can do this. Recently, my 99-year old great-grandmother passed away. On her last day, I went to her apartment, held her hand, and again sang her favorite song, "The Best of Times" by Perry Como. Although she had been unresponsive for a few days, she heard the song and smiled one last time before she left us. Her daughter, my grandmother, was so happy to see her smile once more. For the last year and a half, I have led the men's a cappella group at my HS. I arrange simple music that I know we can perform well as a group, and I teach it to them. Our group has performed at talent shows, concerts, parties, and even funerals. What was almost an afterthought of our HS music department is now the leading musical group that everyone wants to

join. We are best friends who support one another, contribute to school spirit, and enjoy varied performance opportunities that most of the members would not otherwise experience. The group gives many of the guys a new sense of belonging in a 2,500-student HS. The camaraderie offered by music is not limited to young people. On Tuesday afternoons, I work with a group of elderly gentlemen at the nearby Rockhill Mennonite Community. The RMC Men's Choir, which I founded in October 2013 with just four people, has grown to 12 gentlemen who love to sing together. I arrange music, teach harmonies, and conduct them in weekly rehearsals and occasional concerts for their retirement community. Ranging in age from their late 60s to early 90s, these men enjoy singing and now have a fun outlet for it. Better yet, their lady friends view them as the Frank Sinatra of their retirement community. None of these life-changing events would be possible without music education in the public schools. Although I have had the privilege of private music lessons and training, it was my elementary, middle school, and HS teachers in the Pennridge School District that exposed me to a broad variety of musical styles, composers, and opportunities. Without these music educators, I may have never had the chance to learn to make music and share it with others throughout my family, school, and community.

### **Noah Smith**

Occupation: Student

From: Pennsbury HS , Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Since I've been studying music since I was 3, it's safe to say that music education has had an immense impact on my life. It help instill discipline while allowing me to express myself.

### **Ben Cohen**

Occupation: Full Time Student

From: Sellersville, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been a part of music since 3rd grade when they started to let us play string instruments. Then in 5th grade I was given the opportunity to play a band instrument. I chose trombone because why not. I played in the jazz band in middle school and did jazz and marching band in high school. Stayed after school almost everyday of the week. It was my life. Going to football games on Friday and competitions on Saturday. I learned leadership being a section leader and gained a family away from home. I even went to Disney because of music. It was my first and most likely my last time to ever go there. Without music I simply would not be the person I am today. Music did not just impact my life. It was my life.

### **Ari Carrillo**

Occupation: Student

From: William Tennent HS, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has taught me responsibility as well as leadership. Throughout the course of my HS career, Music Education has opened up new possibilities to my possible future career.

### **Jazmin Pachas**

Occupation: Student

From: William Tennent HS, Bucks County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has brought me closer to my classmates and teachers as well as taught me organizational skills, language skills, and social skills. Without Music Education, my life would not be as fulfilled as it is today.

## **Violet Fortier**

Occupation: Student

From: Doylestown, Bucks County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music was by far the most important and integral part of my education. Through participation in countless music ensembles throughout my middle school and high school career, I have gained an incredible set of skills and experiences. Music has provided me with a passion, an enthusiasm for learning, a community of dedicated peers, a plethora of amazing instructors, and a way of carrying myself that represents the program that defined my high school experience. Marching Band allowed me to be a part of something bigger than myself, and made me responsible to a larger group. It afforded me leadership skills and dedication that I could never have gained from academic classes. In band, we strive for excellence through hard work, hours of practice and desire to be great. The band community is one of the most tight knit parts of high school. Entire families are involved in marching band, with every sibling finding a way to participate and parents volunteering and giving their time to something they know is incredible for their child. The kindness with which upperclassmen address underclassmen in band is unique to most other parts of school. United in love for making music, older kids would encourage and help younger kids to be the best that they could. When we would come back from a competition, I remember that my middle school director would say that even though we earned the highest possible rating and countless awards, he was most proud of us for the way we acted. Our band was polite, responsible and respectful. We were good sports, we thanked volunteers, we cleaned up after ourselves and we were professional. This had a huge impact on me because it demonstrated the importance of being a courteous and responsible community member. One of the most valuable things I gained from music education was confidence in myself. PMEA District Auditions were a huge deal in high school, and even though I knew it would be a challenge, I decided to try out. Working on a solo piece to play for a panel of judges encouraged me to work hard and challenge myself to do better every day. Making district band my sophomore year helped me realize that dedication and hard work can allow me to accomplish anything I set my mind to. The importance of expressing a passion and doing something you love in a community of peers in high school cannot be overstated. It has been proven in countless studies that music students do better on standardized tests and succeed later in life. Music majors are the most likely to be admitted to med school. These statistics are not a coincidence. Not everyone will use what they learn from music classes in their career, but they will carry the impact music had on their character for the rest of their life.

## **Tierney Campbell**

Occupation: High School

From: Spring City, Bucks County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am a junior at Owen J Roberts High School in Bucktown, Pa. I have been taking a music class in my school district since I was in 4th grade. I have done elementary scale musicals such as Wizard of Oz in which I was one of the henchmonkeys. I can play the piano, guitar, and flute. In connection to band, I took flute lessons in elementary school for 3 years and again for a short while in middle school. I have performed for the elite singing group in middle school and enjoyed every second of it. I currently participate in my high schools marching band as a part of the color guard, however music is essential to performing well so I am always hearing the show music in my head and in my sleep. Needless to say, music has made me the person I am today. Music has taught me that blending in with the crowd is sometimes just as important as being an individual; sounding like one choir is just as important as sounding individualized with a solo or small group performance. Music has taught me patience in learning and accepting my limits. As a first soprano, sometimes I am not always able to hit the highest note and I have learned to adapt to my faults. Marching Band has taught me the order of seniority and that there may always be a person who is better at what I do than I am. However, music has also taught me that I am not the best at a lot of what I do. It has also taught me that even if I am right in a certain matter, if a person with more seniority argues against me, I am likely to lose. No matter how depressing those thoughts may be, they are lessons that had to be learned and I am glad that I have learned them sooner rather than later. I have been taught humility and learned my place in my school. Music has given me many opportunities for enjoying myself and those around me. I am going to

continue taking as many musical classes and extracurricular activities as my schedule allows because I know they will benefit me even more in the years to come.

## **BUTLER COUNTY**

### **Molly Stenner**

Occupation: Therapist

From: Atlanta, GA, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I grew up in Butler county in the Mars school district. I was actively involved in after-school and during school musical programs from 4th grade on. Being part of the orchestra and chorus gave me the chance to be a leader with my peers, and the opportunity to work hard to learn something. It taught me discipline, the importance of working as a team toward a common goal, and gave me self confidence in my own ability to master a difficult skill. I would not be the person I am today without music education.

### **Aryanna Napora**

Occupation: Student

From: Butler, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in so many positive ways. I have learned how to read music and play guitar and piano through music classes at home and in school at a very young age. Performing on stage for chorus concerts in front of large audiences has given me confidence, has improved my performance skills, and has also helped me to reduce my stage fright. Music and music education can be credited in helping to improve my memory as well as my concentration. Reading music has also been linked to improving mathematical skills, which could explain why math is my favorite and best subject. Music has also taught me perseverance, which comes from a sense of achievement that can only come through a lot of practicing. In addition, I believe music is to be credited for my good reading and comprehension skills. Without music, I wouldn't have the hand-eye coordination that I have. Nor would I have the time management and strong organizational skills that I possess. Without music, I would be more at risk of having dementia or other memory loss diseases later in life. Without music, my life would seem so empty. Music brings great joy, happiness, and a feeling of peace in my life which fills a void that nothing else can. It is my hope and my wish for all kids in public schools in Pennsylvania to be able to enjoy the same benefits from music and music education as I have.

### **Vincent J. Sanzotti**

Occupation: Musician

From: Butler, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

... the arts have been an inseparable part of the human journey; indeed, we depend on the arts to carry us toward the fullness of our humanity. We value them for themselves, and because we do, we believe knowing and practicing them is fundamental to the healthy development of our children's minds and spirits. That is why, in any civilization - ours included - the arts are inseparable from the very meaning of the term 'education.' We know from long experience that no one can claim to be truly educated who lacks basic knowledge and skills in the arts." –National Standards for Arts Education

### **Meghan Hyatt**

Occupation: Student

From: Butler Intermediate HS, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has formed all aspects of my life whether it be with my family and friends or with in my studies. Between musical, marching band, and choral activities, my time is always spent in music or school work. Because of music education, I feel that I have found a place in this world.

### **Luke Walker**

Occupation: Student

From: Butler Intermediate HS, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life and I wouldn't be here where I am today without it. My private lesson instructor has taught me the most about music, and percussion out of anyone I know. I love to play and just listen to all types of music. I have made numerous friends through music. Most of my best friends are in marching band with me. When I become older I want to continue playing drums and percussion in general. My director has given me the opportunity to excel, compete, and move up the rankings at PMEA. Without him I wouldn't be here today writing this essay, having this chance at all-states. Music education has not only played a major role in my music career but also in my everyday life. I thank all of my teachers and instructors for all of the things they have done for me over the past 8 years of my percussion playing.

### **Megan Paul**

Occupation: Student

From: Butler Senior High, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has become a very important aspect of my life. Even though I am not planning on going to college for music, I do not think I could survive without it. Music education was given me a chance to appreciate music. When you get the chance to sing or play an instrument, you get the chance to make a form of art that is unlike any other. If you are a great musician, you can get the audience not only to hear the beauty of it, but also there will be a visual interest. Also, if it is absolutely perfect, you can achieve this musical moment that is unlike anything else, where the sound is so pure and beautiful that it moves the audience to tears. To have been able to be a part of a moment like this, and to experience it first hand is something I will never forget for as long as I live. However, kids are not going to have the chance to experience it because the arts are sadly being left out of education, but they are arguably even more important than the core courses. There is no one right answer to music. Your interpretation of a song could be completely different from someone else's, but they could both be absolutely beautiful. Music is more than just sound. For me it is a time to just forget about anything that may be bothering me and to just let it go. I will find myself singing all of the time because it is how I relax. I would not have the appreciation of music that allows me to do that if it were not for the music classes I have taken in school and PMEA festivals. I truly believe that music should be a requirement just as any of the core classes because you can learn so much more in a music class than you could in any of your core classes, and it will have more practical applications in your life than some of the other required classes. I do not know where I would be in my life if it were not for my music classes.

### **Cassandra Krul**

Occupation: Nursing Assistant

From: Cranberry Township, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I'm a current student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) studying biology and music still has a big impact on my life. I listen to classical music when I'm studying (because I've heard that helps you retain more information), 90's alternative when I'm feeling nostalgic, and a new liking of mine--celtic music. But I'll listen to almost anything in between. I had an amazing orchestra (viola) teacher for almost seven years of my life, from 6th grade through 12th grade. I learned amazing pieces of music and went on to participate in PMEA events. So now when I hear popular pieces of music on the TV or radio, I find myself easily able to identify many songs. I am proud of that ability and I am proud to say I played a string instrument. It taught me principles of dedication, hard work, and a well-rounded love for music.

### **Sarah Neubert**

Occupation: Student

From: Knoch HS, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is one of my passions. I started playing flute which stemmed from piano when I was young. Music is a way to express what words can't and I couldn't imagine a day without. Without the encouragement from my parents and educators, I would never be hooked on music.

### **Waylon O'Donnell**

Occupation: Student

From: Moniteau HS, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. I sing in church choirs, participate in musicals, I am the drum major for the marching band and participate in music classes in HS. I am a better person, and have better friends, because of music.

### **Rebecca Wells**

Occupation: Student

From: Moniteau HS, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has made me more confident and self assured.

### **Cassandra Jefferson**

Occupation:

From: Portersville, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music had impact my life by giving me something I love to do. Music has alwaysed been their for me, music helps me express how I feel. I have don't music ever since 4th grade. Music is my life.

### **Brecken Farrell**

Occupation: Knoch Middle School

From: Saxonburg, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my life. The impact music has made on me allows me to do what I love everyday. Beginning at the age of 6, I started taking voice and piano lessons. I also study musical theater and dance at Pittsburgh Musical Theater. My training has given me the opportunity to perform in professional musicals in Pittsburgh. I have also been honored to sing the National Anthem at sporting events. Most recently, I attended District Chorus and met incredible people. I make music a part of my everyday life. I work hard and train to become better. I hope to one day pursue a career in the music industry on some level. Music has helped me to become a confident communicator. This will help me to be successful.

### **Kim McGinnis**

Occupation: Student

From: Seneca Valley Intermediate HS, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a big part of my education. It is a big part of the reason I come to school. I have made a lot of friends through the music program at my school and find learning through music enjoyable. Creating songs can help me remember things while studying and helps to improve my grades.

### **Emma Brown**

Occupation: Student

From: Slippery Rock, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I never expected that music would mean so much to me, but by the time I graduated from high school it was a totally integral part of my life. I learned a lot about myself while working under my music teachers and alongside other student musicians: I could never have developed the patience, discipline, and confidence that a make a real musician without the experiences and education I received learning, performing, and sharing music.

### **Kate Matticks**

Occupation: Student

From: Slippery Rock, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me more confidence than I have ever thought was possible. It has given me friends and endless memories which I will always cherish. When piled with acadmeic work it has always been a class that I have been able to use as a de-stresser even when I am having to learn new things. It opens my mind and gives me new perspectives on every day things.

### **Jason Bluedorn**

Occupation: Student

From: Slippery Rock HS, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

For as long as I can remember, I have had a passion for music. I sing everywhere I go, whether by myself or with friends. A lot of my friends that I am very close with are involved with music too! I believe that a common interest in music has brought me closer to these friends, and I wouldn't change that for anything. Music has made me the person I am. I've met some amazing people in music, including my choir director, Mrs. Groves-Edwards, and band director, Mr. Fine. They have helped me to better my musical ability, but even more importantly they have taught me lessons about life that I will keep with me forever. Perseverance, determination, and patience are only a few examples. Without being in the music programs I have been in, I can honestly say that I would not be there person I am today. Singing in front of crowds has helped me to become more comfortable with public speaking. The most important thing that music has done for me, however, is that whenever I'm feeling down, or angry, or just looking to relax, I turn to music. Being able to be a part of such an amazing music program has allowed me to become the musician I am today, and I wouldn't trade my musical ability and education for anything in the world.

### **Derek Gieraltowski**

Occupation: Student

From: Slippery Rock HS, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My family has always encouraged me since I was younger to participate in activities that they thought I would be good at. For them, this meant that I was to be like my older brother and play in every sport possible. If I hadn't been taught music in school, I would've had a much lower self-esteem because it would've been much harder for me to find something I excel in. I love the feeling of contributing to the production of music because it gives me worth and value. I love improving, reaching goals, and receiving recognition and compliments because I feel as if I am broadening myself as a human being. My parents have always stressed the importance of good grades, and I don't disagree. However, most of what I have learned throughout HS that has truly helped me grow as a person has come from my music classes and outside musical activities.

### **Kalyn Stewing**

Occupation: Young Adult Volunteer, Presbyterian Church, USA

From: Valencia, Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My permanent address is in Valencia, but currently, I live abroad as a volunteer in South Korea, teaching English as a Second Language to children. It is difficult, but worth it. The times that we have most connected is when music is involved. Whether listening to the newest K-Pop song, or learning a new chord on the guitar, music speaks when language fails. As a kid, I attended church because I wanted to sing in the choir. I loved singing. Through singing, I found confidence in myself, learned how to work together with others to make a beautiful sound, and learned to love. Music was (and is) present for me in the most difficult moments in life, always ready to help me wallow in my sorrow and then to help me stand again. Music is one thing in my life that has never let me down. My home life was hard. I am not comfortable sharing family details, but I was in a deep depression for much of my teens. When I wanted to escape, music was there. Music gave me hope. Music gives me hope. Through music, I can express myself when my words fail. Through music, I can find the words to identify difficult emotions. Through music, I can connect with others. Music gives me life. I sing almost constantly, whether out loud or in my head. And there is always an earworm floating about in my head, often triggered by the most subtle reminder. Right now, there are two songs moving about in my head-"A Spoonful of Sugar" and "Bohemian Rhapsody." If I think long enough, I might remember why these two are the earworms in my mind presently. It's certainly an interesting combination. But that's another thing music taught me. It taught me to multi-task in a productive manner. Thinking of words, intros, feelings, rests, the time signature-all of these have taught me that each part, though sometimes frustrating (I have a very hard time with rhythm) is necessary. Music has taught me that exact thing about life. Each part, whether hard, easy, loud, soft, joyful, or sorrowful, is necessary. Simply put, music has taught me how to live.

### **Anonymous**

Occupation: High School Student

From: Butler County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has had a large impact on my life and you could even say saved it. When I was fourteen years old some events happened to where I lost a family member and 3 really close friends. For me I thought it was over everything that kept me happy was gone. Other people kept making it worse and worse. Soon I started to self harm and have suicidal thoughts. One girl was able to keep me from it and some friends told me about a few songs and bands. I took their advice and listened to them. Those songs helped me out so much and stopped my self harming and thoughts. Now every time I feel down I listen to them and I feel a lot better. This wonderful girl is now my beautiful girlfriend, and those friends are now some of my best friends. In the end I lost some people to only gain more.

## **CAMBRIA COUNTY**

### **Nicholas Mathur**

Occupation: Student

From: Bishop McCort Catholic HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My greatest touchstone in my HS life has been the Band Room. I have Aspergers Syndrome. I have always been socially awkward. But I feel at home in the Band Room. As an extension of Band, I became involved in Drama. So far, I have been in every Spring and Fall Band and Drama and Musical performance at my school. Who would ever expect the Aspergers kid to be on stage? Open the curtain, here I am. I, Nick Mathur, am a Performer.

**Michael Walther, Jr**

Occupation: Student

From: Bishop McCort Catholic HS, Cambria County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has exposed me to a spectacular variety of music genre, motivated me to master multiple instruments, introduced me to lasting friendships, and opened a whole world of possibilities for my future.

**Jonathan Kirk**

Occupation: Student

From: Cambria Heights HS, Cambria County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life tremendously because of just how it allows me to express me. Before I entered the music program in fourth grade, I was a very quiet, shy, and backwards adolescent. Now that I have broadened my horizons and became a member of the chorus, band, marching band, and musicals and plays at my school, those past characteristics have left me to now become a very open loving, caring, and friendly individual. Music has most importantly impacted my life in opening me up to not only new opportunities but also to break me out of my shell and become the jovial person I have become today.

**Michaela Schreyer**

Occupation: Student

From: Cambria Heights HS, Cambria County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music, in general, is a way to express myself unlike any other. Music education in our schools has developed this outlet for me to be myself. Music in school is something that I look forward to everyday and motivates me unlike any other class I could take. Though I do not plan to pursue music as a career, it has brought a new aspect and love to my life that I do plan to continue into my future. Through the music program at my school, I have not only excelled vocally and instrumentally, but I have learned the value of hard work and practice as well as the ability to work in an ensemble. Music is ageless and is of utmost importance in our school system and has impacted my life greatly.

**Brianna Bellomo**

Occupation: Student

From: Central Cambria HS, Cambria County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me a sense of belonging that I would not have otherwise. In my opinion, band is where all of the nicest and most intelligent pupils gather to learn and create art together. I am very proud to consider myself a band member. Plus, band gives me the chance to learn about many other cultures in a fun environment.

**Chelsea Persio**

Occupation: Student

From: Central Cambria HS, Cambria County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a huge impact on my life because this is the profession I would like to persue after college. Learning about music from my direction was an inspiration to what I would like to teach and become to young students who are like me and want to further persue music education.

### **Trevor Tarwater**

Occupation: Student

From: Central Cambria HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me something I am passionate about and placed it on a competitive level. It has also exposed me to a variety of different kinds of music, as well as given me the idea of going into a musical career field.

### **Antoine Malvoisin**

Occupation: Air Traffic Controller

From: Colver, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I sang in a chorus (at least one) every year of school since third grade. In high school I was a part of 2 choruses including our "show choir", the musical theatre program and I also took music theory. Today, I am an air traffic controller. In my free time, I sing in various local community chorus programs, I am very active in local theatre/musical theatre productions on a volunteer basis. I also have become a sound engineer of sorts...I run sound for a rock and roll horn band, and I also run sound for Conemaugh Township Area High Schools annual musical. I know how music education affected my life and when I work with the young adults there, I get to witness their enjoyment of music education. It was the music education that I received in high school that makes up the things I love to do today as an adult.

### **Ricky Stahl**

Occupation: Student

From: Conemaugh Valley HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

What I have learned in my music and chorus classes has inspired me to pursue my dream of a career in Musical Theater.

### **Agnes Klayko Manning**

Occupation: Retired ES Teacher

From: Ebensburg, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Agnes Klayko Manning My life has been enriched by various music experiences. Formal mus. ed. in high school and college only, but private lessons got me started. Since music is such an important aspect of daily life and special events, instruction can broaden student's horizons in many ways, giving them a foundation upon which to build any career.

### **Haley Cook**

Occupation: Student

From: Forest Hills HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life by advancing my skills in reading sheet music and playing instruments. It has taught me the keys on the clarinet and the saxophone. Through it I gained many friends in band and in chorus. Without it, I wouldn't have such a great appreciation for the people who make the music that I love. It's taught me what letter names go with which notes on a staff on both treble and bass clef, which I wouldn't have known without joining band or chorus.

### **Eva Golden**

Occupation: Student

From: Forest Hills HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music improved my mathematics, reading ability, reading speed, team working skills, cultural studies, language studies, social skills, ability to work with total strangers, a place to meet some new people and

make new friends, a chance to get into many amazing colleges because of what I accomplish in music. Without music, I would still be an angry lonely kid failing most of my school classes with nothing to drive me and no one there for me. Music gave me something to hold on to, and a family, if all that I've worked for is taken from me I don't know what I would do with myself.

### **Hannah Oldham**

Occupation: Student

From: Forest Hills HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been able to meet new people due to going to festivals. Learning how to read music was challenging but very rewarding. I have been able to go into marching band and be very successful in learning it. Music gave me something to do in my free time and became a big part of my life. Music made a big positive impact on me and I want to continue to do things in the music field.

### **Ian Wieczorek**

Occupation: Student

From: Forest Hills HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Through music education, I have become a better musician. This education has helped me better understand various other topics in life including math, reading, and languages. Music education is also a fantastic hobby that is perhaps more challenging than most. It requires a lot of hard work, effort, and leaves very little time for your schedule to be lax. Music education has taught me how to be hardworking, find talents I would've otherwise never known I've had, and has smoothed the foundation of an ever-growing mountain of success. I love to sing.

### **Jeffrey L. Webb**

Occupation: Associate Professor of Music

From: Johnstown, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is my livelihood. More than that, music helps me express my emotions. It helps me share experiences with other people. It helps me bring the best out of my students. Music education allows for people who to be able to accomplish something they may not otherwise be able to. Through music you learn what it is to work as a team to accomplish something bigger than yourself. You learn to rely on other people and to have them rely on you. Music education also allows for participants to use and enhance skills from other disciplines, like foreign language, physics, literature, mathematics, and psychology (just to name a few).

### **Dee B.**

Occupation: College Student

From: Johnstown, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music education, I believe I would not be where I am at today. I struggled in school in all of my courses, and I struggled to find myself and to find what I was good at. Music changed that. When I became a part of my high school band, I found myself. In a way, band became my home away from home and my "second family". I also learned a lot about responsibility and respect. I honestly do not know how to explain how much music has changed my life. Music was and still is my escape from everything, and I believe a young students need to learn about this escape. I believe music education is important to students (like me) who are not advanced in other subjects because it might give them the chance to find who they are and maybe even give them a reason to like going to school. I know I never wanted to go to school as a kid, but music changed that as well. I honestly do not believe where I would be without music education, and not a day goes by that I don't miss being a part of band and chorus. Please allow the following generations to continue participating in music. It may just change their lives in a great way.

### **Emma Miller**

Occupation: Student

From: Johnstown Christian School, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in so many ways. I am a part of choir, handbells, band, and musical, and I love it all. They have brought me friends and experiences I wouldn't have without them. They have given me a group of people to feel connected to, a new family to learn to love over that small amount of time. Music has brought me out of my shell and showed me that I don't have to just be a fade-into-the-background follower. I can be a leader and use my talents to touch others.

### **Travis Najjar**

Occupation: Student

From: Johnstown Christian School, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Being apart of the PMEA festivals has greatly helped me develop musically. I have improved my singing voice because of it. I have learned new things and learned how to implement them to improve my voice.

### **Kaitlyn Seth**

Occupation: Student

From: Johnstown Christian School, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music and music education has had a giant impact on my life. It has changed the way I see the world and helped me learn more about myself as a person. Certain music and songs know how to say what or how I'm feeling when I can't seem to find the words, and can evoke feelings I never thought I could feel. I don't know what my life would be like today if I would have never discovered all that music has to offer. Music has been my outlet since before I could remember and will continue to be. I am so gratefully to have experienced all that I have in the music field and hope to never quite learning and listening to music.

### **Kimber Berezansky**

Occupation: Student

From: Penn Cambria HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life greatly! When I was in fifth grade there was a sign up sheet for band in our music class room. I looked at it and said that band was for geeks. I then turned around and signed the sheet. Little did I know that signing that paper would change my life. I fell in love with band immediately. Music is great to listen to but it's even better when you're playing and making that music! Today, I cannot picture myself not playing music. Music education makes me who I am. Music is a passion.

### **Amanda Bergamaschi**

Occupation: Student

From: Penn Cambria HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me the opportunity to go to festivals like this one. The skills I have gained through band and such festivals make me a better musician, which may come in handy in getting scholarships for college to make it a little easier for my partents and myself to pay for my college education. So, if the opportunity arises to continue my musical education, I'm going to take it because not only is it fun and educational, but helps to prepare me for my future. Band has inspired a love for music that will never go away.

### **Monica Lee**

Occupation: Student

From: Penn Cambria HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is an interesting subject that always has something for me to learn for the past seven years. There are numerous opportunities to learn and share the talent of my music. Without it, my school classes would be very stressful. Ending my day with my band classes lets me forget the stress of my classes and helps me relax. Most of all, I have learned to take pride in the band education from performing, learning, or making music. It is a special gift and understanding that many people do not understand and it is important to emphasize the meaning of music. Music is clearly not a waste of time or class. It helps settle the mind, expand knowledge, make close friends, and even teach others how music can be filled with many sounds that create any emotion.

### **Brian Myers**

Occupation: Student

From: Penn Cambria HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a giant impact on my life. Learning about notes and rhythms helped me improve my singing capabilities and made me feel happier in life. Music education is something that has made me grow together with other people and it has made me sing out more. That is how music education impacted my life.

### **Taylor Nileski**

Occupation: Student

From: Penn Cambria HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways, including daily life. For example, it has given me a sense of discipline and a craving for knowledge, not in just music, but on a day-to-day basis. Music is my chosen form of self-expression and it could not be done without the aid of music education.

### **Tony Anthony**

Occupation: Student

From: Portage Area HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has not only allowed me to express myself artistically, it also has shaped my future and my career. As a senior in HS, many of my classmates are looking for fields and occupations to go to school for. Despite the lack of music in an electrical engineering course, I plan to also pursue music in the form of a minor. This will allow me to further my education and ability in music, and also prepare me for a career in acoustics. In the future, I plan on researching and expanding the field of acoustics by designing speaker and personal audio devices unlike any others seen before. This will propel the music industry and open up doors for others who would like to listen to music at the highest caliber possible. Music education has made me think more about my future than any other course I have delved into over the many years I have studied music. It has been an experience that I will hold on to and let grow. The moments made rehearsing in many different festivals and summer camps have shown me emotions I never thought I was capable of feeling, and the impacts of running a musical about six million times sticks with you. When it comes together, music has made an impact on me and the world that can never be erased, and that is truly beautiful.

### **Tyler Cadwallader**

Occupation: Student

From: Portage Area HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a universal emotion. It is the only force known to man to be able to express emotion. With the changing modes and everything, it just happens.

### **Madelyn Single**

Occupation: Student

From: Portage Area HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life. It not only furthered my education, but it has taught me how to get along different people, and it has let me meet new people. Music education is a wonderful thing, and I wish all schools had the opportunity to learn music.

### **Karsen Bailey**

Occupation: Student

From: Richland HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My entire life revolves around music at my school. Almost every day after school lets out, I spend the next 2-6 hours in our schools various music programs. These programs not only make sure I always have something to do, but they help me grow as a person.

### **Kaela Cardarella**

Occupation: Student

From: Richland HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is an escape for me. It has given me a place where I feel I belong. It has taught me foreign language, mathematic skills, science, history, and is demanding both physically and mentally. Music has taught me how to interact with people and has branched out into other interests such as musicals, modern concerts, and more. I would not have all of the opportunities I have without music education and I most certainly would not be the person I am today without it either. Music is everything to me.

### **Gabby Garcia**

Occupation: Student

From: Richland HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education helped me overcome my anxiety and break out of my shell. When I was younger I was a girl of very few words, most of the time no words at all. I was always so nervous to say anything, but I loved to sing. In the fifth grade, I tried out for my first musical. It was the most terrifying experience I've ever had, but that didn't stop me from singing. In seventh grade, I joined chorus. Chorus has been and is always my favorite part of the school day. I felt I was able to be myself and not worry about what others had to think or say about me. Chorus was my time to open up and be myself. Over the years, singing slowly helped me overcome my shyness. It made me realize I have a voice. I've had the pleasure of performing different solos and duets at concerts and festivals. My love of music has helped me decide to pursue a career in music therapy. The fine arts department at my school is like a second home to me. They have helped me so much over the years. We're practically a family. Honestly, without music education, I would probably still be that quiet girl who sits in the back of class.

### **Joshua Hilands**

Occupation: Student

From: Richland HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me an opportunity to continually strive to improve myself.

### **Madison Kriak**

Occupation: Student

From: Richland HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life since elementary school. I learned basic counting rhythms and learned to read music. This education has continued through middle school and HS. In choir I have learned to diligently work with other students, to listen to their parts and to focus on creating the best sound we possibly could for a successful concert. Music education in school has thoroughly developed my true passion for music and my appreciation for it. Without it, I would not be the singer or the musician I am today. I truly believe others share the same opinion as I do and I recognize how significant music is for some people. To many, music truly is life, and without the music education provided in school, many would not get to have their dreams fulfilled. Music education has benefitted me for the absolute better.

### **Marissa Lydic**

Occupation: Student

From: Richland HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Seeing that I've been involved with music for 5+ years, it truly has been a HUGE part of my day to day life. Music has helped me find not only myself, but friends that I plan to keep all my life. I'm currently in 10th grade and 16 years old and music has never failed me. I feel like all my life music has always been there. My mom was the first person to introduce me to playing music, she started me on the flute. Thank goodness that I realized the flute wasn't for me. About a couple of years later, I was offered the chance to try out any instrument I wanted. I chose the French Horn. Ever since that moment I learned that I'd also like Marching Band and I eventually joined Chorus which lead me to the RPAC. In all of this I've learned what my personality truly is and what my dream in life is. I plan on continuing on with music later in life, just like my director, who I personally look up to and who pushes me to my full potential every day. I truly wouldn't be as happy as I am today, at this very minute, without music in my life.

### **Salena Moran**

Occupation: Student

From: Richland HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have loved music from the moment I was little. As I grew up, I leaned toward my music educators and enjoyed learning how to broaden and perfect my musical abilities. Once the opportunity arose to participate in choir events, my choir director knew I should try it out. PMEA is the most organized and professional way to meet other students in PA who feel just as passionate about music as I do. Without these experiences and help from my teachers, I would not have gone as far nor recognize the talent I have without them. Music educators should be a part of every school. These men and women help students like myself satisfy the "art side" of our brains. Without them, there would be no festivals and no music education to help kids find their passion. These people have impacted me musically more than ever, and I am so grateful to be their student.

### **Shawn Roth**

Occupation: Student

From: Richland HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

To say music education has impacted my life is the understatement of a lifetime; music education is, in many ways, my life. Its benefits first became known to me at the age of 5, when I started my musical life by enrolling in piano lessons. Even at this early stage in my life, my newfound musicianship had enacted discipline, academic clarity, as well as the will to work harder in my day to day life. This pattern continued all the way up through my childhood education to my current year as a junior, learning many new instruments as well as exploring new musical aspects along the way. As the senior member of my school's percussion section, I have been in the band since my 5th grade year. Being in band had taught me to collaborate with other musicians to make a sound as a whole, something I had never been exposed to before. I loved being a

part of something bigger musically, and when it was brought up to me that I could also simultaneously be a member of the chorus and orchestra in junior high, I was quick to act on it. Being in these ensembles has not only done wonders for me musically, but also academically and socially. Without music, it can be very easily said that I would not be where I am today. It is by far my most successful area of study, and is even looking to be a future career choice. Without music education, it wouldn't even be an option. To put it plainly, music education made me who I am today, and I will always advocate for it to touch as many lives as possible, just as it has benefitted me in more ways than I can count.

### **Susan Blazosky**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Saint Michael, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has played an important role in my life. From listening to my favorite tunes, or singing them, or dancing with my friends, music has been a huge part of my life. I cantor and sing in my church's choir. My faith is expressed through music on a daily basis. I have seen many lives transformed through the words of a song. I can't imagine the state of my faith life without music. I also sing with the local community chorus. For me, it's enjoyable, fun, and entertaining. I have met many people through the chorus over the past 16 years. I have many good memories that I wouldn't trade for the world, all credited to my love for music. If that love wasn't instilled in me from my youth by good music teachers at school, at church, and through private music lessons, my life would be drastically different. Without music programs in school, students miss out on an essential life skill and become less diverse adults. I have personally seen what the elimination of the music program has done in the state's department of corrections where I work. Inmates who used to have a creative outlet to properly channel their musical talent were left for naught when the program was eliminated several years ago. They were so lost to no longer have a regular place to play or practice their talent. Being in a controlled environment all day, every day, can be very stressful. Music was one way to release some stress. That opportunity was taken away. It's important that music education be a viable option for all students through their basic educational experience. Not all students excel academically. Those that don't, need another avenue to channel their strengths. Schools have no problem allowing them to channel those talents through sports. Thus, sporting programs are never in consideration when it comes time to cutting costs. Yet, not all students are gifted athletically. Where do those students have opportunities to showcase their talents? Art, music, and theater are great outlets for them to explore, but if school boards choose to cut those options to save money, we will be doing a disservice to a whole group of students who will never get that chance. Without music and music education, we will create a silent society without creativity. I don't ever want to live in a world without music.

### **Alexis Edwards**

Occupation: Student

From: Sidman, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me in every single aspect of my life. The answer every politician wants to hear is that it's improved my school performance, which is true. But that's not all music has done for me. School can be a very stressful experience and music has been the only thing I have had to look forward to in school for the past 8 years that I have been a musician. It has taught me motivation, determination, perseverance, and that failure is okay. It's taught me how to make friendships and how to work with others towards one common goal. It's taught me that if you want something, you work for it; that even if you work as hard as you possibly can, someone will be better than you, and that's okay. It's taught me how to live. I don't express myself very well in words or art, but I can express every emotion I've ever had in music, and I do. I express my sorrow and my anger and my happiness through music. Music education has taught me how to live.

### **Sarah Kilpatrick**

Occupation: Student

From: Westmont Hilltop HS, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is sometimes the only bright spot in my day. No matter what advanced or AP crazy classes I'm taking, I always get a break in my day to sing. Whatever is going on in my life, music makes me happy. I'm so grateful to have been able to be educated musically my whole life and I want to continue to learn as much as I can.

### **Garrett Bunn**

Occupation: Percussionist

From: Windber, Cambria County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has literally formed me through my entire life. It opened the doors wide open to my future. Music education has pointed me in the right direction and I know it will continue changing lives, as it has to mine, for years to come

## **CAMERON COUNTY**

### **Cali Housler**

Occupation: Student

From: Cameron County HS, Cameron County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me many opportunities to travel to new places. It has also allowed me to open my horizons to new creative things.

### **Heidi Aikens**

Occupation: Director - Cameron County Family Center

From: Emporium, Cameron County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I've never played an instrument. Does it seem strange that I'd have something to say about music education if I've never played an instrument? I am a mother of 3 who has seen the positive impact music education has had on my children's lives on a daily basis. Once quiet, shy, introverts, my children have found a place where they fit in. Where they are welcome. Where it doesn't matter how strong they are or how far they can throw, or how fast they can run. It's a place where they are able to showcase a talent that brightens the lives of people all around the world, every single day. Music education has broadened their horizons and increased their enthusiasm for the future and what it can hold for them. They are part of a team, working together to win. The prize, not necessarily a trophy to be placed on a shelf, but rather one to be worn. Their trophy is the smile they see on the faces of the people who hear them play and are taken to a memory far away. The smile they see on the faces of the people who are proud of their accomplishments, of who they have become, and where they are headed with the confidence they have gained through their music education. Music education impacts us all. Some more than others, but all in a way that can not be equated to any other kind of education.

### **Brady Belkowski**

Occupation: Student

From: Emporium, Cameron County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. I remember in elementary school I would look forward to going to music class because it was so much fun. We would always do creative, fun activities to learn about music. I remember learning the cups song in elementary school and using these barrel like instruments to create music by hitting them on the ground. It was always fun in music class!

### **Jan Hampton**

Occupation: Conservation District Manager

From: Emporium, Cameron County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My family has always been musical, living up to our sir name of Singer. My "formal" music education began in 5th grade, with a phenomenal, yet crazy teacher, Mr. Ron Tusing. His simple love of all varieties of music and his joy of sharing it instilled within me the tools to face all areas in life, times of great joy and deep sorrow. When one of life's surprises arises, a tune of glee or sadness comes to my mind and sometimes to my lips. My high school music teacher, Sue Beveridge, helped me to hone those skills and emotions and gave me the confidence to provide vocal music at weddings, funerals, inductions and community events. Without which, my life would be sadly lacking.

### **Walt Holly**

Occupation: Retired HR manager

From: Emporium, Cameron County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was in chorus and band in high school. Since then I have sung in choirs and singing groups. I have moved several times and always feel welcome in singing groups. I enjoyed singing with my daughters and now listening to them sing as adults. Three years ago I began learning bass guitar and am having a good time playing with a group. So, music has had a delightful impact on my life through the years and still is.

### **Kara Martz**

Occupation: Homemaker

From: Emporium, Cameron County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a Stay at home mom/foster mom I have parented 7 children full time and numerous "temps" spanning 20 years. The public school system tends to teach children in a "sit down and listen" format. Most children do not fit into this type of learning style. Music education has been a tremendous gift to several of my children. My son (diagnosed with ADHD) started drum instruction in 5th grad, the movement and rhythmic stimulation gave him an outlet to blow off steam and better focus during times of heavy "motionless brain work," he eventually matured, developed self discipline and confidence all with out the need of medication- The drumming provided the movement necessary while requiring heavy brain concentration. My daughter, a member of the gifted program, struggled with high levels of stress and times of anxiety (as most over achievers do- placing too much emphasis on perfectionism) started saxophone instruction in 5th grad she quickly found music a way to express "big" emotions and connect with others. She was able to "perfect" her songs while learning to "feel" the music. Another daughter, by far most talented was painfully shy and struggled with fitting in and finding a place. She started piano instruction in 3rd grade and trumpet in 5th grade. Music instruction has helped her build self confidence and find a way to be seen and heard. She is emerging out of her shell with the help of "sharing" her music and songs with others. Although she has much natural talent in this area without music in school she may have never discovered her niche and soared so quickly. Leading to years of undue shyness and feeling "lost." Lastly as a foster mom I can say first hand that music has a way of saying what the heart feels but the mouth cannot speak. Children who are under my care have suffered neglect and abuse. Although the school is "sympathetic" towards these children they only address physical and intellectual disabilities. Rarely do they address emotional safety/wellness.... unless you have some diagnosis. As if being in foster care isn't enough to show emotional trauma. The music programs in school naturally helps meet emotional needs by the nature of the class... Music expresses all emotions in a healthy way. It may be the only class that day/week where a neglected or abuse child can "feel" safely, can connect with out rejection, can express without judgment. We have a saying in our house, "If you're angry and you know it, bang a drum!" In closing all children regardless of intellect, talent, emotional or physical ability benefit from music instruction the same way they benefit from reading, gym or lunch, its just necessary. I hope you keep in mind that a well rounded education has a better chance of meeting the needs of the child as a whole. The more we narrow what and how we teach the more narrow the group we reach.

### **Lynn Summerson**

Occupation: Caseworker, PA Dept. of Human Services

From: Emporium, Cameron County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is one way to make you feel good! I have 4 adult children and 3 of them participated in our school band since they were in 5th grade. My oldest went to District and Regional Band in her high school career and then in her Senior year, even had the opportunity to go to State Band! She even went on to join band in college as a University of Pitt Band member, and even was apart of Community Band for a year. My 3rd child was also able to go to District and Regional Band in his high school career. High school football games wouldn't be the same without the band urging the fans to cheer on the team! Music helps children to learn responsibility too. Most students who are involved in a music program through their schools, are usually good students who get their work done timely, allot also have part time jobs. Even as a parent with children no longer in our high school band, I can say I still attend the music concerts the school puts on in the spring and winter! I know for a fact that the children work diligently to learn the music they are responsible to play. Our local band was actually chosen in 2014 to attend the Pearl Harbor Parade in Hawaii-out of all bands in PA! They also are asked to go to Disney every other year or so to participate in the parades there-its' an honor! Please don't end music in our schools-it would be a terrible loss to all in the community, especially our children. Thank you.

### **Diane**

Occupation: Retired Social Work

From: Emporium, Cameron County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am 77 years old, but music has always been a part of my life. My mother and dad introduced me to Broadway music and the 40's Big Band sound. I took piano lessons when about 10 years old. I was in high school and church choirs. My "work year's came where my time was totally devoted to raising a family and full time employment with little time, but to listen to my favorite group, "Queen" which I still love today. When about 60 years old, I became interested in the bagpipe, bought a chanter, found a teacher and two years later bought my own set of small pipes. A friend encouraged me and others to form a group; I also learned to play the Irish drum as my bagpipe key does not blend with other instruments. When playing the bagpipe, I play a solo or introduction. Now our group, has been playing together for about three years for anyone who will listen. We have played for special events in town and at parks, the nursing home and senior centers, for church services, on the radio for fund raiser and most recently played for a Robert Burns dinner of all Scottish music. Last year we were invited to share our instruments with the elementary program at our local school. We each talked about our instruments and how to play them. The children were fascinated because we had instruments they might not be familiar with. They were, ukulele, dulcimer, Irish drum, flute, keyboard, bass guitar, violin, banjo, bagpipe and recorder. The older children brought their recorders to play for us. I have found music to be a therapeutic force and a binding agent. It is a communication to the place of the heart - complicated, yet simple. We have developed repertoires of Irish, Scottish, Valentine/love, Mother's Day, summertime, patriotic, religious-hymns, folk/country, winter and Christmas music. We have found that persons who may not communicate to any degree in a nursing home, have responded to familiar sounding songs. We have seen residents singing along and using rhythm instruments to accompany us so they can share the experience of music and beat. Speaking for myself, I do not consider myself a musician -I cannot read music - but I have a memory for music and can keep a tune and hear a rhythm. I can play the bagpipe because my eyes tell my fingers what to do. Knowing this, opens the field of the experience of music in anyone's life. There are so many degrees of knowledge of music that almost anyone can enjoy and partake at one level or another. Music is not only important in life, but it enhances one of the most primary senses. Even though I am hearing impaired, I can still enjoy and participate fully in the experience of music. I have been blessed to be sought out by a Music teacher, encouraged and challenged to play, and play and keep on playing my instruments.

### **Genna**

Occupation: Student

From: Emporium, Cameron County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Coming from a small town with very little chances to play music, my high school band was everything to me. I went to a grades 7-12 high school, so eventually the music started becoming less and less challenging. We didn't have a community orchestra or a youth ensemble of any sort near where I lived so I felt like I had outgrown music. Just when I thought I was bored of it, I tried out for PMEA district band. The chance to work with accomplished directors, and play beautiful, challenging music inspired me so much. I eventually made state wind ensemble and now I'm studying music in college and playing bassoon in many ensembles. If it hadn't been for my amazing high school band director and PMEA festivals, I'm afraid I would have never discovered my interest in making music a career. No one should ever be without a chance to discover music and it's so important to keep it alive in schools.

## **CARBON COUNTY**

### **Ellen Perkins**

Occupation: Student

From: Leighton Area HS, Carbon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has had a profound effect upon my life. I have been involved in band, orchestra, and choir throughout school. I started playing when I was five years old. I have been selected to Elementary, intermediate and HS festivals. I have come away from each experience with a greater love and understanding of music. I have been selected to State, All-East, and National ensembles and I plan to continue my education in music education and performance. I don't know what my life would be like without.

### **Diane Danielson**

Occupation: Library Director

From: Palmerton, Carbon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has brought great joy and wonderful friends into my life. For 20 years I taught preschool. I always included a lot of music, singing and dancing into my curriculum. The kids loved it and I enjoyed being able to bring it to them. Now that I'm older I sing in our church choir and play in our church bell choir so two nights a week I get to learn something new, spend time with some great friends and eventually accomplish something wonderful that we can perform for the congregation. When a piece goes well its hard to explain the wonderful feeling we get as a group that all the hard work paid off. The general music classes in school and 2 years of violin lessons as a kid really have made it easier for me to learn and keep up with others in the choirs.

## **CENTRE COUNTY**

### **Nora May**

Occupation: Student

From: State College, Cente County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by making me focused, organized, and responsible. Now that I have a task expected of me, (practicing my instrument) I make time for that which makes time for everything else. I am focused on making my playing as great as possible and having a place for it and everything now.

### **Karen Neff**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Bellefonte, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been with me from the start. I learned to talk, spell and add through music. I made music my vocation. It speaks what my words cannot. I have my deepest, most cherished memories anchored to my heart through music. I've made lifelong friends who shared the joy of making music around the world. It defines me.

I will share with you a portion of a letter written by a former student from his application for a scholarship. This is why I teach. "Throughout my elementary and middle school years, my life at home was miserable at best. My father was an alcoholic and my mother suffered from bipolar and schizophrenia... When I needed guidance, there was always a teacher willing to listen and console me. And when I needed it the most, it was a teacher that saved me from my pain. In sixth grade, my life was becoming unbearable. It was at a point where I was seriously considering suicide in order to end my anguish. But then my music teacher ... gave me an outlet for my suffering and I now had a way to turn that in to beauty; she gave me control over my life. Before music, became a part of my life I had trouble looking people in the eye. I felt so comfortable around her that I told her everything about my life at home..She gave me strength to stand in from of a judge and change my life for the better. She gave me a reason to sing again." Not all students stories are so dramatic or compelling, but I truly believe that all lives can and will be changed and enriched through exposure to teachers who understand the power that music holds. Music can speak the unspeakable, offer comfort to those in pain, help us understand the world around us, elevate our spirit and join us to a wider, more vibrant world. The idea that I find most humbling, most inspiring is that as teachers we are but a dot on the continuum, and that through us the next dots are plotted. We live on through our students as our teachers live on through us.

### **Natalie Stanton**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Bellefonte, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am who I am today because of the top notch music education that I have received and continue to receive on a daily basis. In the beginning my lessons were learned by watching my teachers, doing as they instructed me to do. Constantly being told try again, you can do it, don't give up, great job, I knew you could...these are powerful things to hear as a child. Equally powerful were the lessons that I learned when I wasn't doing the correct things. When I didn't practice or work hard, my teachers didn't let me get away with that :-). Now I am an adult and I tell my students those same things. I watch them blossom and grow, gain confidence and believe in themselves, I also hold them accountable. In addition to instrumental music lessons I also teach classroom music and it is in this environment that I truly see amazing things happen. I make music accessible to everyone. It is in these classes that students are made to realize that everyone can sing...and SHOULD! Everyone can understand music. Music is for everyone. And without music the world would be a terribly dreadful and dreary place. How would we express ourselves? Show joy? Worship? Celebrate? I realize that there are other ways to do all those things...but music is truly for everyone. To little ones in preschool right to the elderly, everyone should be encouraged to sing the song that is in their hearts. Many wouldn't have the chance for this without music education!

### **Nicholas Webb**

Occupation: High School Band and Choir Director

From: Bellefonte, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has played a huge role in my life. When I was growing up, it was my music teachers who had the biggest impact on my life. They taught me respect, work ethic, good habits and how to take care of my body and things that I care about. Both my high school orchestra director, choir director and county chorus director were very influential to me. Their impact on my life was the reason that I decided to pursue music as a career. What those people meant to me and how they guided my life was something that I

wanted to be able to do for other students. The musicians they were and the men that they were exemplified the type of person I wanted to grow up to be. I'm so thankful that I have been put in the position to affect kids lives the way I was influenced, and I focus my life on being the best me I can be for them every day.

### **Laura Mazer**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Bellefonte, PA, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Growing up, my participation in music was a major part of my life. It wasn't just that I loved singing, playing the saxophone and string bass, dancing, and performing on stage - it was also a chance for me to be part of something. Through music, I made my best friends who I am still friends with as an adult. Through music, I made some of my most cherished memories. Through music, I gained a support system that lasted through elementary school, high school, and college into adulthood. Through music, I experienced joy. Through music, I found direction for my passions. Through music, I learned discipline, control, responsibility, and pride in a job well done. Through music, I experienced a world much bigger than the very small town that I was from, learning about history and other cultures. Now, as an adult, I am so proud to be a music educator. I chose this career so that I could share the joy of music with others. Each day in my classroom, I witness students who are engaged in learning and very excited to be at school. I witness students who need something like music to help them navigate social experiences with their peers. I witness students who wonder about art, about other people, about other times, and about other places. I witness students who have found something that they love, that lights a fire for learning in them, that makes them happy to be in school. Music has impacted my life, and in turn I am using music to impact the lives of young people. It is a beautiful ripple effect that I hope can continue to ripple.

### **Kason Breon**

Occupation: Student

From: Penns Valley Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has opened up my perspective on life and how easily people can join together.

### **Elizabeth Cochran**

Occupation: Music

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It made me love music more than ever and has got me through tough times in my life. At my old school we didn't have music class. When I moved we had it and I was so happy and I learned how to play the piano which I have wanted to do for years. I think by not having music class it makes a big impact on peoples life's and how they interpret music if we didn't have music we wouldn't have sound and I know for a lot of people that music gets them to stay out of trouble.

### **Zoe Ellis**

Occupation: Student

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has opened my mind to so many doors. I can memorize numbers and patterns more easily and the skill of reading music also has helped me read different texts more fluently. It helps with my knowledge of math as well. Music is also something I can confide in and express myself through. If I didn't have music I would be lost in my own emotions. Music helps me find myself. Having music education available in school is so helpful because then if kids want to live their dreams of becoming musicians they can without having to pay money and spend extra time outside of school-time they may not have. Music education also has made me feel like I have a purpose in the school. If I didn't have music education I wouldn't be as involved in school activities and fundraisers and I also wouldn't be as compelled to participate in other school activities. Without music I wouldn't have made as many friends and special bonds, I wouldn't

ave discovered the talents I possess or the fun pastime that music provides. Music is a fun, educational way to bring many different students and teachers together to learn and be who they are, expressing themselves through music. Music also gives me something to strive for. If I ever feel like I'm on a "roller coaster" that only goes down, I can motivate myself and achieve small goals by learning more music, and music education in my school provided me with that tool.

### **Dara Hadighi**

Occupation: Student

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me a larger memory and has helped me in other classes. It is very fun and Mrs Brownson rocks.

### **Kenya Landis**

Occupation: School

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have learned how to play the flute and learned to play beautiful and amazing music.

### **Kristen Lenze**

Occupation: Student

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I grew up around music. My mom sang in the choir at our church and loved to sing to everything she knew. My grandma, taught music and my grandpa, played the saxophone and loved jazz as much as his family. My dad like music too, he wasn't always in tune, but he loved it anyways. My sister played the violin, starting young. She went to Europe with her high school orchestra to play. She earned lots of awards from everything she did. I knew I would also be sucked in because of all of that.

When 4th grade came around, my peers and I were given the chance to pick an instrument and receive a lesson during school one day each week and participate in the school's band. Many of us jumped at the opportunity, and I fell in love with the flute. 4th grade was also the year we were allowed to start choir. We didn't have a class for it, so we came 45 minutes earlier to school for rehearsals.

When middle school came around, it also helped me with the transition. 6th grade was a tough year for me and I lost some good friends. Music was a place I could go to and feel welcomed. It was also the place where I made some new friends.

All of this has taught me to be more responsible and more resilient. To learn how to take care of an instrument is a responsibility I and many others hadn't experienced yet. It helped me realize that if I wanted to do something, I had to work at it and couldn't expect it to simply come to me. Also, that music was a place that people would always be given an opportunity in. Music has also helped me academically. I'm typically a stubborn person who will work through a problem until it's solved. But if I cannot understand a concept that I've been working on alone for some time, I listen to some music, or go practice my flute. When I come back, I can take another look at it and usually work out the problem.

Many people say that this can be done with anything. But to me, music helps me concentrate, realize what I need to do, and sometimes, even find a purpose. It's helped me in everything I do.

It's also an area that I can set a goal in and not feel as pressured. I'm a soccer player as well and sometimes it can be very cutthroat. Music gives me a place to go where I can be me, and that's good enough. I can set my own goals and achieve them at my rate. I don't have to live up to the other girls on my team, or getting a high enough score on a test. Music is something that has changed my life for the better and helped me grow into who I need to be. And who I want to be.

### **Guanchen Liu**

Occupation: Student

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My mom had been a music professional all her life. She was an excellent learner, once she starts to do something, she never gives up. So I have doing music for a long time now, and I'll keep doing it.

### **Rebecca Misangyi**

Occupation: Teacher

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has provided me and my children with another language in which to learn about and communicate with the world. If music education had not been part of our public school experience, we never would have learned this language. Like spoken language, math and art, it is one more way to think and understand. It also augments learning in all other areas. Music education is as critical as any of the other subject areas and instead of cutting it further, I believe music education should be increased and be a requirement.

### **Peter Sides**

Occupation: Family Business Owner

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been part of my life from the start. My grandfather and great-grandfather were piano tuners, my mother was a music educator/violinist and my family owns and operates a musical instrument store. I played piano, violin, french horn and bass guitar growing up but discovered in 9th grade that soccer was my true love as I got older. Even after i stopped taking lessons due to my year-round soccer schedule I still found great joy in playing bass in a small rock n roll group at my high school. I quickly discovered that being involved in sports and music, particularly at a large high school, gave me the opportunity to broaden my circle of friends at a time when many of us were narrowing that circle. At college music would again have a strong impact on my happiness. After playing 3 years of collegiate soccer and sustaining several injuries I decided that what was once fun was now work and chose not to play my senior year. Fortunately I was able to immerse myself in our rock n roll cover band on campus and never really felt like there was a void in my life. My children try to quit sports, music or other activities and i'm sure i asked several times. At the time it's not easy to understand why your parents encourage you to stick with things and to not "put all your eggs in one basket." During my senior year of college when music swooped in to save the day, the advice of my parents finally made sense. Without the balance of both music and sports in my life I would have missed out on a lot of opportunities and friendships along the way and I'm thankful that they coexisted throughout the years.

### **Guy Simpson**

Occupation: Optometrist

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As the father of three children, ages 14, 12, and 12, I would state that music education has played a tremendous role in the development of their self esteem, social skills, and overall happiness. When we moved to State College from a nearby school district three years ago, one of our most compelling reasons for this was the strong music program in the State College School District. There were rumors about possibly cutting the music education program in our former school district. How short-sighted! Since our family doesn't have much interest in popular sports, which also play a large role in social development of children, music was a great way to still make friends, develop lifelong skills, and get a sense of belonging to a group of peers. I wish, like I am sure all parents do, to raise children who are confident, happy, and make good decisions as they grow up into adulthood. As I am watching my children blossom in young adults, I feel confident that music education has, and is continuing to, provide a very strong influence in this process. I should also mention that, as most parents are aware of, additional benefits of music education are better overall grades and standardized test scores, and this is also an area where all three have done and continue to do quite well. I consider music education to be an integral, critical part of my children's overall education process.

### **Rachel Smith**

Occupation: Middle Schooler at Park Forest

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life greatly. It has made understand how to read music and note names and rhythms. When I hear a piece of music, I can sort of visualize how the notes would look on paper, and see how they work. I can hear more instruments in music, and I can see how things work in my instrument, like the valves and the air flow. An education in music has helped me greatly in school.

### **Emma**

Occupation: Student

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted me in many ways. I was born listening to music, my mother is a singer and my father is a drummer. My first instrument was a little toy drum, I got it around the age of 2 or 3. My main instrument now is the flute, but i can also play the guitar, piano, pan-flute, drums, bells and a few others. (It's a long list) I don't think I have ever gone one day in my life where I have not heard at least one song sometime throughout my day. When I'm sad, I listen to music to relax. When I'm angry or upset I listen to music to ease my stress. When I'm happy I listen to music to maybe calm myself down a bit. :) Music is a part of my everyday life. I don't know what I'd do without it.

### **Rachael Babb**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music and my clarinet have impacted my life in many different areas. I often find when I go a few days without playing my clarinet I get anxious, wanting to feel my fingers fly over the keys and making music. Clarinet calms my nerves, helps me relax, and brings me joy. Without all my teachers past and present I wouldn't have this wonderful gift. I have found that most of my friends in the world of music. We share a passion and help each other grow. Out of school, it has allowed me to bond with people instantly. After knowing them for even a half an hour, it's awesome when they wish you good luck and tell you to "break a reed". Music has introduced me to so many people I would have never met and allowed me build friendship all over the state. Music has also taught me to be brave. As a musician we have to be confident in auditions and proud of the music we make. I used to be terrified and apologized after every mistake I made, but I've learned better now. Now I more comfortable in the audition setting and in the real world. I've learned to be brave, do my best, and end with a smile. I've also learned to be patient and persevere. Music, like many other things doesn't happen over night, it takes effort and time. I'd like to thank all my music teachers for the wonderful gift they've given me. Music is my life. It's what I do to have fun, and relax. It's what I listen to while doing my homework, and it's my favorite period during the day. I've learned about different cultures, era's, peoples and places; learned to persevere, work through problems, and lastly make music. It introduced my to my best friends and became my best friend. I don't know where I would be without music or the people that encouraged me to do it.

### **Luisa Bressan**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life because it has given me countless opportunities to experience different aspects of playing music. From playing in a symphonic band, jazz band, wind ensemble, and as a soloist, music education has allowed me to have a great appreciation of music. I am so thankful for all the opportunities I have been able to have in music education because they have caused me to become a better musician and find a great joy in making music.

### **Brian Cunningham**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I've met a lot of people interested in similar things.

### **Crystal Dahm**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Although much of my life is focussed on academics, music offers me a welcome relief from the stress and pressure coming from all other aspects of my life.

### **Anna Hirsch**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music education, I wouldn't be here doing PMEAs festivals today. My seventh grade band teacher in particular, although he was intimidating, had faith in me as a saxophonist and gave me the motive I needed to be hard-working and passionate about music. I am now in 11th grade and plan to pursue a career in music, and I couldn't be more grateful to the wonderful music educators I've had in my life.

### **Allison Lightner**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without musical education I would not have met some great composers, conductors and wonderful colleagues of music. I love music so much because it is something I can go to that does not make me feel stressed.

### **Annie Liu**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life in that I have met some of my best friends through music, had some of my favorite school experiences, and had a lot of personal satisfaction in playing and excelling at my instrument. Through music, I have had the opportunity to learn a lot and grow and develop. It has changed my life very much.

### **Colleen McDonough**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education makes up almost my entire school day. There is nothing I look forward to more than my music classes, and the people who teach them. My choir and band directors are two of very important people in my life, and I'm not entirely sure where I would be without them. My father is a music teacher so I thought I would never want to go into music or music education or anything like that, but I find that now, it's the opposite. Music education is unparalleled, and any school that doesn't give its students these experiences is denying its students a great deal.

**Mason Millard**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education gave me a passion, a drive, and an inspiration. Music education taught me responsibility, self-reliance, and an invaluable set of skills that will stick with me for life. Nothing has made a bigger impact on my life than music education.

**Ella Misangyi**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in many positive ways. From playing clarinet, I have learned that when you really enjoy doing something, you have the greatest success and the greatest satisfaction when you put your full effort into it. Being in music programs allows me to work at something that I am passionate about, and in addition, I have met many wonderful friends and have learned about myself and my interests.

**Bethany Parkinson**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education gives me a great opportunity during the school day to relax and forget about any stressful things that I may have to face in other classes. It helps me be optimistic; regardless of how hard my other classes are, I always know that band is somewhere I can go to just chill and make music.

**Joshua Peters**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life more than anything else. I have been singing since I was young and plan to use my voice in the future. Either in song or in a career in voice acting.

**Katie Reese**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has positively impacted my life by helping to develop life skills such as time management, leadership, and organization abilities. I also find music relaxing, and enjoy performing for the benefit of the community.

**Betsy Shields**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Because of free lessons in school, I was able to learn two instruments, go to many concerts, learn to improvise and thus play jazz. Band, choir, and orchestra has opened me to many different styles and forms of music I never would have grown to like otherwise. Music education has given me many opportunities, such as region band. I really enjoy playing and listening to music of all varieties and it is a huge part of my life.

### **Phoebe Woods**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

There's a quote that says, "The only things worth doing are worth doing well." Music is something that's worth doing. Having the opportunity to participate in music education programs has allowed me to grow as a musician and do something I love better. There isn't much more a person can ask for.

### **Hannah Youmans**

Occupation: Student

From: State College Area HS, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a huge part of me for all of my life. I would not be the person I am without it.

### **Kerrin Okane**

Occupation: Teacher

From: State College, Centre County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music was there for me when I was being bullied at school. No one was there for me, only the music teacher, only he seemed to get to know me enough to notice I was being tortured. Music was an escape, an outlet, whether I was performing or just listening. I don't know how I would've made it through school without it. Once I went to high school, I went to a private school and the teasing went away, but music changed my life in another way. I made friends that has lasted me my life in music. I had a place I belonged at the school, a group that always seemed to not only care, but understand me. I went to college on a music scholarship, and although I switched majors away from music, it still helped me go to an amazing school I wouldn't have been able to afford. I am who I am today because of music education.

## **CHESTER COUNTY**

### **Joshua Brown**

Occupation: Student

From: Avon Grove HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

If it weren't for music education, I wouldn't have a career. My parents started me on piano when I was young, and when I reached the fifth grade and began playing tuba, my band directors were the people I liked the most. They helped me become the musician I am and have inspired me to teach as they do.

### **Katelyn Dinsmore**

Occupation: Student

From: Avon Grove HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me an outlet in which I have grown and flourished. Without Music, I don't know where I'd be today. It has changed me both inside and out. I have grown more confident, made more friends than I ever thought possible, and I have learned just how much of an impact music can have on kids my age. I am so blessed that my school even has a music program, and I hope it will continue to grow in the future. I hope that music will forever remain a part of schools in all parts of America. Music has given me a chance to shine, and a strong sense of self. Music is a part of me, and it always will be.

### **Rachel Gillespie**

Occupation: Student

From: Avon Grove HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was younger (around third grade), I struggled with making friends. I was often left out of many social activities and events, and felt extremely down about myself as a result of that. Was there something wrong with me? Was it because I'm Chinese? However, during that same year I signed up for choir in an effort to get involved with others and possibly find a friend. I found that whenever I sang, all my troubles and negative thoughts seemed to disappear. I've been singing ever since then, and I know that I can turn to music anytime in order to lift my spirits.

### **Matthew McCutchen**

Occupation: Student

From: Avon Grove HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has allowed me to demonstrate my creative expression through the conduit of an instrument. It has also provided an environment lush with friendliness, passion, and talent. I am now even pursuing a career in performance music, and hope to bring this passion to others.

### **Thomas Wehrle**

Occupation: Student

From: Avon Grove HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me in a few very good ways. I used to not know what I would do with myself until I found my first musical activity: choir. Since then, I have learned how to be mature with different academic and social situations. With this, my standards for everything in my life have risen and have put me at a point where I have advanced to many different distinguished ensembles and classes along with a much larger circle of friends that I truly respect and trust.

### **Ningxuan Zhou**

Occupation: Student

From: Baldwin School, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been an important part of my life. I sing when I shower and wash dishes. And in fact I come to the United States as an international student to explore further interests on choral music.

### **Melinda Burns**

Occupation: Student

From: Chester Springs, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have always believed that creativity and imagination are the most essential parts of the human mind. There is no point in having a life where copying others and living the same way every day are the only functions of existence. This will always be true with art, and within art, the best example is music. No inspiration will ever compare to the beauty of free expression that musical performance allows. Because of this, deciding to learn how to sing and play music is the single most important choice I have ever made. Music is what has come to define my life, and I will always owe that to musical education. From the first time I sat down at the piano to the last time I practiced, the opportunities that school has given me in music have built up to make me the person I am now. I will never forget the day that I signed up for my elementary school's chorus in fourth grade, and, upon looking at the sign-up form, happened to glance at a notice for piano accompaniment tryouts. I was ecstatic, and I auditioned, but did not get a part. I kept trying, though, and it changed me forever. I made it that spring, and it gave me the feeling of accomplishment that only musicians can truly understand. Now, I have played accompaniment for years, but every song that I receive gives me the same excitement that I was able then to experience for the first time. It is a hard feeling to pinpoint, but it is almost

like being part of something greater; saying that music sparks dreams is not an exaggeration. When I try to think of one moment that has been the culmination of my musical education, the first memory that comes to mind is from my last concert of middle school. My band teacher had told the whole group right before we performed that, in his words, "In eight months you will forget what it is like to be in my band." My first reaction was tears. The music wing of the middle school was my home; I was there every day, and going there was the only thing I looked forward to in the labyrinth of work that made up middle school. I feared forgetting that above all else. That concert, there was one song in particular that I loved. It was a leviathan of sound, with a rising melody that built up into a feeling of freedom. I should have been angry while we played it- when we first started practicing the piece, I was given a soaring melody part, but I was later switched to background - but there was no way to be, when the song was so stunning. The single moment I remember came right at the last crescendo- everything was full of sound, joy, and belonging. Then there was silence, and as I caught my breath, I knew that music would always be my passion.

### **Kate Dietrich**

Occupation: Student

From: Chester Springs, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in several ways. When I first joined chorus, I was not sure if I would enjoy it at first. But by the middle of the year I realized I loved it, and it is one of my favorite classes. Chorus is an opportunity to meet new people, to learn something new, puts me in a better mood, and is another way to express yourself. By joining choir I was able to become close with others who I never had an opportunity to talk with before. It's also a good chance to spread out and make new friends. As well as being able to make new friends, it is a fun class to socialize. I always look forward to it during the day because it is very enjoyable and stress-free. It is relaxing because there is no pressure, and it is fun to participate in something you like with your friends. Also, I gained confidence by being with a supportive group of people trying something new. In choir, I learned how to sing music properly. Not only is it a fun class, but you learn a lot as well. I am glad I had the chance to learn this because it is very enjoyable. Chorus also puts me in a better mood. During the day, choir is one of the classes that I look forward to. Being surrounded by my friends doing something we like puts me in a better mood. Chorus is a great chance to make new friends and enjoy myself, but I also learned something new. I was never really involved in singing until I joined middle school chorus in eighth grade. Throughout elementary school, I played the piano but quit. I wanted to stay involved in music so I joined chorus to try something new. I learned new things that I did not know before and it is overall a great experience. Singing is another way to express yourself musically, just like the piano. Being in choir has impacted my life by meeting new people, learning something new, putting me in a better mood, and is another way to express yourself. Music is very enjoyable and is a part of my life. Overall, music education has had an impact on my life.

### **Tristan Fish**

Occupation: Student

From: Chester Springs, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My journey of musical education started when I was 4 years old, taking piano lessons every Wednesday and practicing quite often. I was too young then to really appreciate the music but I believe that it definitely had an impact later in my life. Those years of piano lessons gave me a large amount of knowledge on reading and interpreting music, which helped me greatly later in my life. When I reached 3rd grade, I joined the choir group at my elementary school and have attended choir every year since then. Those 6 years have given me many things, the most important in my opinion being an escape from routine, and some of my best friends. The idea of schooling children is a much debated and controversial topic for adults, but more so for the kids attending. It is not very hard to see that a large amount of students feel that the 6 or more hours spent in school are some of the worst in their life. While I didn't mind attending school for the most part, there were some times where that half of day in felt like an eternity of living in a nightmare. The only escape was when I was in chorus. There, all the tensions and worries of the day melted away and the only goal was to sing to the best of your ability. Without those breaks from the socially tense and judgmental area that is school, it

would have been much tougher to make it through the years. Throughout the 12 long years of school, many friendships are formed and dissipate. They may last for years or disappear in a matter of months. Since my first year of school, I have probably had hundreds of friends. The majority of these were made in chorus. As with many classes that teach arts and skills, kids usually have similar interests and personalities. Chorus is no exception. Without musical education, I wouldn't have as many of the friends that I have today and they wouldn't be as close to me as they are now. Musical education has impacted my life in numerous ways. It provided an escape from stress and helped me find some of my closest friends. Without it, I don't think I would be remotely the same person as I am today.

### **Erica Gratton**

Occupation: Student

From: Chester Springs, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in so many different ways. I learn more, meet new people, get taught very valuable lessons, but most importantly, it makes me happy. And I can say that for everyone else, it makes them happy too. Music education is not just something you learn, it is something that changes your life. Not only have I learned about note names and rhythm, but also about vocal diversity. When music is put together with the beautiful harmonies, the sound it makes is prodigious. Music connects people and it is almost as if, when singing, everyone is brought together, bound by one song. Music has taught me to get out there and be more confident. I first started off in chorus as one of those people that sang very quietly and would never speak, but as the years went on, I met many amazing people and I found out not to be afraid of performing, because they became my family. It is like a safe environment, you are not judged for what you say or for what you do. Not only do we learn music, in music class, but also life lessons. We have learned not to judge or be judged by other people, everyone is different. I think that it really affects you, and when you walk out of the door at the end of the day, you take what you learn with you. I have learned to not take one little bad grade too harshly because "you are not your grades." Music also has a way of brightening your mood even on the worst days. Even after I have a terrible day, I walk into chorus class and a smile instantly appears on my face. I look around and I am surrounded by my friends, and people who support me. Music is also a way to de-stress yourself. You can come in, being worried about all of the tests that you have that week, but all of your worries drift away while you are singing. Music is a magical thing. The ways that it can impact your life, even the slightest bit are astonishing. Boosting your confidence, meeting new people, learning valuable life lessons, and making you happy, are all some of the things music education can do. Where would I, or anyone else be, without music?

### **Erica Hild**

Occupation: Student

From: Chester Springs, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been a gift I have been given throughout my entire life. I have had many opportunities to be educated in music, and I took every one I could find. It has given me confidence in school and also through life. Music has been there to comfort me and has relieved stress through the hard times. It also has taught me how to work with others. It is something I love, and it will always be with me. It was clear from a very young age that music education has made a difference in my life. When I was in kindergarten, I started singing in my church's children choir. Before choir, I was a very shy kindergartener, I would cry, and I would not talk to anyone. Choir helped me open up at church and at school. Music education gave me the opportunity to become confident, and I took it. In a month, I was a different person who was not afraid to express and share her opinions. I was given this newfound voice, and I was not afraid to share it. Music education has also helped me get through difficult times. When I was in sixth grade, I was in my middle school's musical. Also during that time, my dad was in the hospital with heart failure. The musical, my music teachers, and my fellow actors helped me cope with the stress. I had to admit, it was hard performing the musical without my dad there, but the musical helped me get through the time. Luckily, once the performances were over, my dad was able to come home. Education in music has also taught me how to work with others. In music, it is important to work and listen with others especially when a song has parts. If

you do not work together, the song will not be balanced. Sometimes, I think of music as a team sport because of the teamwork that goes into singing a song. In school, you also need to learn how to work together; otherwise things will not go as planned, and you will not succeed in your task. I also believe it is important to know how to work with others because it is a skill you need going into the workforce. Music education is what I desire everyday of my life. It is a confidence builder for me in singing and school. Also, it helps me get through what is bothering me. It even helps me learn how to get along with other people. I understand that music education impacts people in different ways which is an amazing thing. Music brings out different emotions, and it is one of the few things that can do that. I am grateful that I have music in my life, and it will always be a part of me.

### **Madison**

Occupation: Student

From: Chester Springs, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Musical education programs have changed my life for the better. I used to be shy, a really shy child. One day I decided to raise my hand in church choir and audition for the solo. I could feel my heart beating out of my chest, but I decided to go for it, and I ended up getting the solo. That moment changed me. I realized: If I can sing in front of a whole room of people, I can present a project in front of them, I can introduce myself to one of them, and I don't have to hide in the corner all my life. I began doing school musicals. That introduced me to a world of happiness beyond what I ever could have imagined. My favorite was a Summer Stock program at Neshaminy High School, where I performed in Carousel. I have now had countless solos and found a new passion in my life, just by raising my hand. My singing career began in fourth grade with chorus; however, middle school chorus was what opened my eyes to how far I could go with my voice. My director, Mrs. Cheryl Markofski, had me sing the alto part in the fall of my seventh grade year. As much as I tried to get out of it, and as much as I did not want to sing the dreaded alto part, she forced me to. Then, I tried out for Varsity Singers, a vocal ensemble, in eighth grade. I got in as an alto. In that singing group I learned to love sight-reading, and I began to secretly appreciate the alto part. Now I am a proud alto, and I was recently nominated to audition for the Honors Performance Program at Carnegie Hall (by my church choir director). I sent in an alto audition piece. This voice part switch has helped me to flourish and enjoy my music even more. Music is an outlet for me. My freshman choir is a class where I can show off my true self proudly. My teacher, Ms. McIntyre, has created a safe environment where all of us are friends, and we all venture out of our comfort zone, because we know that no one in our choir judges each other. Every Friday we play games, and Ms. Mac talks to us about life in between showering us with new musical information. I have already learned more from her in two months than I have learned in all five previous years I have been a singer, both music theory and valuable skills. One talk she gave us that was particularly motivational was about how a person is not their grades. The grade that a person receives in school does not make them a better or worse person, and one can choose how he or she takes on the world. A bad grade is not the end of the world. Educational music is a life-changer.

### **Jenna Gillam**

Occupation: Student

From: Conestoga HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It helped to get me into college.

### **Michael Godfrey**

Occupation: Student

From: Conestoga HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It Has!

**Amy Liu**

Occupation: Student

From: Conestoga HS, Chester County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is love; Music is life!

**Joseph Warner**

Occupation: Student

From: Conestoga HS, Chester County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It got me into college!

**Matthew Ceresini**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Downingtown, Chester County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a dramatic and positive impact on my life. When I was in early elementary school I learned that music was a medium in which I could express myself and be confident. I was able to apply this confidence to the rest of my life. I was able to approach the rest of my time in school using what I learned to think deeply about issues and decisions. I learned to think about the why, what, when, who, where and how, and then apply that information to my life situation. Music also taught me to think about the needs of others and how I can be an effective part of a team. It became an avenue by which I can understand pain and relish joy. At all times, music is with me, and I am better for it. Now in my professional career as a music teacher, I find that music helps me interact in different ways with many different students. Students look forward to music class, being creative, collaborating with other students, and performing. We strive to create compelling and artistic moments, and many students report that they feel like music class is a place where they can be their true selves. Because of music education I have found a career which I enjoy greatly and hopefully my students find their school experience that much more rewarding.

**Danielle M. Cullen**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Downingtown, Chester County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a source of great happiness for me. My band director in junior high, Mr. Ronald Lamar, was one of my favorite teachers. He was a great leader, and was very encouraging to me. He suggested that I start private lessons, which I did. Mr. Lamar was also my band director when I was in high school, and he supported me during auditions and course selections. My favorite memories are from playing in band in junior high and high school. I love making music with others, and I'm so thankful that I get to make music with my students each and every day. Music is one of the things that makes us human, and it brings me great joy.

**Marissa Martini**

Occupation: Student

From: Downingtown East HS, Chester County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life because without it I would not have the lasting friendships and love for music that I have today. I never would have chosen to pursue music as a career without the incredible music programs that I have been a part of in middle and HS. I cannot imagine my life without the friends that I have made through music education. I am very grateful for the amazing experience that music education has given me throughout my school years.

### **Christina Murray**

Occupation: Student

From: Downingtown East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has opened me up to more opportunities than I could possibly list in 500 words. It has allowed me to express myself and my emotion, learn how to read and understand music, and socialize with other people with the same interests as me. Music is one of my favorite activities and most treasured passions, and I can thank music education for that.

### **Ethan O'Grady**

Occupation: Student

From: Downingtown East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has driven me through some hard times in my life and has also been a relaxation during the stress of HS. The music education and opportunities it has given are far greater than I could have imagined. Music is what I love now because of the early introduction into music education my school district has given me. I would not be anywhere near Regional choir if it had not been for my expansive music education.

### **Laney Pleasanton**

Occupation: Student

From: Downingtown East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to express myself, make lasting connections with others, and grow as both a musician and a student. I feel that receiving a quality education in choral singing, music history, and music theory has helped me to become more culturally aware as well. Singing provides an outlet that I can use to escape the stresses of everyday life.

### **Danielle Rodgers**

Occupation: Student

From: Downingtown East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. I used to be involved in sports but I never felt like I could be myself. When I joined my schools music department I felt like I belonged. I got very involved and gave me something to live for. I am very thankful that I have music in my life, and I am also thankful that my schools music department is talented enough to be able to give me a great education in music.

### **Marissa Tomeo**

Occupation: Student

From: Downingtown East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a tremendous impact on my life. I am quiet, somewhat shy, and studious, so singing makes me feel as though I have an escape. Being in music education classes has helped me take my mind off of what my social life lacks. However, music classes have allowed me to be more comfortable and confident with myself and I have made some good friends because of it. Singing has helped me to feel special and talented in a way that is solely for me. Unlike academics, music education seems to lack the competitiveness of normal classes, allowing for a more welcoming, casual environment where students are free to develop as individuals. Overall, music education has made a strong impact on my life because it has enabled me to become comfortable with myself and more confident in who I am.

### **Rachana Mudipalli**

Occupation: Student

From: Downingtown STEM Academy, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education in chorus has taught me a great deal about the importance of teamwork perseverance, and hard work in accomplishing a goal. In this case, that goal would be to make beautiful music.

### **Henry Pearlberg**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: East Fallowfield, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From my childhood through my adult life, music education have given me my identity as a person. There is a sense of fulfillment that is without description that music education and my involvement in music has given me. From performing music as an individual to performing music with others, relationships have developed that otherwise would not have existed. Appreciation of life and the arts would not be the same without an experience in music and music education. As a music educator for over 30 years, I have witnessed first hand how music education has positively impacted students in all aspects of their lives as well as improving the quality of life in the community that I teach. Music and music education has a unique way of bringing people together both as performers and as listeners that is not possible in other ways. Music and music education strengthens student's educational experiences in all facets; from academics, to arts, athletics, and community life.

### **Mijka Smith**

Occupation: Student

From: Elverson, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music: one of the world's greatest pleasures. I personally started with music at an early age. When I was about three years old, my mom enrolled me in a Kindermusik, a music program designed to introduce young children to the fundamentals of music education. There I started learning about rhythm, how to read music, and started playing the recorder. After finishing this program at age six, I started taking piano lessons. The foundation of knowledge that Kindermusik provided made the transition easier. I enjoyed practicing every day, and my teacher's patience with me made the experience fun. These piano lessons have made learning other instruments easier, and instilled in me the good discipline to practice on a regular basis. In third grade I decided to take up the violin. It had always been a dream of mine to play the violin, and I was very excited to start lessons in school. I took lessons for five years before switching to private lessons. It was when I started private lessons that I truly began to enjoy the instrument. My teacher was very flexible with what types of music I worked on, but also provided a good structure for my lessons. We focused on fiddle music, but she also made sure I learned classical pieces so that I had a well-rounded education. In total I have been playing piano for ten years and violin for seven years. Although I stopped taking lessons for these instruments about a year ago when I moved, I still enjoy playing at home. In the past few years, I have begun developing a more personal connection with music. What my teachers had been telling me for years finally started to sink in. I began to connect emotionally with not only the music, but the instruments as well. This bond has helped me deal with many of the stresses I have recently encountered, and step back and relax a bit. Overall, music is a huge part of my life. In addition to my first two instruments, I have also recently started teaching myself guitar, mandolin, alto saxophone, and I sing. Without music education and the many opportunities it has given me, I would not have a major creative outlet. Music is a wonderful part of who I am, and the lessons I have learned from it will stay with me the rest of my life.

### **Maggie Kennedy**

Occupation: Student

From: Great Valley HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a huge part of my life ever since I was a child. I grew up listening to my parents sing and play piano and guitar. I began to take piano lessons and loved music class at school. I have been a part of all the general and honors choir groups at the middle and HS level. I take voice lessons outside of school and perform with our Drama Guild. Music makes me happy every day and I am so lucky to go to a HS that has such a strong music department. The music wing truly is my escape.

### **Katherine Li**

Occupation: Student

From: Great Valley HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made my school environment more comfortable. I look forward to going to choir every day. I have also made many new friends through music groups and classes at school. In addition, music education has brought joy to my life. I am always happy when I am around or making music.

### **Benjamin Nurthen**

Occupation: Student

From: Great Valley HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has enriched my life beyond any other subject in all ways. Not only do I hear the world in a new, more intricate way, but I appreciate the amount of effort taken by composers and musicians to present music in desirable ways. Music education has inspired me to pursue it and has driven me to be passionate about its continuance in schools for all ages. In addition to passion, music theory education has opened new doors instrumentally for me. I've been able to teach myself instruments from scratch and build original chords and compositions alone, utilizing my musical knowledge. Essentially, music education and the application of that education has become my center of focus as a student.

### **Benedict Roemer**

Occupation: Student

From: Kimberton Waldorf School, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has had a huge impact on my life from a very young age. It has served as both an escape from the academic stress of school and also as a way to connect to other people who have an interest in music.

### **Lauren Fisher**

Occupation: Student at Owen J Roberts High School

From: North Coventry, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

If you were to ever ask me, how has music impacted your life? I'd respond with, "You might want to grab a chair; this is going to take a while." And my story would begin from there... Ever since I was little music has always been a big part of my life. I always loved listening to those cheesy Kidz Bop CDs and other kiddie music. Music wasn't my favorite subject back then, but I decided to join the elementary chorus for the fun of it. When I took chorus with some friends, they were always commenting in how they thought I was good at singing. I decided to test their opinions by trying out for a solo for chorus in 6th grade. Along with my other two friends, I was granted to sing a solo for A Whole New World in the Aladdin movie. I got really into singing after that, so when the opportunity came, I tried out for District Chorus. I was really nervous because I really wanted to get in and learn more about music and compare my voice to other talented singers from different elementary schools. Three words. I GOT IN. I was so excited I nearly screamed. I only knew one other girl in my school and her name was Sami. Every day I sat next to her and we would have fun and joke around during practices. Through all of those practices, there was one person that stood out the most. She sat and

isle directly across from me and had really big curly blonde hair. I heard her every time we practiced and her voice was AMAZING. I've always remembered her because she always wore crazy outfits that I found hilarious. When it was finally time for the concert, we went to the Middle School to perform. I was so amazed by the Middle School thinking I'm going to be here next year. Next year in 7th grade, during lit links, I recognized the same girl that was in District Chorus with me in my class. She told me her name was Kaiden and that she recognized me from District Chorus too. I learned that she was in my chorus class as well, and we became really good friends after that. Even now as a freshman at Owen J. Roberts High School, we are still the best of friends. I've heard my voice change throughout the years of being taught musical education at OJR, but nothing like I've ever experienced before. Recognizing so many new people from District Chorus and becoming friends with them, was so amazing to me. So yeah, music education throughout the years has impacted my life greatly. I've made so many new friends, and I've learned and experienced things I'll remember forever. I'm very proud of how far I've come in the music world. And I can't wait to share my story with other people.

### **Alexander Meek**

Occupation: Student

From: Octorara Area HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has created a community in which I feel comfortable, a place where I can go to unwind and simply immerse myself in music. The atmosphere that exists while our band is playing, that feeling of working together with other students to create something larger than ourselves, it is greater than anything that can be found anywhere else in school. Music is important to me because it has become something that I can hang my hat on, something that I know I can be proud of. Being able to say that means a lot to me, and its music education that has provided me with the opportunity to experience something not many people are fortunate enough to be involved with. Music and Band are my home, its that simple.

### **Madeline Sapp**

Occupation: Student

From: Oxford Area HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Imagine a room full of students using one simple gift to produce sound so powerful it moves the soul and brings tears to the eye. This is what music means to me. My passion began when I was a child, when I was involved in school choirs, local ensembles and small theater productions. My love for music truly blossomed when I entered HS. I was introduced to a group of people just like me and conducted by an astounding teacher. As a freshman, I was in awe of the astonishing tone of my peers and the sensational quality of music that was created. As I grew older I became more involved in the music department, becoming a part of the school's Choral Ensemble, Women's Ensemble, and the Modern Music Masters Honors Society. I have developed a close relationship with my choral instructor, whom I look up to and emulate. I have formed many friendships within the class. Our music group is also active in our community. The group volunteers to sing at local events and travels to New York and Philadelphia. I have also developed leadership skills, becoming the chorus' Vice President, as well as the Vice President of Music Honors Society. Through my involvement with music, my sister and brother have been inspired by me to pursue a singing experience in their respective schools. I hope that students after me will be educated and motivated by their music programs like I was and will continue to be. Singing has taught me about unity and collaboration, and that hard work and dedication produce astounding results that benefit not only the singer, but the community as well.

### **Thomas Sumner**

Occupation: Student

From: Oxford Area HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My experiences through music truly define me as a person. Through music, I have learned dedication, patience, and teamwork are the keys to success. The skills I've learned by singing are applicable to many

other aspects of my life, particularly my studies. I cannot thank my choir director, Mrs. Wydrzynski, enough for the hours of hard work and dedication she pours into our music department. Mrs. Wydrzynski is the only teacher I've had every single day of HS from freshman year up to the present, and I've loved every minute of it. She has made chorus my favorite class, and she always brightens the room with her energy and commitment to musical excellence. Mrs. W. knows what I'm capable of, and never lets me give anything less than my best. I may be leaving HS in a year, but I will take the life skills Mrs. W has imparted in me through an education in music wherever I go.

### **Sejung An**

Occupation: Student

From: PA Leadership Charter School, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in numerous various ways. It gave me a source of passion and taught me what it means to work hard and have perseverance. Studying music opened my eyes and ears to countless number of great pieces that I came to appreciate. It also gave me opportunities to share music with others. I've also met a great number of wonderful people through music, including one of my best friends and my greatest cello teacher. Music education is one of the most significant things that shaped my life.

### **Weston Lickfeld**

Occupation: Student

From: Parkerford, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The music wing: a sector of Owen J. Roberts High School that is concealed to an irregular proportion of our student body. For the few who have chosen to explore the confines of this "impractical hallway", they have found just the opposite. Choir, band, and orchestra students alike have found a family in this adjacent appendage of the architecture of our academic asylum, and I am one of those students who have that privilege of calling it a home. Music is a form of expression, and although this is a trite phrase, it is exemplified in a shy teenager who is afraid to speak in front of crowds. Even though I could be scared to stand in front of my English class and recite a line of Shakespeare, singing the word hallelujah over and over again in perfect harmony with others comes more fluently. A choir, just as example, is composed of individuals. These individuals come from different backgrounds and social groups. The exhilarating part about music is that it brings these personalities together to form magnificence out of variances. A nerd and a homecoming queen can sing a duet in flawless harmony, while a skateboarder and a theater lover could be waiting in the next verse. That is exciting to me. I am also enamored by music's ability produce lifelong friends with people I would have never encountered in my AP classes or my swim practices after school because of this diversity. A formal school setting for this musical education is under-appreciated in today's society. A classroom provides a student with an atmosphere where he or she has an incentive to impress and to improve. Auditions for solos are an adequate example of where this is applicable. In a setting at home, alone, it is necessary for students to possess self-determination and motivation to improve, which not all teenagers retain. Without a classroom, I would have no desire to practice staying on pitch or my scales. Whether it is for personal gain or for improvement of the choir as a whole, students in classrooms are motivated. After all of these invokes of thought, when presented with the inquiry, "if the music program is cut from schools, will it even make a difference?", I simply cannot control my impulse to expel a chuckle from my lips. The purpose of this essay is not merely to nostalgically reflect as my graduation date roles near and my days of high school choir trickle down away from infinity, but, moreover, to force a declaration. This declaration is that the music program, in fact, positively influences lives. Music programs stimulate, instigate, encourage, produce, and magnify. They invite, rejoice, mold, inspire, unify and unite. The impact of musical education will never be viewed, in my eyes or the eyes of my peers, as simply an experience of the past, but as a constant inspiration on the future because of the morals and ideologies it has inscribed in us.

### **Madeline Sager**

Occupation: Student

From: Phoenixville, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

"I think music in itself is healing. It's an explosive expression of humanity. It's something we are all touched by. No matter what culture we're from, everyone loves music" (Billy Joel). Music is universal, and it brings people together because of that. I am able to sing every day through my participation in concert choir at my high school. This musical education has impacted my life in a positive way because of the experiences I have had and the connections I have made. Throughout high school, I have participated in choir, and it has always been enjoyable. I have been able to sing every day and express myself through the music. I love to sing, and choir is a great way to do something that you love while learning at the same time. Our class has practiced and performed many challenging pieces, and learning that music has been a new experience; both challenging and rewarding. Choir has also provided me with various extra-curricular activities that have impacted me in a positive way. As a freshman, I was able to sing and dance in the Thanksgiving Day Parade in Philadelphia. This unforgettable experience was only possible because of my participation in choir. Other enjoyable experiences I have had through choir are performing for my school in concert, auditioning for select singing groups, and being a part of an A Capella group. These new and engaging experiences helped to further my love of music and singing. In addition to gaining new experiences from choir, I have also made new connections with people. Concert choir surrounds me with a different group of people from my usual crowd, so it gives me a chance to branch out from my friends and make new ones. Without choir, there are many people that I would not have met and become closer to throughout high school. I enjoy meeting new people, and it is especially rewarding to find a group of people that are all working toward a common goal with enthusiasm. Because of the connections I have made with new people and the experiences I have had, I truly believe that music education has impacted me in a positive way.

### **Catherine**

Occupation: Teacher, parent

From: Phoenixville, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education IS my life! I found a voice and passion through the Music programs at the Pennsylvania Public schools I attended. My life is filled with Music because there was a place in school where I could excel beyond testing, books and classrooms. A place where I was part of something greater than myself - a place where it ONLY works if you are working as a team. Making Music made me see the world through a wider lens. I chose a path in Music - no, was called to a path in Music - because I was exposed to and had the opportunity to immerse myself in something that made me smarter, more passionate, more compassionate, more driven, less self-centered, and less inhibited. I can only hope that I pass to my children and my students the joy, sense of ownership, and rewards that come from Making music. I know that they find a place to succeed in my Music classroom that they may not experience ANY where else in the building. Keep Pennsylvania strong! Keep Music alive in our public schools!

### **Eli Brown**

Occupation: Student

From: Phoenixville Area HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music and music education has been a big part of my life. I have been studying music through singing and instruments since I was 5 years old. Music has been an outlet to release stress and to expand mind and my character. Throughout my many years of music education I have made many great friends who I would not have made otherwise. Music has been a huge part of my life and it offers me an alternate way to expand my education in a non traditional way. I love music, and I think if it weren't for music education in the public school system I would not be nearly as advanced in music as I am now. Music education has made me into the person I am today, and I cannot deny that. If I am having a bad day I can go to my music rehearsals and just forget about all of my problems and my stress and just leave it at the door. The great thing about music is the ability to get lost in it. That is what music education means to me.

### **Chris Fitting**

Occupation: Student

From: Phoenixville Area HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been a huge part of my life over the past several years. My school's choir has been like a family to me over the years. At times where it felt like no one was there for me, the choir was. I have made many friends during my years in the choir. I have always felt like I have been accepted when I am with the choir. I am thankful to have had this opportunity, and it is important to me that everyone who becomes involved with the choir has that opportunity. As a musician, I have come a long way. I used to be deeply confused when looking at a piece of music. I am now able to learn music quickly as well as teach it to my section. Simply by taking all vocal exercises seriously, my range has nearly doubled in the past three years. In addition to this, I believe that I have gained more resonance in my singing voice. As a senior who will not be majoring in music, I am still able to say that being a member of the choir has taught me lessons that I will remember for the rest of my life.

### **Brittany Lynn Bartholomew**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted many lives around the world. When I was little I listened to country music all the time and I will never stop. Then when I became older I started singing a lot. An example would be when we were at a family reunion, where there was a stage, I was the only person that sang every song. Music has relieved my daily stress, every day I go home and listen to 92.5xtu {which is country music}. Music has impacted me by inspiring me to join chorus. Being in chorus inspires me to be a country music singer when I grow up. I want to sing, write music and play a guitar. One reason music has impacted my life is inspiring me to join chorus. Inspiring me to join chorus gets the fear of singing in front of people out of me by singing in the concerts. It helps me to improve for being a singer. But being in chorus is not the only thing that music education has helped me with. Being in chorus inspires me to be a country singer. Wanting to be a country singer inspires me by.... becoming somebody that I want to be. I might become rich, I might get more chances. Singing makes me happy and it relieves my daily stress by singing the music I listen to. Singing is not the only thing that has impacted me with music education. A third reason is getting and or playing a guitar. If I get a guitar, I would play it all the time. Playing an acoustic guitar would help me write music. Playing a guitar would help me find how high my voice is. I would stop being on the computer. There are tons of reasons why playing a guitar helps me, but I never told you how it helps with my music education. Playing a guitar would help me start thinking about the future with playing it and writing the music. Learning to play the guitar has made me to appreciate listening to music more. Finally my last and final reason, listening to the music. Listening to music relieves my daily stress. Listening to music has helped me learn the music and helped me to write more music. In conclusion music education and music in general has impacted my life a lot.. Music has impacted many lives around the world including mine. Like music relieves daily stress people have or get. Being in chorus helps you improve your voice and it gets your voice ready to sing in front of people if you want to be a singer like me.

### **Elizabeth Bealer**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is defined as an art of sound. It conveys emotion with the use of rhythm and melody. Music is a form of expression. It teaches people to communicate their feelings and encourages confidence. Music teaches people many important lessons and life goals. Those who teach music are responsible for bringing the joy of music to young people. I have been blessed to have a comprehensive music education from a very young age, and attend a school that encourages music. Music education has molded me into the student that I am today. It has taught me how to count rhythms, how to read music, and how to express emotion through

music. Music is apparent in life every day. Whether we hear, sing, or play it, we experience music. In my life, music education has given me a love of music and a newfound confidence. My first memories of my music education are from elementary school. I remember attending music class every week and enjoying learning new songs and the basics of rhythm. When I was in fourth grade there was an assembly where all of my classmates and me had the opportunity to listen to instruments that we could start playing. That was the first time I remember solely hearing the sound of the flute. In that instant I knew that I wanted to play it as well. I loved the way it sounded so light, yet so powerful. I have played the flute ever since and yet every time I hear its sounds; it renews my passion and love of its music. Learning to play the flute seemed daunting to a young fourth grader, but every teacher I had encouraged me to keep trying, keep making mistakes, and, above all, keep playing. Music education taught me that in failure there is hope. That is one aspect of music that I love. Music's imperfections make it beautiful. As a young child I was always very shy and reserved. I rarely spoke unless spoken too and preferred to not stand out. Learning music, though, has made me a more confident person. In elementary school my choir teacher encouraged me to sing and join the chorus. When I started chorus in fifth grade I knew I had made the right decision. My teacher taught me to sing out and express myself in a way I never did before. Not only did my choir teacher help me to blossom, my band teacher did as well. I started to play louder and in middle school I even played a solo. Music education has helped me grow into the person that I am today. It has instilled in me a love for music and a more self-assured attitude. I am blessed to have such a wonderful music education and will surely be benefited by it in the future.

### **Cameron DelGatto**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education can change one's life. Music can be an important piece of anyone's life, which is why I believe it is essential for kids and teenagers to be educated on it. Music education can push kids to express themselves in ways they would not have expected. It gives students something to look forward to and helps them de-stress. Also music education can give a child more confidence in themselves because they feel more accepted in a musical environment. Music has impacted my life by helping me express myself, putting me in a better mood, and giving me more confidence. During music class, or choir, I am given the chance to give my input on what I would like to do in class that day, what I would like to sing, or I am allowed to speak my mind and tell stories. My teacher lets the students in my class and I tell her that we would like to take a break that day because we are not feeling well, or are having a bad day. It shows us that we have someone who truly cares and makes us not afraid to be ourselves because we feel safe. Music class is an enjoyable subject that gives us students a chance to relax and have fun. I know that I look forward to chorus class the entire day because I know that I will be interested in what I am learning, and that I can enjoy myself while doing it, which puts me in a much better mood. My chorus class is somewhere that I know I will not be judged, or mocked because I am supported and respected by everyone in my class. On multiple occasions, my teacher has reinforced that in that classroom, we will not be judged and that it is ok to be different, which all in all gives me more confidence outside of the classroom too, because I know it is ok to be whom I am. Self-expression, a good attitude, and confidence are all things that are encouraged in music education. Music education make students feel more comfortable in school and makes them happy, which is why it should not ever be denied in schools. I know from personal experiences that music education is something very special and I will remember my music classes for the rest of my life. Music education is not only enjoyable, but memorable. It gives kids a way to create fantastic memories and open new doors for themselves, which is why it should never be denied from schools.

### **LeeAnn Dempsey**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. Music helps you a lot internally with your feelings and emotions. Chorus class puts me in a better mood every day; I always look forward to it. Singing in class in front of people also helps to build your confidence for outside of the chorus room. Chorus is a place where no

one is judged, and a place where we all understand each other. Consequently, it definitely helps me to release stress and get away from the pressure and worry of other classes. Hearing the speech about “your grades are not you” goes along with this idea and definitely impacted my life in a positive way. Music education has taught me how to express myself and to be my own person. Especially the time in chorus class when we talked about how us and our voices are like apples and they are good for different styles or types of music just like how different types of apples are better for certain recipes. Music education has also impacted my life in other ways, externally. Learning rhythms, tones, and singing techniques have helped me to notice and pay attention to music in real life, like on the radio or live. All throughout elementary school, music education has taught me how to play the violin. In addition, music education has helped me to learn to play a little bit of piano. Chorus class has also made me make so many new friends throughout the years. Since I started chorus in second grade and even now in ninth grade, I meet some of my best friends in choir. Singing is a great way to bond and have a common interest in people with. Chorus is a fun, social part of my everyday school life. Music education has given me more vocal diversity. Hearing and learning how other people sing has made me a better and more diverse singer. Most importantly, music education has taught me how to sing. From everything to taking breaths at the right time during a song to knowing how long to hold out a note, music education is responsible for teaching me it. Music education has taught me to love music. It inspires me to sing in my free time, and I have fun singing with my friends.

### **Daniel P. DiMarino**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Since the first few years of elementary school, music education has had a tremendous impact on my daily life. Starting at a young age, music was an intriguing activity which sparked my interest, even as a toddler. It was evident that I was blessed with musical talent at 18 months, when my parents, who were music education majors in college, and had embraced expertise in music education, noticed my ability to match pitch with my father within my own range. If it weren't for music education, these abilities would not have progressed in such a way to lead me to where I am today in my understanding of musical concepts and repertoire. My parents had introduced me to various composers, including the masters of Bach and Beethoven, Mozart, among others. However, it was not until the first one or two years of grade school when I was able to understand who these people really were, and what their significances were. Elementary music education also introduced concepts of music notation, which was a fairly new concept to me, and helped me to understand how the wonderful music I was hearing was recorded on paper to be played for centuries. These simple concepts were very important in guiding me as a potential musician. In first grade, I began studying piano privately out of interest, and also because it was a skill my parents struggled to learn in college, and they thought it would be a wise decision to have me begin when I was young to avoid difficulties later in life. Music education was helpful in sparking my interest to pursue something which has, in retrospect, had a positive impact on my life. In third grade, I began learning to play the violin, which was an interest I sought to pursue. While many of the beginning string players had a difficult time learning to read notes, this was already a skill I was fairly familiar with, which allowed me to move forward in the process of learning the technicalities of the instrument. Because music education has solidified my interest for music, I have been able to pursue dreams I never thought I would have been able to pursue. During my daily life, music keeps me cheerful. Anytime I experience struggles, music is there for me to escape from anger and sadness. During stressful periods in time, music soothes me, calms me, and constantly reminds me what a gift I have. I plan to continue to perform until the day I die, and music education is the reason I have become so devoted, and so attached to music.

### **Sierra Fish**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is often an overlooked subject in schools. People often forget how important music is to children and adolescents and the impact it can leave on their lives. I, personally, am one of these

adolescents who treasure music. The fact that my high school's music program is well-established makes me a very lucky student. Choir has been a huge part of my life since elementary school. I could not be more grateful for what experiences singing has brought me. Chorus is a safe-haven from the outside world where I can let my creativity and passion for singing show. Also, the friends I have met in choral ensemble are very important to me because nothing bonds students together more than a common love for music. The skills I learn in music education can also be applied to other aspects of my life. Performing in front of an audience builds confidence and makes me feel more comfortable to speak in public. Also, a deep knowledge of rhythm and how music is composed helps me to stay on time in dance class. These musical skills are not often recognized, but help me on a day to day basis. Overall, my experience in my school's musical program has not only made me well-rounded, but also a more quality person.

### **Mary Flaherty**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Musical education has improved my life in ways no one else can even think of. I enjoy being a part of orchestra and choir, and having previously been in Varsity Singers in middle school. These activities have allowed for me to make more friends than I had previously had. Then again, before I started my musical career I had little less than two friends. I was not a very popular individual, nor am I now, but I gained loyal, helpful friends. These friends have helped me through many hardships in my life. For example, many people used to make fun of my religion and my new friends have, on multiple occasions, defended me. Had I never been in orchestra or choir, I would never have met these friends. Orchestra and choir have helped me learn more about the real world as well. Before chorus and orchestra, I had been a very frightened girl who could barely talk to a single person. Orchestra and choir helped me overcome this fear by making me go up on the stage and perform for other people to see. While I am still a bit afraid, I have come to realize that this kind of reaction is normal. Everyone else has stage fright. I am not alone. Again, this is something that orchestra and choir has helped me overcome. I am deeply indebted to these hobbies.

### **Emma Flinchbaugh**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Starting in grade school, everyone had music class. My music teacher, Mrs. Rowley, enjoyed music and loved teaching us, which produced the effect of inspiring myself and many others to love music. At this young age, we were taught general music, such as playing a variety of instruments, learning basic music theory, singing, music history, music appreciation and studying famous composers. I fondly remember playing all different types of instruments and how fun that was, because you could try them, but not have the stress of practicing regularly. For my first two years, I had general music class in school and private piano lessons outside of school. Playing the piano helped me read music better, sing in tune, and harmonize better with the other kids. After experiencing different instruments in music class and eager to expand my knowledge in music, I joined the junior orchestra in 3rd grade by playing the violin. In 4th grade, the opportunity of being in the school chorus and the concert band were announced, so having the desire to sing and play another instrument, I joined both. The instrument I chose to play for band was the flute. Overtime, I decided that playing in the orchestra was not something I enjoyed and that the band was more to my liking. I quit the violin, but continued to sing and play flute and piano. By the end of elementary school, my years of flute and being in the concert band had prepared me for the middle school concert and marching bands. As for singing, participating in chorus, district chorus, and Chorus Fest had added to my singing experience, so hopefully one day I could fulfill my dream of being in the high school Seven-Ups singing group. In middle school chorus, we sang many popular and present day tunes. This helped familiarized me with songs that are popular today, since I don't often listen to pop music. Also, there were other extra-curricular choral activities I took part in like Chorus Fest, which once again increased my singing experience and exposure to different genres of music. At my seventh grade spring concert, I was asked to accompany the chorus on the piano. It was a nervous experience, but impacted me by giving me the experience to accompany the chorus

the next year. In middle school concert band, playing for Mr. Hess was great! He was funny, taught us key points that really made our band sound great, and he was also very hard-working. His teaching also had a huge impact, because he made music fun, enjoyable, and yet still taught the class and prepared us for the High School band. He did the same in marching band, by teaching us how to march and do the forms, how to multi-task, and introducing us to memorization, sound projection and blend in different settings. I moved on to high school with noticeable improvement in my instruments and my amount of musical knowledge.

### **Olivia Foden**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Before I had taken music education classes, to me, music was just music. It was nothing but a catchy tune or a few words with instruments playing in the background. Once I began taking choir courses in middle school and high school, my whole perspective on music changed. I began to observe music more in depth, so now through these classes, I have improved my music comprehension, connect with others, and truly appreciate music for what it is. Through the multiple music education classes I have taken at my school, I have learned to read music, which is a very big step for me. I have never played an instrument in my life, but now I understand keys, notes, measures, and various other aspects of musical compositions. By grasping these critical features of songs, I comprehend music more efficiently and am able to sing pieces by reading, not just by hearing the teacher and repeating. When I walk into my chorus class each day, I am welcomed with such a comforting environment. The people involved in my courses have similar interests, so we easily bond in class. I can sense the class's connection especially when we sing together as one choir. The way each section sings together and the various harmonies sung easily brings a smile to my face. The supportive and positive attitudes of both the teacher and the students simply makes Choir one of my favorite classes. Most importantly, I appreciate each and every note in a song I either sing or hear. Ever since I learned about the process of writing and reading music, I fully understand what experiences the composer undergoes. Also, the course allows the students to be exposed to different genres of music we would not have been introduced to otherwise. Being exposed to these unique pieces helps me to appreciate not only the specific genres I prefer, but a variety of them. Improved music comprehension, connections with others, and being very appreciative of music have all been positive changes caused by taking music classes with my school. My perspective and understanding of music has completely changed and I have become more confident through music. No longer will I need to hear the music played before I can sing it, no longer will I be afraid of being judged thanks to the supportive students and staff I am surrounded by, and no longer will I just view music as words with instruments playing in the background. Music education is truly a blessing and I am so thankful that I was given the opportunity to take such a class as Freshman Choir.

### **Owen Gift**

Occupation: None

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

For students, school functions like nutrients to a plant; school provides the student with the necessary things the student needs to flourish. However, a plant will not do well if it only gets one type of nutrient; it needs a variety of nutrients in order not only to survive, but thrive. School may provide math, science, and history to my brain, but these are only the basic "nutrients" that my mind needs. I need something to combine everything I learn on a daily basis. I could play basketball, or baseball, or some other sport, but sports are only able to be played at a relatively young age, and a variety of other factors also limit when I can play them. However, if I do something that will stay with me forever, I will have something to do and think about until I die. For this reason and many others, I chose music as my main interest. Music education has been with me for most of my living days. Music has impacted my life because it allows me to use my brain in a different way, allowing my brain to grow even more and for me to gain more knowledge. Music can be used in every subject, even math and social studies. For example, if I have sixteen measures of four/four time, that is sixty-four beats all together. The history of famous music composers and instrument inventors can help me understand social studies even more than I already do. I also get to combine my senses, feeling the piano

keys under my hands, seeing the way to strum a guitar, and listening to the different pitches of singing voices. Music education has allowed me to combine everything I know into one fascinating subject, allowing me to grow more as a student and further fill my brain with knowledge.

### **Sarah Hampton**

Occupation: Student at Owen J. Roberts High School

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Modern education places an emphasis on science, technology, and math; those with aptitudes for engineering are praised for their quick minds and immense skill. The clack of keyboards and the glow of computer screens have gradually become the predominant track of advanced students. There is much more to the world, however, than machines and numbers, and these lessons are best taught within the sound-proofed walls of musical practice rooms. Musical education has provided me with the opportunity to explore my personal identity as well as with invaluable life experiences. Crisp breezes and changing leaves announce the presence of fall, but the season would be incomplete without the sound of the marching band occasionally blaring from stands in the stadium. The true season begins in August, when around a hundred teenagers sacrifice their summers to participate in the unity that the band provides. Required to follow a conductor and march in step with the timing of another, members abandon their individuality to become part of an organization that is greater than themselves. This is observed in the band room as well, when instruments from different sections must balance their tones as well as their volume in order to find the perfect harmony that is associated with beautiful music. Marching band and its unique structure has taught me what true leadership represents; one must earn the respect of their peers before expecting to lead them. As the mellophone section leader this lesson is particularly pertinent to myself. Band has shown me that I possess the capability to be a leader as well as the desire to belong, and it has taught me that respect must be earned through one's own actions. Every major event at our high school is vocally accompanied by the choir, yet the true value of the choir is seldom known by those who are not involved with it. They are unaware of the underlying bond between members who share a love of creating beautiful music and pleasing those around them. In the same manner that each voice part builds off of one another to create a fuller sound, each individual brings a different set of skills to every group, and they all have value. The intense, complex pieces that we explore express raw emotion, and navigating their various chords has taught me that there are a manifold of ways to portray a single feeling. Self-discipline is necessary in order to contribute to the choir as a whole. Choir has shown me that there is beauty in every situation, and that every individual person has worth and importance. Music education has shown me a world full of emotion, beauty, discipline, and complete unity. It is certainly safe to say that my French horn has left an imprint on my life as well as my leg, and that the choir room has been a place of sanctuary, for music teaches all of life's greatest lessons. My musical education has molded me into the complex person I am today.

### **Claire Hampton**

Occupation: Student at Owen J. Roberts High School

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Society has continuously encouraged that one's way of thinking is either logical or artistic. In our school there is a painting I like to ponder about when I pass it-located in the North Wing LGI hallway, it has two parts. On the left side is a gray and white portrait with logical illustrations; the right side is colorful with artistic illustrations. This portrait makes me wonder whether or not it is possible to be both mathematically inclined and musically inclined, without the two interests competing too much. Although less encouraged by the school, music is one of the most important forms of education I have received. Music has helped me positively in countless ways, and I would not be the same student or person without it. My musical education provided from the Owen J. Roberts high school has taught me discipline, hard work, self-expression, team work and the importance of the individual. Discipline is an activity, exercise, or a regimen that develops or improves a skill, and the music lessons I have received since fourth grade have taught me the discipline of playing multiple instruments. Along with discipline comes hard work, and learning an instrument is not easy, but the joy of mastering one is one of the most rewarding feelings I have ever gotten. After hours upon hours

of practice, hard work becomes second nature and is easily applied in other aspects of my life like school work and other extra-curricular activities, such as my dancing. Practice has allowed me to learn many instruments so I am able to express myself with the joyful, loud sounds of a trumpet or the daintiness of the flute; these are creative outlets for me. The gift of song and voice can be manipulated in many different ways and is for many, especially myself, the easiest form of self-expression. Both band and choir have taught me about team work and patience and about the overall importance of the individual. For a choir to sound whole, every participant must sing and positively contribute to the group adding his or her own tone and touch to a piece of music. Every individual is working towards the common goal of having a beautiful sounding choir. To reach this goal it takes patience, for every part is individually worked on. It may be tedious and time consuming, but is worth every second of devotion. Although a band and choir are groups the individual is important in each, for every action one makes affects others as well. A single wrong pitch would not affect the overall sound greatly but many wrong pitches create a clashing sound. In society the individual can be lost to the greater picture, but band and choir have taught me that this is incorrect, and that every single person is important. I believe that is the most valuable lesson I have received from my music education.

### **Leah Muthler**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been my passion, even from a young age. As a child, I found constant joy in singing whenever I had the chance. Taking piano lessons from my grandmother at the age of five taught me to read music and laid a foundation for my musical journey. I began taking huge leaps in my knowledge of music when I began taking private vocal lessons the summer after my eighth grade year. It was like a whole other world opened up for me when I discovered what my voice could really do. My vocal instructor was also the chorus director at the high school. As a home schooled student I had not been aware that the opportunity was available for me to take chorus in school. When she asked me if I would consider joining the high school chorus, she didn't have to ask twice. After joining chorus as a freshman, my journey in music took off. I learned about singing in parts, something I had almost never done before. I learned how to follow a director when singing, and I greatly improved my sight reading skills. I got involved in County Chorus and an extra-curricular singing group. I got involved in the wonderful craziness of putting on a musical. I learned so much in such a short amount of time that I nearly became overwhelmed with it all. My sophomore year was another spectacular part of my journey. I was more confident of myself and I knew what I was capable of doing. I worked towards becoming a leader in my section and did my best in every rehearsal. Later in the fall, I tried out for PMEA District Chorus. I made it into Districts and had an amazing time. While there, I discovered something called solfege that I have come to know as an amazing tool in music. I learned how exciting, and also how tiring, spending an entire day rehearsing is. I was amazed at the talent of some of the musicians I was singing with. From Districts, I made it to Regional Chorus. There, I realized just how many extremely talented young musicians there are. I found the level of difficulty increased, but saw that the increased difficulty only led to more beautiful music. It was truly a wonderful experience to know that all the students there shared the same passion for music that I have. Through all these experiences, music education has greatly impacted my life. Music taught me confidence in myself and my God-given abilities. When my family moved at the end of my sophomore year, music gave me a connection between my old home and my new one. It was one thing I knew I would be able to continue. My musical journey will keep going, no matter where I am, or what I'm doing. It will keep on going, until the very last note.

### **Victoria Rivkin**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I first joined choir in fourth grade at only the age of ten. I attended East Coventry and I always adored Mrs. Anastasia. There is always something uplifting with music teacher's spirits and attitudes that make you want to be just like them. In fifth and sixth grade I was involved in district choir which was a remarkable group,

which I was privileged enough to join. Once I left elementary school and was in middle school I had a new teacher named Mrs. Markofski. She was so considerate and kind yet funny and smart. She always cared so much about her students and you could tell by her patience with the crazy middle school attitudes. Once I started into high school in ninth grade, I had my third music teacher, Mrs. McIntyre. Mrs. McIntyre is the most uplifting, charismatic, patient, hardworking, loving teacher anyone could have. When I first had her class in ninth grade, I was in the freshmen choir that consisted of approximately fourteen girls. Having a classroom where you could be as outgoing, free minded, and spontaneous as you'd like, was a diamond in the rough. I cherished the moments I spent so closely with my classmates and the unique sound we created with our voices in unison with our petite collection of singers. After freshman year, in my sophomore year I joined the concert choir. The concert choir has much more intense music tones and rhythmic exercises that really test your knowledge. I love to sing but can never really grasp the understanding of reading notes fluently. Through a lot of personal hard work day after day, I am finally getting closer to my goal. When we work on voice exercises daily, it is a real test to say the notes not only correctly, but sing them appropriately also. Music has helped me find my hidden emotions through the uplifting and/or distressing songs. I listen to music at least five hours every day. Music relaxes, composes, lightens, and inspires me to be me; a happy, united, and best me I can be. Music has been a part of my life from as young as I can remember, and always will be due to the magnificent occurrences I have had from my music teachers. Thank you all.

### **Izabelle Shiffler**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My name is Izabelle and I am a freshman at the OJR High School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Music education has greatly impacted my life as of late. I play the clarinet and I started marching band for the first time over the summer. Through marching band, I've met so many amazing upperclassmen that I probably wouldn't have met otherwise. The marching band is like a family; we all work hard together and have fun while working. We're stuck with each other for hours on end at practice, and band camp, not to mention cavalcades, and we make the most of it. Music education has brought so many students together. Marching band not only is super fun, but you get to see all the friends you made. This year I have also started taking choir class for the first time. Knowing how to play the clarinet and read music has greatly helped me learn how to read the choir songs music. Both choir and band are amazing music programs that I enjoy greatly. I get to do what I love: sing and make music with all of my friends and people I've met in both programs. That's why I love band so much: there are so many different songs we practice and perform. Our marching band show's theme this year is the Beatles. I love all the songs we play, and in my opinion, it is a good song selection when starting marching band for the first time. I was so nervous for band camp to come along in the summer. I thought I would be really bad and get yelled at. When we had Freshmen Day, which was a day the band had for all the freshmen to learn basic marching skills, I learned so much from the section leaders and other instructors. Through marching band I have learned a lot. I learned how to be more disciplined. I learned how to work hard for hours on end, without slacking. I have learned how to be one hundred percent confident in the songs, and have fun while looking great (during the shows). I also learned to appreciate how hard everyone around me is working. The directors don't get paid to do marching band, they do it because they love it. They create the show and figure out the songs we will play and a bunch of other behind the scenes hard work that some of the people in band probably take for granted. Music education has greatly impacted my life. My music education has opened many opportunities as well as helped me meet some amazing people along the way. Through my music education I have learned many things. One being to work hard until you reach your desired goal. I have also learned how to appreciate other people's hard work that I may or may not know about. I have also known that I love music, whether that means singing it or playing it.

### **Madeleine Simmons**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is an essential and ever-present part of my life. My schedule is packed with musical activities which often consume hours of my time and that I enjoy. But what enables me to participate in such a thriving musical community in and out of school? Most of my musical endeavors and many of the activities I engage in would not exist had I not received excellent musical education from school teachers and private teachers. One way music education has affected my life is that it allows me to study cello and piano, and to aspire to become a musician someday. Without the basic training in rhythm and note reading from my piano teacher when I first started piano, I never would be able to play the pieces I can play now. I also would not be considering music as a career in the future had I not been taught to play piano and cello by private teachers. The most simple concepts taught to me from my early years in piano now enable me to face the challenging pieces and exercises I am assigned without difficulty. Musical education also offers me the opportunity to be part of a musical community and to take part in numerous musical events. The level of my piano skills taught to me by my teacher has made me eligible for many piano festivals/competitions. I am awarded superior ratings, but I always attribute these successes to the excellent instruction from my piano teacher. As for cello, I have been accepted into several events which would never have happened for me unless my abilities had been sufficient enough to be approved for them. A favorite festival of mine has been PMEA Stringfest (and Chorusfest). An out-of-school opportunity I gained from superior musical training was entrance into Reading Symphony Youth Orchestra (RSYO). I would have had no chance of being accepted into the orchestra had it not been for my cello teacher, who helped me to master the art of the instrument and receive a principal chair. Without the necessary musical training, one would never be able to execute the high caliber of music presented in RSYO. Music education is a gift I am very fortunate to attain, and it empowers me to engage in a most ambitious endeavor: mastering music. Without this privilege, my plans for the future would be entirely different and I would not partake in all of the musical events that I have in the past. I can perfect impressive pieces. Music education has given me all of this, but the paramount gift I have been given and greatest impact is simply the joy of learning music.

### **Alison Stevens**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is a very influential, important part of my and many students life. Since I can remember, I have been very shy and always felt different from peers. Music has helped me open up more than usual, express myself, and create a social life. Music classes are usually enjoyable but still educational. When I do participate fully in Chorus I enjoy and find myself feeling a little less insecure. For the past three years I've dealt with a lot, and my music class has helped me be more confident. It is a community that is very supportive and caring. An example is when I left the school last year for about 5 months, when I came back, no students really noticed or cared all day until I entered the music room and everyone was asking kindly where I was and what happened to me. Since joining Music Education classes, I have opened up more. I have social anxiety, and being able to connect with people who share a common interest in a casual environment makes it easier. I have made best friends through these classes whom I might have never spoken to outside of music classes because of being too shy. The social aspect has the biggest impact, I think, on any student in Music Education. I have opened up a lot through Chorus. In 7th grade I never said hello and couldn't look anyone in the eyes. I am now in 9th grade and I can look people in the eyes and say "Hello" back to anyone who says it to me. I may not be a social butterfly, but music classes have helped me open up more than I ever thought I would. Overall, Chorus and music education classes have greatly impacted my life. They have helped me improve myself by helping me gain confidence, encouraging me to interact with peers, and teaching me to be original and true to myself.

### **Brianna Summerill**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Sets My Heart on Fire. Since my early childhood it has been very apparent that music has influenced my everyday life. Watching old home videos, my family and I laugh at a younger me putting on performances

in my living room. A few years following that, in third grade I rushed home with permission slip to join my elementary school's choir. Every year after, I consistently auditioned for solos and participated actively in many different musical events. In middle school I auditioned for my first musical, High School Musical. Without prior experience, I did not expect to be cast as the lead. This surprised me, and gave me additional confidence to continue my musical career. Now in high school, I am a member in of the choir, audition for the musicals, and partake in select musical groups. If I did not have music in my life I would be utterly jaded. An amazing aspect of music is that the principles never change, but different musical arrangements can be so diverse and unique. Music is my release. Throughout every rough or joyful time in my life there has always been a song that expresses my emotions. It gives me an outlet to express my opinions. Singing is not the only musical activity that I have dabbled in. I also played violin for a few years, and I took piano lessons for 7 years and I continue to practice playing. Learning to play the piano has been life changing for me. It has opened up so many doors in the music world. Not only am I now able to play classical music, but I can accompany myself whilst singing. Music always makes perfect sense. There are numbers, and rhythms, and counting involved; which all comes together harmoniously to produce divine and meaningful music. I believe that music is one of the most distinctive and an individual form of art. There are countless ways for a person to express his or her passions, sentiments, and values through music. Music as an art form can be interpreted in a numerous amount of different ways. Whether it is playing an instrument, singing, or even listening to music, music is around us constantly. It has impacted my life because it is part of who I am. If I am describing myself, one of the first adjectives that comes to mind is musician. Without any form of music in my life, my life would be dull. I believe that it is very important that all schools around the world incorporate music into the curriculum. It is crucial that students have the opportunities to take part in such an expressive subject. I have found the person who I am today and who I want to continue to develop into, through music. Music sets my heart on fire, and it will for the rest of my life.

### **Jonathan Arditi**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had an enormous impact on my life. As Handel wrote in his opera Rodelinda, music is the "source of all gladness", and he could not be more correct. Through all the exposure to music through the music education I have had in my life, I have gained happiness as well as fundamental skills that prepare me for life, and I could not be more thankful. I have taken piano lessons since second grade, played the upright bass in the school orchestra since fourth grade, and participated in school choir groups since fifth grade. I also participate in school musicals. Now, as a freshman in high school, I see the amazing benefits all this training has given me in my academic life. For example, music has helped me with some fundamental math and science skills. Exposure to basic and complex rhythms through my early lessons gave me a strong ability to comprehend numbers and their relationships as a young math student. Additionally, developing complex tonal harmonies in music theory, and analyzing them in many Baroque-era pieces have helped me to develop my logical-mathematical mind and has improved my ability to problem-solve, do algebraic proofs and balance chemical equations. Music education also assists in language education. My experience with many classical choral songs' poetic lyrics has helped me to develop skill with the English language, while exposure to songs in languages besides English has helped me in my comprehension and diction of foreign languages. My historical knowledge has also been improved my music education, because studying the many composers and styles of the ages has given me an interest in their contemporaneous worlds. While music education has assisted me in my scholarly pursuits, it has also impacted me in other ways. My music education has taught me that one needs focus, determination, and a positive attitude to succeed. To excel at anything, whether academically, athletically, or artistically, one needs to devote himself and put one hundred percent of his or her effort into it. Liszt would never have been such a famed pianist if he ever wasted time instead of practicing, and in the same way, Michael Jordan would never have been a two-time inductee to the Basketball Hall of Fame if he didn't take time to practice shooting hoops. I, personally, would not be a very good student if I lacked the dedication I learned from my music education. Music education has also brought me into contact with others who share the same interests as I do. I have made many close friends because of my involvement in music, and I could not imagine what my life would be like, or what kind of a

person I would be, without them. So, overall, music education has had a profound impact on my life. I would be a different, unhappier person without all the music education I have had. I support Handel's claim: "Music, music calleth with voice divine!"

### **Joan Bickley**

Occupation: Salon Manager

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

By shaping the minds of composers and musicians I love, THEIR education has built the soundtrack to many parts of my life growing up... And now, it is a VITAL part of my daughters daily life. She is a percussionist at Spring-Ford Senior High School in Limerick/Royersford, PA. Learning to play, and learning to read music has helped her with her academic studies (she had difficulty with reading as a first and second grader-learning to read music helped her learn to read!)...music has assisted her in healing after a terrible knee injury that required surgery...and it gives her a social circle to be a part of at the end of the school day and after games and competitions. She once told me, "It is so hard to practice as much as we do, and it isn't always easy to focus in music when you know you have a math or science test coming up, but knowing that in order to keep going in music and band I have to keep my grades up, it gives me a reason to work even harder. I love the challenge of it all..." Music education is so important to me, because I see that it gives children a place. It inspires them to work harder (and smarter to balance out the practice, homework, and studying!)... It is so important to me, because I see it light up my child, it assists her in reaching goals of following her passion, and it is showing her, that yes, she can have it all. Her teacher, the assistants, and the administration in her District, along with you, our Legislators, are the ones that keep this alive in our District. For that I am grateful, and I know she is as well... Thank you.

### **Kelsey Brobst**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is needed in every student's life. I have always been taking music classes and it lifts my spirits. All day we have classes that give us stress and giving us so much information in a short amount of time. When we get to sixth period freshman choir, we can have fun and have a break from our taxing classes. Everybody has a bad day and personally, listening to music lifts my spirit. We can go into class and Miss McIntyre can tell as soon as we open the door. She has a way that will brighten our bad day. If we are feeling self-conscious she will tell us how even though our class is so different, all of us together can sing harmony and each one of us will make our class sound better. Listening to Miss Mac makes my pupils feel better about themselves and its wonderful to see. It is proven that music releases stress, and we need a stress-reliever in our daily life. Music is very important to have with us and it has definitely impacted my life in a positive way.

### **Nina Flamiano**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

"Music produces a kind of pleasure which human nature cannot do without" (Confucius). Many can listen to a song and enjoy it, but it takes a true lover of music to be moved by it. Music education has impacted my life in many reasons, in school and out of school. Music helps me to express myself and relieve my stress. It has always been there for me when no one else was, and it can understand me like no other person I know. In my life, I have been accustomed to music since I was a toddler. I would always be singing Disney princess songs, and my parents would record it. To this day, I still watch them and laugh hysterically at myself. I joined elementary choir, but never seemed to enjoy it. The teacher was not so serious about singing, so I quit, and I never got back into singing until the summer of 2011. Towards the end of my 2011 summer, I took my first guitar lesson. I was 11 and one of the oldest in my class. I was a pretty fast learner and became top of my class quickly. I then took private lessons to further my knowledge. At first I was learning note theory

and basic chords. I started taking singing seriously again when I covered songs on the guitar. The first song I learned how to play on guitar was Teardrops on my Guitar by Taylor Swift. The year of 6th grade, I gained a lot of confidence. I was able to in front of my first crowd. In the crowd, there was about 70-80 people. It does not seem like a lot, but in the eyes of an 11 year old, that was terrifying. I still remember shaking and sweating during my performance, but it was all worth it because I received many kind and heartwarming compliments afterwards. When it was time to go to middle school, I rejoined choir because I fell in love with singing and music once again. Middle school brought all elementary schools together, and that made me move backwards. I lost confidence hearing the other students voices, and thinking how much better they were than me. I did not try out for anything involved with performing, and to this day, I still have not performed in front of a crowd since my first performance. Now, I am in high school. I hope to regain my confidence I had in 6th grade and excel with that confidence. Music has impacted my life greatly. Without it, I would be lost. My feelings would be trapped inside me, and it would not be able to get out. Singing and playing guitar helps me to forget about the world for a second and be happy. Everybody need music in their lives. It give you the chance to be free.

### **Navdeep Handa**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In Maria von Trapp's immortal words, "Music acts like a magic key, to which the most tightly closed heart opens." The key of music is a versatile tool, compact in its size but large in its implications. Both in a literal and figurative sense, it shapes the world, whether that world is comprised of staves and ledger lines or skies and earth. This minuscule key is an apt metaphor for the way music has impacted my life: it has both unlocked gates and changed the tune of my world. Music is the most astounding, visceral connection to the world our ears will ever make, and its presence in my life has brought me closer to the world around me; it has unlocked the metaphorical gates to the fullest experiences of life. Though I have been singing and playing the violin for almost my whole life, the connection really started to deepen in middle school. When I made it into Varsity Singers in eighth grade, a missing sense of purpose was reinstated, and I spent the eighth grade closer to my fellow peers and happier in my day-to-day life because music took up a large role in my life. Though I do not participate in that select ensemble anymore, the impact it had on me persists; I am much closer to music, and I gained many technical skills, like improved sight reading, stronger vibrato, and dance-singing synchronization, from that experience as well. Conversely, as I finally came to peace with singing, I had to face the battle of violin. Having played it for a long time as a child, I did not think taking a year off in seventh grade would have had the impact it did. Much to my surprise, I found I was lagging far behind my peers in my technical skills, a struggle that has lessened but that I still face somewhat to this day. Whatever the odds, though, I did not simply give up; music unlocked the perseverance inside me, and I kept trying to be better. It has improved me as a person. It is not just music that I play that affects me, either. Every time I listen to a track, my mood is altered, and I gain a new perspective on life in listening to lyrics. It never fails to instill a new sense of purpose within me, and I am better for it. Music has made me a better person, more in tune with my surroundings and with new, unlocked elements of personality. I wear that key around my neck every single day I approach life, and it never fails to provide me with the tools and perspective I need to face it. In every sense, the key of music is the key to the fullest life.

### **Julia Maenza**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life and my general education significantly. The music room (and later on in my education, the music wing), was always a safe place for me. Ever since I was in elementary school, I saw music as an outlet to release stress and express myself. When I was stuck in bullying situations, I always knew who I could come to, and that ended up being my chorus teacher. Though I may have not always gotten a solo, it was a very valuable experience I would not have changed for the world. Also, throughout the stress of my high school freshman year, my choir teacher is always there for a pep talk or to

vent to. She does not just care about my music career, but how I am doing in general. Many times during the week she will teach us useful lessons, such as “you are never alone”, “there is always someone for you to talk to, I am always here for you” and “you are more than your grades.” These lessons are powerful and impactful in life and in choir. Music student or not, everyone should have a person like this. As a musician and an actress, music education has also helped me in these fields of my life. I often find myself using exercises I learned in choir to help me in piano or during a sight reading audition for theater. I have learned various breathing and vocal techniques that have helped me achieve my goals in other areas of music that I pursue. Doing orchestra in the elementary school also helped me to develop my pitch as well as my ear. This has helped my pitch in singing. It also taught me discipline, and that to succeed I had to put in time to get a result. I could not just slack off and somehow become great at it. I had to practice and put dedication in to sound good. Overall, music education has made me a better person, general student and musician in general.

### **Jodie Miller**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many different ways. First of all music education can teach you how to use different motor skills at the same time. For example people have to use their ears to listen to others and their hands or voice to make the music. Music education has taught me to hear the beauty in music. Music has been a huge part of my life ever since I started music class in elementary school. I remember being super excited to go to music class everyday at school and I am still excited that music is a huge part of my life today. I am currently involved in marching band, concert band, and chorus and I enjoy all three every day. I enjoy marching band because there is something about it that just fascinates me. Ever since I was little I was always so amused when I would watch marching bands because it was so amazing how they made all of the formations and how the music still sounded so amazing. Singing is also an important part of my life because I love expressing myself through it. Music is my way to escape from the world and just have fun being who I truly am. I like to listen to music when I am doing my homework because it helps me focus. I like to hear how different people make music and put lyrics to it to make a point. I love how many different genres of music there are and how many different artists write songs for their favorite genres. One of my favorite genres is Country because I like how country singers aren't afraid to say what they feel and put it into music, which is also what I like to do.

### **Dana Moore**

Occupation: 9th Grade Student- Owen J. Roberts High School

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Standing on stage in front of a huge live audience in my Owen J. Roberts Middle School auditorium thinking that all I have to do is sing a couple of lyrics, but I'm not afraid. My musical education has enabled me to exceed my limits of confidence and had expanded my learning of music, adjusting my everyday lifestyle. When I was younger, I was never fully confident in myself, always blending in with the crowd. But, once I was introduced to music I broke free. Music is “vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion” (Dictionary.com). Being introduced to music at a young age, I learned that music is like a snowflake being that it's all different; in vocal diversity, creativity in the artist taste and decisions, and the different style of music. Music empowers musicians and gives them a voice so they are heard and understood by all even when they're un-receptive about their feelings. Victor Hugo stated that, “Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent.” When I sing I'm not by myself but I'm singing with my peers as one smooth motion that brings joy and tells of emotions that could be understood and in turn develop a way of comfort and gratitude. This is the same experience I embraced in my freshman chorus class, when we sang as a group we could genuinely lift the moods of our fellow classmates and still contribute to the whole group. When I sing I feel waves of comfort in knowing that I'm not cornered on my emotions but letting them vent through me when expressing them through song. Expressing my emotions through music and singing has favorably impacted the way I talk to

people, participate actively in group activities, and has given me a sense of belonging in my life. I have more confidence in accepting the challenge of developing a greater voice in and outside of chorus class that others can accept as well, giving me a sense of pride, when they greatly respond to something I have done. This also refers to my chorus concerts and how the audience accepts and receives the emotions that go through our entire class to make the night more enjoyable to all. Audiences are very receptive when we sing and always reserve their excitement until we have completed the selection of songs. My music education has grown since I was young. I have since met and connected to new people making bonds with one another. Gradually I gained a better mood in my everyday life, to which I am able to de-stress, build my character, and has allowed me to pay more attention and focus. Having these skills has affected my personality enabling it to expand and bloom as I grow.

### **Kathryn Proffitt**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music surrounds my life, but it would be impossible to truly appreciate it without an education in the fine art. My first encounter with it began in kindergarten when my classmates and I were required to attend music class once a week. Throughout elementary school, I would take this class, and for the better part of this time, I utterly detested it. As I was such a young child, I could not understand why one would need to learn about music or why it was important for that matter. When I was old enough, I joined my school's chorus, but I only did so because I believed we would immediately begin singing the popular songs I had heard on the radio. My idea could not be further from the truth; although I enjoyed our concert scores, they required constant rehearsal and specific attention. My instructor urged us to pay precise attention to the melody, and while we were impatient, she encouraged us to persevere through the extensive practices and do our best. The night of my first concert, I was extremely anxious, but as soon as we filed onto the stage, my nerves were eased. I felt at home on that stage. My middle school experience was much different, if not more challenging. We were expected to know how to read the music and learn it as we sang as opposed to repeating the melody after our teacher played it for us. I quickly grew accustomed to this, and thoroughly enjoyed my time in the class. In eighth grade, I even auditioned for varsity singers, a group that was much more exclusive than the district choir I had been a member of during my elementary years. My acceptance into the group merely encouraged my passion for singing. Anyone who desires to find joy and purpose in their life, which includes the majority of the human race, should invest their time in music. Over the years, my life has become busier and busier, but I still make time for music. During my freshman year of high school, I deeply missed being part of the school chorus, so I joined my church's choir until I could fit choir into my schedule once more the following year. This year, I even tried to step away from music by taking another class, but I found that I simply could not do it. My education has made music such an immense part of my life. I could not imagine living without it. It is part of what has made me the individual that I am today, and when I consider my role in the school, I know it is what allows me to stand apart from others. Nonetheless, I have made so many friends in my music classes that I know I am never alone. We are joined by our love for music; for this reason, I have discovered how beauty is not necessarily seen by the eye but felt in one's heart.

### **Savanna Sachar**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From elementary school to high school and into adult years, music is something that you can never outgrow. It has always had a very big impact on my life. There are many ways it has helped me through tough situations. Starting off my music education in elementary school, I was in chorus from the third grade until sixth. During this time, I learned a lot about the different sounds and how to raise and lower my voice hitting the proper notes. I was also taking the music class that everyone took. I remember having to play the drums to understand how certain beats and rhythms worked. We also worked on the xylophones which was also a way to learn scales and notes. I found these classes fun and always looked forward to attending them. This was the beginning to my passion for music. Throughout middle school, I decided to stop chorus and music

class to join other electives and clubs. This is when I realized how much I had truly missed it. In eighth grade I took “music through the ages”, where I was able to learn how to play the piano. This is where I reconnected with some people that I am still friends with now. We were able to play songs and help each other learn the different chords. It made me feel like I found a passion. As high school approached, I joined the freshman choir. This was very new and different to me because this was where I became a soprano two. I wasn't very familiar with this because it was the first time where there were more than two parts in chorus for girls to sing. But once I learned how to harmonize and sing the correct notes I loved it! Also, during this time I was able to become friends with other girls in my freshman choir. Because the choir was very small, I was able to develop a better sense for Mrs. McIntyre's teaching style. This allowed me to progress in the understanding of music. Through my wonderful years of learning about the history of music to being able to sing, music has had a positive impact on my life. Music has also affected others in many positive ways as well. It is able to change and affect a person's emotions and moods. Many people even listen to music to help them through tough times. This is why music education is so important and should continue to be taught so others can feel the positivity and happy energy I feel when being around music.

### **Alissa Vining**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Some people go through life without the understanding of music. Sure they listen to it on the radio and sing it with their friends at the top of their lungs in the car but they never really know what it is. However, during my life, the same cannot be said for me. I was exposed to music at a very early age like most people.

Kindergarten was my first year at school and we all had to go to music class. But, it was not until 4th grade that I actually understood my love of music. Since 4th grade, my music education has helped me keep up that love and appreciation for music up unto present day as a junior in high school. Music education has made a huge impact on me. Growing up and in elementary school, music was not my priority. It was even probably one of my least favorite classes of the day. I never truly understood what all the notes were or what the different types of instruments there were. Sure I loved to sing and joined the choir in 3rd grade like most of my friends but I didn't quite know how to read music or anything like that. Then when I went into 4th grade it all clicked. I learned how to play the trumpet and read music by Mr. Roberts and it was the first time I understood that music could mean so much more in life. I could actually sight read most of what we were singing, could figure out how to identify notes, and everything clicked and came into focus. My music teacher, Mrs. Anastasi, taught me even more and helped me achieve so much more than I knew I was capable of. In 6th grade I decided to take piano lessons. It was probably the smartest decision I ever made. Piano is a huge part of my life and I couldn't imagine life without it. My piano teacher, Mrs. Sass, still continues to teach me music education and I am so grateful for it. Elementary school was the first time I truly learned my love of music. In middle school, everything continued to be amazing in the music world. Mrs. Markofski, my middle school music teacher, taught me how singing could be fun. She taught me more about reading music and tone quality. I even made it into varsity singers in 7th grade and Tri-M. I also learned from both her and Mrs. Sass what it took to accompany for a choir. I learned that it is much different than playing regular piano but also very fun. They both taught me a lot about music and following the conductor and the choir. Throughout all the years from elementary school all the way to present day I am so grateful to all of my music and instrument teachers who taught me so much about music education, playing instruments, reading music, and finding my voice. I couldn't have done it without them.

### **Nicole Walton**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has changed my life by giving me something else to do besides just being bored at home, and gives me a chance to sing songs that are only really sung by choirs. In 3rd grade at East Coventry Elementary school, they had choir and I decided to join, because I thought it would be cool. Then I have been continuing ever since then. In 7th grade, I had Mrs. Markofski and we did music theory and then took

tests after we learned something. She said that were doing this because when we get to high school, we can show the teacher how much we know. Then in 8th grade, with Mrs. Markofski we did the same. This also has changed my life because it gives me something else to do, and it can get me comfortable with perform as a group. This basically how music education has changed my life.

### **Stephen Waskiw**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Since the beginning of 2nd grade, I have had a strong inclination to the musical aspect of school, and the things that you can do with it. Chorus was a class that I took immediate liking to. I had always liked listening to music when I was little, but I enjoyed singing them even more. Singing has had a calming effect on me whenever I get stressed, and has helped a lot throughout many years. I learned how to sight-read as well, and have implemented muscle memory as a skill that I often use. I have also made relationships with people who I might have never met without joining chorus. Music has impacted my life by helping me stay happy and unstressed, conditioning my mind to function quicker and more efficiently, and helped me make long lasting relationships with great friends. As an honors student, I'm constantly up late at night trying to get my work done and being prepared for tomorrow, while still participating in extracurricular activities. This leads to me being fairly stressed for a decent portion of the time that I spend awake. However, I have learned that practicing concert music has helped to relieve stress that I accumulate throughout the week. I remember last year that I was terrified by the number of finals that I had to take, and was up late every day trying to make sure that I had a complete understanding of all the information. I would often stop and listen to music, which helped me greatly, and prevented me from collapsing beneath the pressure. Without music, I believe that I would be a nervous wreck, and unable to accomplish anything. Music also helped to make me learn. I learned to think on my feet while doing sight-reading, and was able to make good study habits through muscle memory, by basically just repeating the information until I knew by heart. I believe that those two skills themselves have helped make me an honor student, and have been two of my driving forces in success. These skills helped me with the PSAT's that we recently took, by having me react quickly to the questions and being able to answer them from past information ingrained within my head. Lastly, music has helped me find friends. I am in both band and chorus, so I spend a large portion of time in the music wing of my school, which led to me making long lasting friendships with many people who have similar interests. The majority of my friends are connected to music in some way, and I have had close attachments to them for many years because of it. Music has helped me relax when I am stressed, improved my ability to learn, and has help me make long lasting friendships with others. Without music in my life, I don't know what I would do. Without music, a large portion of my life would be missing.

### **Matt Wilson**

Occupation:

From: Spring City, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Choir has been a very influential in my life thus far. I have participated in choir since second grade and I do not know what I would do without it. Music Education has taught me the essentials of reading music, to respect the artistry that goes into making a song and how to treat others. In choir, I have learned the basics of reading scales and understanding dynamics. Learning all of these important parts of music helps me enjoy the music, because I understand how it is supposed to sound and how the composer meant for it to be sung. A composer writes a song how he or she meant for it to be sung or played. In choir, we go through every line of words and try to understand what the composer means and understanding what the composer means makes it more interesting for me. It makes me feel like I am hearing the composer tell me a story. We also go through the music and understand the composition that goes into making the song. In choir, our teacher makes sure that we respect each other and ourselves. She enforces that respect is essential to being an adult and a responsible student. Music Education has taught me to treat others and myself with respect, to respect and understand the composer and his or her music, and the basics of reading music. Music

Education has been a part of my life since I was in second grade and has been very influential in my life thus far.

### **Abu Akki**

Occupation: Student

From: Unionville HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been involved with PMEA and NAFME very closely for the past three years and I have not had a single more enriching experience than those that I experienced through these two organizations. To say that music education has impacted my life is a gross understatement. I have been able to share my love of music with hundreds of other individuals whose passions coincide with my own. I have also been able to create friendships that have transcended school and age, but that have grown out of a love of music. Not only have I been able to establish friendships, but I have also been humbled to work with esteemed directors and associates in the choral world, learning various techniques involving vocal performance and health. PMEA and NAFME have given me the opportunity to generate a better understanding of other people, myself and, above all, music, for which I will be forever grateful.

### **Justin Bowen**

Occupation: Student

From: Unionville HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has helped me in many ways throughout my life. Not only did it bring me close to new people, but it also brought me confidence in my everyday life as well as in my singing life. I have become friends with tremendous people of whom I would have never met without my music education. It also lets you travel to different places which can be anywhere from the senior center down the road or going to "the happiest place on Earth." During those trips, you get even closer with at least one person in the music program. Overall, it is a terrific program of which I encourage anyone who can do it, to participate in it, for it will give you many things that you might not have expected.

### **Dana Dirnberger**

Occupation: Student

From: Unionville HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Every person has that one trait or hobby that identifies who they are. For some it's their startlingly attractive eyes, for many it's their obscene ability to solve any math problem, or for others it's their extreme athleticism. As for me, I've always been unnoticeable and average. People don't turn to look at me when I walk into a room, I am not the most popular girl in school, I am not the top of my class, and I am not great at sports. However, the one thing I have found that does set me apart is music. To me music has always been my haven, my safe place. Music is the one thing in my life that has remained stable in the midst of change and chaos. When I began to play flute in sixth grade it was my first year of middle school. Everything was new: new schedule of multiple periods in one day, new people who did not go to the same elementary school as me, and scary eighth graders who looked like they had everything figured out. I was utterly and completely lost. But in beginning band class so was everyone else. In that group of ten new flute players we were all at the same level and no one knew anything more than me. In that class I found myself and the people who would become my best friends. No matter how nerdy it sounds, band, just like soccer for some or dance for others, was the place where I felt safe and where I felt that I had the opportunity to succeed. And I did. Band became my life—I was actually good at something for once! I found a place with other misfits like myself, and I didn't feel so alone anymore. In HS I started marching band, which in Texas, where I was living at the time, is a more serious program than being on the football team. We practiced all hours of every day in hundred degree weather to a point beyond exhaustion. But it was worth it because I felt like I belonged in that group of wacky band kids, which was a welcome relief amid the terror of starting HS in a school of nearly 2,800 students. Then my life changed drastically once more when my dad got a job in Pennsylvania. I left Texas and all I had known right in the middle of HS. I was terrified of starting all over again in a completely

different place. But I started marching band in the middle of summer, and music showed me new people and a new family. Band was still the same and I realized that I was going to be ok again. Throughout every change in my life, music has been the one constant. Music, what identifies me as me, the skills I gain from practicing and playing music, and the people that music brings into my life, is my home.

### **Karalyn Joseph**

Occupation: Student

From: Unionville HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a very important part of my life. Within it, I find a source of calmness and peace, and it is wonderful to have that ambiance within my daily school schedule. It allows for an escape from the stress of school while simultaneously creating a beautiful melodic art. In college, I would like to pursue a double major of music and a yet-to-be decided academic major, and my school's music program allows me to prepare for this goal. PMEA programs like District and Regional Chorus Festivals further my training and also provide enjoyable experiences where I can build friendships with other young musicians.

### **Angela Kodokian**

Occupation: Student

From: Unionville HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I can't even come to words when describing music. It is something that has changed me throughout my entire life. Whether I have met friends or even met myself, music has allowed me to open up about expressing myself through words, rhythms and notes. People often undermine the importance of music, but it is just as powerful and impactful as anything else, if not more. You don't need a translator for people to understand what music is saying. It unites people without them even knowing it. Coming back to the question, music has impacted me by allowing myself and my friends/family to appreciate the beauty of the simple colors of black and white on a single piece of paper that transforms into a story without any words.

### **Anonymous**

Occupation: Student

From: Unionville HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted me in so many ways. I have met many, many friends through music programs that I otherwise would never have talked to. It gives me a way to express myself and create something that I am proud of. Music has also taught me discipline and the importance of practice and not giving up. Through music, I have met many amazing people who have become very dear to me.

### **Julia Trigg**

Occupation: Student

From: Unionville HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life for ten years now. I have taken piano lessons since I was six years old. Although at first, I did not want to play the piano, I came to love it over the passing years. In fourth grade, I made the decision to introduce more music into my life, so I joined the optional choir and band options. Admittedly, I was not immediately enchanted by this music in my life. HS completely changed my perception, however. Upon being introduced to marching band, indoor drumline, and HS choir, I realized that music more or less became my motivation to get up at six in the morning and get ready to go to school. This motivation is largely attributed to the fact that last year, as a freshman, I learned how to play the marimba. The marimba is a percussion mallet instrument, and since day one of learning how to play, I have had a fascination and passion with regards to anything pit percussion related. HS choir has allowed me to grow as individually and as an alto, as it has taught me how to sing better generally as well as how to harmonize. Besides helping me to become a more capable musician, music in general as well as music education have

helped me to find my closest friends and have provided me with a reason to look forward to every day. Without music, I would undoubtedly not be who I am today.

### **Emily Ermer**

Occupation: Student

From: Villa Maria Academy, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life in that it is a huge influence on many major decisions that I have made. School music programs not only helped me to decide which HS I wanted to go to, but they are also helping me to decide which college I want to attend. By influencing decisions such as where I will obtain my degree, music education influences my entire life. Additionally, music education has formed me into the person that I am today by way of the friendships that have formed due to various music education programs. All throughout school, a majority of my friendships were formed through a common interest in music. My friends have shaped me into the person that I am today, and I know that I would have been a very different person if not for the many music education programs that I have participated in. Without music education, I am not sure of who I would be. I might have been a great person and someone that I would be friends with, but I also might have been someone that I would avoid at all costs. However, I do know how I turned out with the influence of music education, and I am happy with the results. I think that music education has helped me to become a better person, and that everyone should have the opportunities that music education has given me.

### **Leslie Burnick**

Occupation: Instrumental Music Teacher

From: West Chester, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education IS my life! I started playing the clarinet when I was 10 years old - not even knowing anything at all about music. From the moment I started, it was clear I had a "gift" for music and that it was going to be a big part of my life. I played all through high school and all of my friends were in the band. Then I decided to major in music and had to decide if I was going to become a teacher, or be a performance major. Since I love music so much, I felt I could possibly influence other children to develop the love of music. I am one of very few of my college friends who is actually using their degree. Being a music educator has been wonderful! I have taught all levels (beginner through high school) of instrumental music - band and orchestra. Plus, I continue to play my clarinet. I am the concertmaster of two concert bands and am in a community orchestra. I am the President of one of the bands (the Chester County Concert Band) and am very proud to help bring that band to a new level of excellence and community exposure. I also have taught private lessons since I was in high school. That was also a determining factor in becoming a music educator. It was (and is) so thrilling to be able to help young musicians achieve new levels of expertise and musical excitement. I was very fortunate to have excellent and inspirational music teachers from the very beginning. Each one had their own way of encouragement and all contributed to make me who I am. I truly don't know how different my life would have been had I not picked up the clarinet, oh so many years ago. I have taught hundreds and hundreds of students over the last 35 years. Sure, some ended up quitting, but most continued playing - at least for a while. It is my hope that many of them have been as inspired by ME, as I was by my teachers. It is so saddening to see many legislators and upper level management in the field of education treat music as just an "extra thing" that can be done away with. It has been proven time and time again by many scientists and researchers that being involved with music - primarily as a musician - will increase a person's IQ, brain synapse, fine motor skills, language, math skills, and reading. We simply cannot let music education be taken away, or cut back so much that it barely exists. Yes, I do have other hobbies and I have loved being a Mom. But music is what I identify with - as a performer, educator, composer, conductor, and listener. MUSIC IS MY LIFE!! Musically Yours, Leslie Burnick

### **Keely Congleton**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has taught me not only team work and leadership, but also self-determination. Because of the music education I received from elementary school all the way up to college, I have learned how to work as a group to achieve a common goal. I have learned that it's not about being the best, but about being your own "best".

### **Philip John DiCriscio**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In short, music education has made me the person I am today. Without the great teachers I was exposed to, I believe that I would not only be headed on a different track in life, but I would be a different person. I do not think I would be as happy as I am, studying music at the collegiate level without the education I began to receive in the fourth grade. My teachers became my mentors, fostering the highest quality in music, and at the same time, fostering the highest quality of humanity. Music education taught me the pleasure of hard work. I have spent countless hours in the practice room playing scales, etudes, doing breathing exercises, and all the "boring" things that musicians must do to keep in good playing shape. However, I know there is payoff to that. When it is time for me to play through a solo or play with an ensemble, I know that my level of playing is at the highest level I am capable of, because I took the time to learn the basics. I apply this to all other aspects of my life. Without music, there is a good chance that I would not know how far I could push myself on the rudimentary things, and therefore not know my true potential. It is this lesson that has been taught to me since the fourth grade from the many teachers I have had. It is a lesson I hope to someday teach. I know that my place is in the study of music and the promotion of music education. There is nothing I'd rather be doing than that. And I am so happy I found it.

### **Jonathan Kreamer**

Occupation: Educator/Performer

From: West Chester, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music touches a soul more than any other element in the world, and music definitely touched my soul. I was given the ability to have many great mentors in my life who inspired and taught me. Because of these mentors, music became, not only a passion, but a career. I have created a career of inspiring students, young and old, with music.

### **Linda Mangold**

Occupation: Elementary Music Teacher

From: West Chester, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The impact music has had on my life is immeasurable. I started playing an instrument in 3rd grade. It taught me responsibility, commitment, and team work. The sense of pride I had when playing something well or when a concert was performed well was a great feeling. This permeated my academic life as well. I wanted the same sense of pride when I performed well on math or science projects. In addition, I truly love hearing a good piece of music. It fills my soul like nothing else can. I became a music teacher because I wanted other children to feel what I felt. I wanted them to excel at academics. I wanted to touch their lives the way my music teachers did. I wanted to have music be as much a source of joy for them as it is for me.

### **Patricia A. Petko**

Occupation: Retired Music Educator

From: West Chester, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my life since childhood when my grandmother sang to me and I heard and began singing songs in church. I enjoyed my grandparent's piano and liked to "pick out" tunes I knew. My first real interaction with formal music education began in elementary school. We sang the usual children's songs and by second or third grade we had a "music" book. We began to read the words with the music and learn the "basics" of music. In third grade, I learned to play the "tonette". It was a simple instrument and it was fun! Learning to follow the notes as I played was so exciting. I played in my first "big" concert that year. The school district's elementary band and third grade "tonettes" played in the Spring concert. It was a "WOW" moment! I looked forward to music class! There was no music room. I remember the music teacher "pushing" the piano from classroom to classroom so she could play and we could sing. In fifth grade, I started learning to play the clarinet. I took lessons at school, practiced and soon found myself advancing faster than my friends. In high school being in the band is what kept me going! I found more of those "WOW" moments when I participated in the high school band as well as County, District and Regional Band Festivals and State Clarinet Choir. I sang in the high school and District Chorus. All of the events were made possible because of the influence of my musical family, my music educators as well as PMEA. In addition to learning to play the clarinet, I was also taking private piano lessons. My life was immersed in music education! When it was time to go to college becoming a music educator was a natural path for me. I wanted to be a teacher and my appreciation of music was a perfect fit! After graduation from West Chester University I spent the next forty years as a music educator in the Coatesville Area School District. Being a music teacher and giving back to the children the love of music that had been shared with me was one of the joys of my life! It is said that "if you find something you really love to do you will never work a day in your life! That was my life! I taught K-5 general music, chorus, band and strings in addition to teaching theater skills through musical plays. I love teaching children about music and although I did retire I now work "one on one" with children in the school I left. Music education will always be a part of who I am and I continue to find ways to use music in my new way of teaching children. I play my clarinet with a community band and sing in the church choir. How has music education impacted my life? I cannot imagine my life without it!

### **Gavin Bond**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a result of pursuing a music, I have a greater appreciation for arts as a whole, and developed a stronger belief in enforcing a well rounded education. Music education also helped me gain a greater respect for other cultures, mainly for those in Europe.

### **Alexander Chen**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has showed me how not only to grow as a musician but also how to reciprocate that and help others grow. I have always believed that music is not just a form of passion but also a form of communication. Music education showed me that music can really connect and communicate with anyone, including people with disabilities whether physical, mental, psychological, or linguistically.

### **Matthew Hontz**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has made a big impact on my life. I have made many new friends at festivals and have had fun at each one. It has made me a better student academically and has taught me how to manage my time between

school, extra-curricular activities, and music lessons. Music Education has also made me think about, and consider possibly majoring in music performance and education in the future. That's the impact that Music Education has had on my life.

### **Ajmain Hossain**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has introduced me to a completely different world, separate from academics and athletics. In this world, students share the same passion for playing and speak the same language of music. Playing the violin and being a part of many orchestras have made me a better person, by instilling qualities of discipline, hard work, and cooperation.

### **Benjamin Klucznik**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to express myself in a way that nothing else really does. I haven't gotten any feeling as good as getting really into the music anywhere else in my life.

### **Henry Linton**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester East HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has introduced me to new people and new opportunities that I might never have experienced. I am the youngest of seven children and each of us plays an instrument so you could say I've been surrounded by music my whole life. As I was growing up, all seven of us would play together each week for residents of a local nursing home. We have also played at the Pennsylvania State Capitol several times, in addition to The White House. Many Music Educators have influenced my musical career by not only focusing on correct technique and posture, but also on lessons to help me in life. My first teacher imprinted upon my mind, "Intonation is a matter of Conscience." If I am not honest with myself, I can never play in tune. My current teacher has emphasized the idea that good performance is a result of slow, careful practice and I have come to realize that that fact is true, with the proof being in good and not so good performances! Currently, Music Education has included the opportunity to be a member of the West Chester Area School District's Senior Strings ensemble with a favorite selection, among others, being Pavane (Favre). I have formed a trio with two other Senior Strings members/friends and we now share music with the residents & staff of the same nursing home I used to visit each week with my family. Music is a gift we can give to others. As a member of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, I count it a privilege whenever we have the opportunity to perform in Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center. Symphony No. 2 (The Resurrection) by Mahler, with full choir and soloists, was so moving... an unforgettable experience. Both Charles DePasquale (Senior Strings) and Maestro Louis Scaglione (PYO) have introduced me to many different sub-genres within classical repertoire which have expanded my horizons. I don't know where I would be today without Music Education.

### **Matt Popyack**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester Henderson HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is important in my life because it allows me to learn and get better in a field that I truly enjoy. Music education also allows for a stress reliever and allows me to have fun in school amongst some difficult classes.

### **Karly Thomas**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester Henderson HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a big part of bringing my family together and closer. My family has always been able to bond over music and music education.

### **Max Xu**

Occupation: Student

From: West Chester Rustin HS, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a vital part of my entire life, even from a young age. I remember being completely entranced by the simple but beautiful melodies that my elementary school music teacher played for us. Just a few simple notes never failed to delight the entire class. Later, in middle school, I was able to create music of my own by joining my school band. Playing in the school band was a wonderful experience in which I learned a great deal about the world around me. My band teacher never missed an opportunity to teach us about the cultures from which our music originated, and never failed to explain the historical context of each song and the significance that each piece of music held for the society. His magical tales of faraway nations and unique, fascinating cultures opened our minds and broadened our perspectives. Today, as a HS choir student, I am proud to be a part of the musical community whose lives have all been enriched and inspired by the music education that we have received.

### **Jack Mannix**

Occupation: Student

From: Exton, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Before the summer of my junior year I had never been out of the country. My travels were limited to Exton, Pennsylvania to Boston, Massachusetts. And no further. I considered myself fortunate; I knew some people have never seen the world outside of the Philadelphia region. I was unaware of the beautiful sights and wonderful cultures that were locked away across the Atlantic Ocean, but with the help of music, I was going to unlock those treasures of the world. From elementary school to high school, I have been singing in my school's choir. It is one of my favorite hobbies, and I have met so many of my closest friends in the confines of a choir room. Music has always been an escape from the stressors and hardships of everyday life, but I had no idea that music could be an escape in a literal sense. It all began with a simple letter in the mail from American Music Abroad, a choral and instrumental group that travels across Europe performing for those craving music. Until then, I had never thought that music could present such an extraordinary opportunity to a casual musician such as me. This musical adventure could not have come at a better time. Junior year had taken its tolls on my body and spirit, and my mentality was destitute of any happiness or relaxation. Within the first few minutes of my AMA experience, my hope was instantly rejuvenated. I had never been with a group of people like this before; their energy was contagious, and their friendships were unbreakable. For the first time in a very long time, I was able to feel pure happiness without being bothered by any outside forces. Music had brought me temporary salvation, and I had not even left the country yet. I had never experienced culture shock so severely before, but it was a pleasant shock. Because of music I was singing choral pieces in gothic churches hundreds of years old, I was hiking up the Austrian Alps, I was waltzing with professional Viennan dancers, I was peering over Paris thousands of feet in the air, and I was watching smiles grow across audience members' faces as they listened to our songs, despite not understanding a word we were singing. Most importantly, I was doing it with people with a common interest, people I love. I can say, without hesitation, that my experience with AMA was one of the most influential experiences in my life. After being exposed to so many cultures, I have changed my focus of study to international relations, and I hope to be attending a university that specializes in that field. I now have a new outlook on the world and a revitalized hope for the future, thanks to music.

## **Becca Ardekani**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has positively influenced my life throughout elementary, middle, and high school. Specifically, in high school, music has challenged me to step outside of my comfort zone and push myself to do things I normally would not do. Music has helped me gain more confidence in myself. Without being exposed to music education through my school I would not be the person I am today. During freshmen and sophomore year of high school I was involved in two musicals, Seussical and 42nd Street. I was hesitant to audition for Seussical my freshmen year because I had never been part of a musical before. When I first went into my audition I was so nervous and had no idea what to expect, but once I began singing and was comfortable, I realized I could overcome my nerves. That year I received a call back and an active part in the ensemble. The chance to participate in this musical gave me a boost of confidence to continue participating in musicals. Throughout the whole musical experience, I gained many great friends. The friends I made during my freshmen year musical are still some of my closest friends today. Joining the musical gave me the confidence I needed to step outside my box and try something new. In addition to the experiences I had with musicals, I am also apart of my high school choir. I joined choir during my sophomore year after my success with musical. The past two years in choir I have learned many new skills. These skills include, solfege, understanding rhythm, and a better understanding on how to read music. Everyday in class my choir teacher presents a new set of solfege and rhythm on the board. At first I was confused by this concept, but as I continued to read and sing solfege daily, I became more comfortable with it. Gaining skills in solfege has deepened my understanding of music. The ability to read music has helped me when I am auditioning for a role and when I have singing tests. Before entering choir I was not motivated to listen to different genres of music. Choir has expanded the variety of genres I enjoy listening to and signing along with. Not only has my music tastes changed, music has also made a huge impact on my education. Throughout the past two years in choir I have sang a variety of different songs. Many of these songs contain different languages. Learning music in a different languages has challenged me to articulate better when I sing. I also learn the meanings of songs in a different language. It is clear to me that music has made such a huge impact on my life and high school career. Music has helped me gain more confidence, form strong friendships and develop new skills. Music education has positively impacted my life. I hope to continue my involvement with music and be exposed to more musical opportunities as I grow older.

## **Chloe Doyle**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always played an immense part in my life. Weather I am listening to music, playing music, or singing, I am always having fun. But music is not just about listening to it; learning about it is one of the main reasons why I enjoy it so much. I play the violin, a little guitar, and sing and one cannot just automatically pick up an instrument or get a piece of sheet music and preform perfectly. It takes time for someone to learn the back ground of learning it; but even then it will not be perfect. Educating about music has helped me express myself, gain confidence, and de-stress. Music is a great way to convey your personality. They types of music one listens to can say a lot about their mood and personality. If a person is sad they could compose a piece about how they are feeling and get their thoughts out that way. Music is a form of therapy in a way and helps people deal with their problems. The quote "Music expresses that which cannot be put into words that which cannot remain silent" by Victor Hugo, really explains this topic well. Going hand-in-hand with expressing yourself, music can help someone express their confidence as well. In elementary school, I was terrified to even speak out loud, and sometimes now, even in high school, I do not want to raise my hand or speak in class out of fear. But, because of music, I am more comfortable singing a solo or playing my instrument than even speaking sometimes. Music can speak when words cannot and I believe that statement because I have experienced it first-hand. The last reason that musical education has impacted my life is because it helps me release my nervousness and helps me stay focused. Before I have a race or a tennis match, I always listen to music to help me calm down. While I do homework, I listen to music so it is not as

boring or stressful when I have hours of homework each night. Whenever I have free time at home I am always singing, playing my guitar or violin. It relaxes me while allowing me to have fun and educate myself. Expressing myself, being more confident, and being stress free are all things music has helped me with throughout my life, and will continue to. Music will never solve all the problems in the world, but it definitely helps me get through a lot of tough moments in life. Music education is not just about educating yourself with facts about ancient composers or trying to acquire perfect pitch. Music can also teach people how to be a better person by being themselves and accepting others for trying to be who they are through music.

### **Joey Mace**

Occupation: High School Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is very important to a student when he is in middle or high school. Music education can teach students to be more imaginative and to enjoy the wonders of music that they could not hear before. For me, music has changed my life in a big way. When I first picked up a violin and when I sang my first scale I could feel the beauty of music. When I started to learn notes for my violin it changed my thinking process in a whole other way. Now when I learn I break down each topic like you have to do when you are learning a piece of music. Also, choir has shown me patience. It teaches me to be patient and trust myself and to take hard problems slowly and then once you get it go a little faster, just like music. When you learn a piece I do not just go right into it, I practice it slowly first talking the lyrics then singing it once I have gotten it down. Also music teaches me to slow down and take a break from the high speed of life and just listen to the wonderful sounds of the earth and life itself. Music shows me how to look on the bright side of things. Also, music does not just teach me how to slow down but it also brings friends together and creates new friendships. When I first came to the high school all I had were my old friends and they were not in my lunch period, but when I walked into choir I immediately made friends who were just like me. Music education has impacted my life in many ways that I still use today and I would never go a day without that education.

### **Caroline Stacks**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Chester County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In the 1970s, President Ford stated that "Music education opens doors that help children pass from school into the world around them." I have found this to be true as I have journeyed through my seventeen years of life as a student, leader, friend, and most importantly, a musician. This is top on my list because without my knowledge of music, and the gifts which it encapsulates, I would not have the ability to be a valuable individual in any of the other subjects in which I participate. Without an education in music, my life would be exponentially disparate from the one which I am currently living. I began in Makin' Music with an exuberant man with hair to match his personality when I was two years old. We grabbed colorful shakers in our tiny hands and shook them to the beat of songs while belting out gibberish that we substituted for the real words of I Like to Eat Apples and Bananas. Then I moved up to Kindermusik with Mrs. Hall, a joyful lady who devoted her time to educating the young generations in music. We would sit at small desks, filling the room with chalk dust, feverishly placing notes on staves. After that I moved up to general music in Elementary School where we played the recorder, sang songs, and learned the letters that corresponded with each note on the staff. That class wasn't too challenging for me, however, considering I was taking piano classes at the same time. Then came Middle School where my love for music education flourished. I participated in the Chorus Elective and Varsity Singers, and found a home in this group of musically inclined people. I formed a bond with everyone in the group, which would travel with me up to high school where I participate in Concert Choir and 7ups. Currently, I am still trying to figure myself out, and how to navigate the obstacles that are thrown at me daily, especially as I enter college. School, while it's a great privilege, can be extremely difficult. Student's days are filled with seven periods in which our heads are flooded with a plethora of information, evenings filled with various activities, and nights filled with heaps of homework and tired eyes. Fortunately for us, music offers a subtle bridge between the real world and the world that we create in our heads which is full of infinite happiness and vibrant color. Through music, an individual is displaced from the imprisoning walls of

high school, and dropped into a place of serenity and light-heartedness. Through music education, I have discovered the confidence to stand in front of a crowd and use my voice. I have found an escape from the insanity of high school. I have formed lifelong relationships, I have learned the proper way to interpret text, and I have achieved high grades by removing stress and focusing on joy. In more than one aspect, an education in music has changed my life permanently.

## **CLARION COUNTY**

### **Eric Bailey**

Occupation: Student

From: Allegheny-Clarion Valley HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many different ways. Without music education, I would have never done band in the first place because there would be no demand for band. Band has taught me many different qualities such as being able to keep time, reading music, and learning how to play an instrument. Music has also given me qualities of being more social and responsible. Without these qualities I would not be the person I am today, therefore music education has changed my life.

### **Elizabeth Best**

Occupation: Student

From: Allegheny-Clarion Valley HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a huge part of my life. I not only participate in our school's chorus, marching band and musicals, but I also have an active musical life outside of school. I am also active in singing at my church and in participating in community theatre musical productions. I have begun studying with a private voice teacher. I believe that my introduction to music through our school's music education program sparked my interest into what will be a life long love of mine. I don't know if I will go on to pursue a career in music, but I know that no matter what I do music will always be a part of my life.

### **Tristan Blain**

Occupation: Student

From: Allegheny-Clarion Valley HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my life since my mother would sing Disney songs along with me growing up. Going into elementary school, I would write and perform songs to my music teacher of my affinitive love for her. That woman would go on to be the one that has helped me prepare for a future in music. Now her inspiration has caused my aspiration to become a music educator and bring music into the lives of students. Music's impact in my life has been cause for my aspirations to pursue a career in music education. Without music, I am unsure of what I would ever spend my life doing.

### **Abigail Larimore**

Occupation: Student

From: Allegheny-Clarion Valley HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has had an incredible impact upon my life. I have been in choir every year since the fourth grade and it has always been the highlight of my day. I sing everywhere, in the shower, on my way to school, and I am so blessed that my school has a class that I can go to every day to learn about music. I feel that music has helped me look at things from many different perspectives. I feel that it has helped me have a better overall understanding of myself, my peers, and the world around me. I am extremely grateful that my school has been one of the many schools that has kept music alive in our curriculum.

### **Madison Stump**

Occupation: Student

From: Allegheny-Clarion Valley HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is a very important aspect in my life, by helping me make new friends and to have a joyful life. Music has been a part of my life for a long time and it is one of the most important things I am participating in.

### **Tina Bennett**

Occupation: Educator

From: Clarion, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a student in high school I had the great fortune to have a Music teacher who was good at his job. Not only was he a terrific musician, but a terrific and innovative educator. He provided us with so many unique opportunities that I chose to pursue a career in Music. After completing my college education I was hired right out of college to teach High School Choir. I have retained my position for 31 years and have enjoyed a terrific career. Music has not only provided me with a career, but countless friends and colleagues as well as terrific students and memories. I cannot imagine not having music in my life.

### **Scott DiTullio**

Occupation: High School Band Director

From: Clarion, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music instilled discipline, motivation, pride in performances through practices and created friendships that have lasted more than thirty years. Music has created friendships that continue to build with colleagues and students as we all striving for musical achievement! Music is fun, even when challenged with learning something new. The reward at the end of the journey with a performance and seeing so many others enjoying the performance is rewarding as well. Music has brought many opportunities into my life. I've traveled outside of the United States to play, as well as several performances within the states. Now as a director - it's about giving students opportunities of a lifetime for them to be successful and represent our community. There is PRIDE when you perform and when you join forces with others to put on a band uniform, it's even more evident as it changes how you feel personally. The nerves seem to disappear and great musical performances come through. As a former athlete and current baseball coach, the team always shines! Music when performed - always shines. What is the best part of music? YOU CAN DO IT YOUR ENTIRE LIFE!! You are always part of the team and no one ever sits on the bench! I am proud to say I am a product of PMEA and very humbled to be a part of so many great educators. Hard work, dedication, and commitment when things get tough is success for the future. No matter what level of music I have been able to play or teach, I know I can thank many educators for my success. They believe and taught me to believe that everyone can be a part of something great. Music is something great and its awesome to be part of it on a daily basis.

### **Callie Freenock**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion Area HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Band is great. I appreciate all the opportunities it has given me throughout my life.

### **Addison Hockins**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion Area HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by connecting me to other people and being able to make friends through music. Music has always been a huge part of my life and should be a part of all peoples lives. Being able to make music shows you how great music truly is.

### **Julie Kenneson**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion Area HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a major part in my life. When I started HS, I knew a total of four people. But through band, I have come to know over half of the student body. Playing my instrument has given me such important skills such as organization and time management. But it has also given long-lasting friendships. Without music education, my life would be completely different.

### **Maggie Luthin**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion Area HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a medium of self-expression and relaxation, and for many, music is an escape. It allows the musician to let go of any worries and be completely absorbed in the music, and it builds character.

### **Hannah Phillips**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion Area HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life for the better. It helps to alleviate my stress and helps rejuvenate me. I love listening to and playing music. I plan on having music play a big role in my life. Hopefully, my future children will love music as much as I do.

### **Claire Saylor**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion Area HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Over the years of being in my school's music department, I have learned that I cannot live without music, it will always be a crucial component of who I am. When in school, the band room is my haven, when I'm having a crappy or stressful day, I can go there and everything falls by the wayside, it's just me and my clarinet. If you were to ask me what my favorite room in the school, it would be our band room. I love the atmosphere, in there, there's no pressure for me to understand quadratic equations or be able to balance redox reactions. I'm not Claire, the girl who is super smart and has all the answers. I'm Claire the girl who loves music and loves playing it. In elementary school, I wanted to quit, but my band director encouraged me to continue. Looking back now it's seems funny that I wanted to quit something that would take up a good portion of my free time, and that I'm going to festivals and playing in almost every band my school offers. I have had so many various opportunities and learned so many different things through our music program. Two years ago, I went to New York City with my band and saw so many things that I wouldn't have been able to afford otherwise, this spring, we are going to Toronto and it will be the first time that I leave the country. I learned to persevere, last year our football season went well into December, and our marching band was at every game cheering our boys on, even though there were some points in time that I couldn't feel my fingers because it was just that cold. Also, I wouldn't have the same friends that I have now if it were not for band. These are friends that I will have for life and that I would do anything for, and I wouldn't have meet them, or have gotten as close to them without band. My memories from band will be memories that I

treasure for the rest of my life, wherever I go, I will always remember my band family and all those laughs that were shared. Music education has impacted me in so many ways that this is just scratching the surface, but I hope that it is enough to convey how important music is in our schools and what it can mean to students.

### **Natalie Thompson**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion Area HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life greatly in many ways. Being apart of the band has increased my love for music because of the different types of pieces we play. Whenever I'm feeling stressed, the flute is my favorite way to relieve that stress and relax. Being apart of the band has also helped me bond with and make new friends through marching band and the different festivals such as Honors band, county band, and district band. I'm very lucky that the music education in my school is supported and I am able to be apart of the pep band for basketball games, and the pit band for musicals. My band director has guided me and helped me to become the musician I am today and I am truly grateful for him challenging me to do better and helping me find my love for music.

### **Tiffany Daniels**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion-Limestone HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has definitely impacted my life for the better. Without it, I would not be the person or the musician that I am today. My entire personality has changed, and I've learned to be a better person. Before I started getting involved in music, I was very shy. I never felt like I was doing anything important. After I started to participate in festivals and got more involved in music, I started to feel like I belonged. Finally I had a sense of accomplishment, and something I had in common with others. I've met so many new people through music who have brought me out of my shell, and who also share the same passion I do. Meeting all of these amazing people and realizing what music has done for my life inspired me to pursue a career in music education and music performance to educate others of the importance of music. I want to be able to show others how music can bring people together and can bring out the best in them. I also want to help those who have felt the way I did before music. Music has become my life, and I have music education to thank for that. It will also be giving me the tools to bring music into the lives of others.

### **Sarah Hubauer**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion-Limestone HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Some people fight to put music education out of our schools to save money for "more important" things. Often sports! I don't mean to say that sports aren't important. They help a person physically and give them something to be a part of. But how many people in sports versus how many people in music get careers in those "fields"? Comparatively music has an incredible amount more to offer than a future in sports. Why then is sports put above Music? Music education is probably one of the most important subjects. Even if kids stop taking it when they aren't required to anymore in middle school or HS, their years in elementary school music class helped them more than most people would think. In music class they learn to think critically, empathetically, logically, and musically. In music class they learned about math, history, English, and other languages in small doses. Music is an enjoyable reinforcement to the development of a child. To put it simple, music education is a big part of who I am Today. I owe so much to it; I have grown up in a relatively musical family. My dad is a professional musician so I was exposed to performing arts and music of all kinds at a very young age. I could not wait for fourth grade when I could sign up band. In fact, I was so excited that the day of when I could not find the sign up sheet I started to cry because I had thought I missed my chance. Turns out they had not even put it out yet I did not even hesitate to put down that I was going to play Saxophone. I knew I was going to play that since I was six years old. Anyway today my life revolves around

band and music education and without it I'm not sure what I would do with myself. I have learned so much about math, history, and other languages and cultures through music. That is not even all! I will without a doubt say that music education is just as important as any of the other core classes. Music strengthens your brain in so many ways. It helps you mature, develop better analyzation skills, develop listening skills, and have fun. Aside from educational benefits of music education, the emotional benefits of it are outstanding! Music provides a release from the stresses of life. Music education provides something to be a part of as well. It gives a sense of belonging. When you participate in music education you join a family. Just as sports do. Whether you are in choir, band, theory, or history, you are a part of something big. Something that will help shape your future, even if you do not wish to go into a career in music. Music education is to thank for who I am today.

### **Béla Jobb**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion-Limestone HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since I was a young child, I have always loved music. However, I was a little confused on how amazing it could actually be. When I got to HS, I finally realized what music really was and how amazing it was. Music has been an amazing past time for me and has grown into my passion. I feel that without my music teachers, I never would have found out about this amazing phenomena. If music education wasn't around anymore, it would, in my opinion, change the world for generations after me. Students would not be able to find their true passions and maybe, find something they're really good at.

### **Megan Peterson**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion-Limestone HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have had music in my life since 4th grade. With music it has been my outlet for when I am in a bad mood and just need to get my mind off of things. Without music in my life I would not be the person that I am today. So many people in my music classes and my music teacher have helped me to be the musician that I am.

### **Anita Snyder**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion-Limestone HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

College is an enticing idea for most HS students. It is essentially the next huge step of your life. I am glad to say that I am one of these HS students looking forward to furthering my education. As of now, I plan on attending Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania for a degree in Music Education and Instrumental Performance. Ever since I was younger, I have also wanted to pursue a professional career in music. As I have grown older, I have realized that I do not only have a passion for music, but for teaching as well. This was discovered through the opportunity my band director gave me at the beginning of my senior year. I was given the chance to assist in teaching elementary band every morning. As I still currently am participating in this opportunity, it has solidified the idea of myself going in to Music Education. Getting a higher education will aid me in the process of fulfilling my dreams of becoming a band director and provide me with the networks I need to obtain a job soon after college. In my career, I hope to fulfill not only the dream of becoming a band director, but to work towards my Master's in music, then my Ph. D in music as well. Also, the aspiration of becoming a clarinetist for The President's Own has been a goal of mine ever since I met a Marine Corps representative at the PMEA All-State Music Festival in 2013. I was able to obtain a CD at the time of The President's Own and I was amazed at what they did. From the first note, I decided it was my life goal to become a part of The President's Own. My father, a Marine Corps veteran, additionally has a great influence on myself wanting to be a musician for The President's Own. He keeps pushing me to do my best in my music and providing me with support to obtain my goal. I was able to take home that CD I obtained to him and show him my most prized possession. He unfortunately was not able to see them live, but he has seen The Commandant's Own. He thought that they were great, so he was under the assumption that The

President's Own was just as good musically, if not better. He and I both agreed that I should try and become a part of them when the time was appropriate. Since then, he has been that supporter of my art and my higher education. As I get ready for that next step in my life, I like to think to myself that this higher education that I am pursuing will not only aid me in the near future, but for my entire life. It will help me reach my goal, fulfill my dreams, and live the life I would like to live. Without the chance for higher education, I would not be able to do so.

### **Grace Snyder**

Occupation: Student

From: Clarion-Limestone HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been surrounded by music my entire life. Some of my oldest memories are music-related. I remember sitting on the piano bench fooling around on the piano. I also remember playing with my mother's old clarinet she use to play. I wanted to be a musician ever since I was little. That dream came true whenever a music teacher got me started. In kindergarten, I started playing the piano. I was in love at my first lesson. The teacher was amazing. She taught me everything I know about piano, and I say that is a lot. I have been playing piano ever since then. That makes it eleven years now that I have been playing the piano. Growing up, piano was not enough. I needed more instruments to keep my interest in music. As I said before, my mother played clarinet in the band when she was in school. My older sister also played piano and then joined band. Every concert of her's I went to, I would get asked, "Are you going to join band?" or "Are you going to be as good as your sister?". The second question got my competitive side going. Even the band director asked me to join band. I could not say no to her, so I joined band. I wanted to be just like my mother and sister, so I chose to play the clarinet. I loved playing the clarinet. The sound was so pretty despite the occasional squeaks. Everything went so well with my band director. She adored me and I adored her. Then in my second year of band, we got a new director. I did not know what to think of her. I did not know she would become one of my biggest influences in life. Right away, my band director noticed my love for band. She also recognized some sort of talent in me. I had private clarinet lessons with her to help my skills grow. She even let me go play with the HS band for a musical. Eventually, she let me brighten my horizons to different instruments. The older I got, the more she helped me even more. No matter how hard my band director works me, she knows that it will benefit me. Even though I hate to practice, she set goals for me to strive for which I could only achieve through practice. She listens to me. I could go to her if I had any kind of problem. My band director is very understanding. I have a busy schedule as a HSer. She is able to work with my despite my busyness. I would have no idea what I would do without her and band. I would probably be an empty shell going nowhere in life. My band director helped guide me to help me make decisions. Band became a great stress reliever for me. Without band or my director, I would not be the person who I am today.

### **Kelly Daugherty**

Occupation: Student

From: Keystone HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in a major way by allowing me to develop essential skills I would have otherwise never established, pushing me to grow through challenging pieces of music, and giving me the chance to escape reality and truly enjoy all that music has to offer. Ever since I was in second or third grade, music has been a huge part of my life. I sang in a Jr. Choir at my church and took piano lessons for several years. I participated in chorus at my school and I started playing the clarinet in fourth grade. I have always had outstanding music teachers who have helped me expand my knowledge and become a better player. Through playing the clarinet, I have developed skills such as listening and memorizing, as well as math and coordination skills. The musical dexterity required to read music and transform it into sound has been proven to make musical students smarter and more well-rounded. There is no other class that I could establish and evolve these skills in. Knowing this, I work hard to make myself the best musician I can be, which will in turn make me a wiser and more skillful person. Continual growth occurs as I play more difficult and complex music. It can be very challenging at times, but practice and perseverance is how I will flourish

as a musician. Not only does this make me a hard worker, but it also shows me the extraordinary result of that hard work. This carries on throughout other aspects of my life as well, as I see that progress comes with struggle and determination. This is one skill that defines me as a person. Music makes me mentally stronger, but it connects with the emotional side of me as well. Music education has also taught me the different styles and feelings that can come from a certain piece. Music tells a beautiful story that only some can connect with. Making music with others is a thrill that only some people ever experience. I have learned so much about a specific time era or culture by playing music from that time and place. This allows me to escape the patterns of everyday life and experience a whole new set of emotions that the music brings. Whether listening to music or playing it, I immediately escape the worries and troubles of my own life and enter a world full of new and fascinating wonder. Without music, life would be rather mundane. Statistics have proven the necessity and importance of music learning, especially in young, developing brains. It has had absolutely had an impact on my life, making me aspire to be the best musician that I can be and a smart, skillful young woman.

### **Katelyn Rhoads**

Occupation: Student

From: Keystone HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

No aspect of my education or life experience has impacted me more than music education. Through the best and worst times, music is always there to make things more interesting, to make each moment better. Music fuels me to push forward, to strive for something better. It has taught me that there is always room to grow; that there can be beauty in putting in extra effort, by working another hour just to make something even better than it already is. Music has invaded my life, in a good way, and it will stay with me for the rest of my life. While some of us struggle for self discovery, to find who they are as well as what they want to do with their life, I have already discovered those facts for myself, through music. Over the years, my involvement in music has opened my eyes to the world. It has shown me that the less than happy parts of life can and will get better. With music, I am able to get closer to people which was a very difficult thing for me to do. I am able to overcome things that once held me back, fears that once kept me from being myself. I can be myself through music because I know that music is how I can express who I am. Through the trials and tribulations, I have discovered that I am a musician and there is nothing that can change that. I have realised that things like being the best sightreader in the world or the best instrumentalist in my school do not detract from who I am. Although it has taken a long time for me to discover this, I have learned that music only requires you to be the best that you can be, which is one of the many reasons why music is the love of my life. Not only has music influenced me in this way, I plan to make music my career, by going to college in order to become a music educator, because there is nothing in the world that I want to do more than to help others see how music really affects our world. I want to show others that music is not something that should be cast aside for things like new ipads and macbook computers that will only be outdated in less than a year, or even to prioritize state mandated tests to an unreasonable level. If anything, schools should be doing everything they can to keep music within their districts, because nothing can make someone think more than learning how to read music. Plato once said, "Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.". Plato could not have been anymore right about music. I would be a completely different person if music had not become a part of my life.

### **Bradley Roddy**

Occupation: Student

From: Keystone HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

People who study music tend to have larger vocabularies and more advanced reading skills than their peers who do not participate in music. It is also one of the only activities that uses both sides of the brain. Music is the only thing extracurricular that I participate in. Without it, I wouldn't have anything to do other than just go to school. Music Education has impacted my life drastically because it is something that gives me joy in life. I have learned about how great of a musician I am because of it, and I have met new people and have made many new friends from the many Choir and Band festivals that I have participated in. It has opened my eyes

to a whole new world. My director, Mr. Nesta, is one of the biggest influences in my life. He is the main reason that I am even in choir. I almost dropped the class, but he wouldn't let me because he knew the musical potential I have. The other influence I have in music is my old band director, Miss Hall. If it wasn't for her, I probably wouldn't even know what a tuba was. These two amazing people are the reason that I have become the person I am today. Without music education, I wouldn't have my future as planned out as I do. I am going to Mansfield University with a major in music Education to teach HS students. It is because of Clarion Area HS's choir director, Mr. Covington, that I even know about Mansfield. I used to receive voice lessons from him and I asked him what schools he recommended, and Mansfield was one of the schools he recommended the most. They have a strong music program, and I think that it will be the perfect place to further my education in music. Music Education is something that every school needs for their students. It is one of the most important things that kids need in their lives while they grow up. It can be influential to many kids in the near or distant future. The music department at Keystone is definitely growing, and I hope that it will continue growing for other generations so that they can enjoy music as much as I do today.

### **Rachel Hook**

Occupation: Student

From: Redbank Valley HS, Clarion County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

"Music speaks what cannot be expressed. Soothes the mind and gives it rest. Heals the heart and makes it whole. Flows from heaven to the soul." Music education has not only been a huge part in my life but has made me grow into the person that I am today. The impact that music has had in my life is a gift that I will treasure the rest of my life. Music education at school has given me the opportunity to share my love of music with others who have the same passion as myself. Being around fellow lovers of music makes me want to strive to grow in my abilities and want to learn something new about it. Music has been an outlet for me when I didn't have anything else and without having music education during my school years, I would not have the appreciation for things and opportunities I have had. So how has music education impacted my life? It's simple. Music is my life.

## **CLEARFIELD COUNTY**

### **Lillian Turner**

Occupation: Student

From: DuBois Area HS, Clearfield County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music gives me an opportunity to create something great and beautiful. It is what makes my life colorful and puts goodness into the world.

### **Maria Ginther**

Occupation: Student

From: DuBois Central Catholic, Clearfield County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life greatly since I was a very young age. My grandparents and parents always exposed me to music and when I started school, I always looked forward to music class. All through middle school and HS, I participated in choir, then advanced to PMEA festivals which greatly enhanced my appreciation and love for music.

### **John Adams**

Occupation: Student

From: Notre Dame, Clearfield County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am a first-year student at the University of Notre Dame. I attended DuBois Area High School through my time in PA, a member of PMEA Region II, and a school I represented at Band, Choral, Orchestral, and Jazz festivals for the last three years of my high school career. I can say with absolute certainty that the music education I received in Pennsylvania, and all the people I have met, friends, teachers, and others, have done wonders to positively impact my life. PMEA turned me from a kid who was kinda forced into music, and wanted to quit, into a member of the Band of the Fighting Irish, playing for hundreds of thousands every week, and a member of the Liturgical Choir of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Without PMEA, I don't think I would have had the opportunity to even get into this, my dream school, and for that and everything they have ever done for me, I am eternally grateful.

### **Rebecca Sensor**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Treasure Lake, Clearfield County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was fortunate enough to discover my love for music at a very early age. My mother loves to tell the story of how I was entered in a talented show at the age of two and sang "Hello My Baby" while a family friend played the guitar. I really do not remember a time when there was not music in my life. Music always filled our home. My mother played the piano and both of my parents sang in the church choir. All 3 of my younger siblings and I played instruments and we were always singing! I grew up with the idea that everyone lived like this. It was not until I was older that I realized that not everyone had the same upbringing. Music became a vital part of who I was once I entered Jr. High School. I came from a small elementary school where everyone knew you and I entered a large, cold Jr. High where everyone already had friends. My parents owned a business that was struggling and they often relied on me to care for my young brother and sisters. In school, music became my new happy home. I became involved in everything musical. I was in band, orchestra, and chorus. I fell in love with musical theater and I really found my true friends. I went from an awkward 6th grader who felt lost in a new school, to a confident senior who was teaching flute lessons to younger kids, starring in the musical, attending music festivals, and winning talent/scholarship pageants. Music transformed my life in so many ways. Now I get to welcome scared 6th graders to a large middle school. I get to help them find their safe, happy place and have an escape from whatever stress they may face during their day. I get to give a voice, through music, to kids that may not feel they have a voice in any other aspect of their life. The comfort of music is an awesome thing!

## **CLINTON COUNTY**

### **Jonathan Probst**

Occupation: Student

From: Bucktail Area HS, Clinton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me a chance to develop my leadership skill, built my confidence and allowed me to make life-long friendships with people who share my interest. I also have been given the opportunity to represent my school and community at festivals and sporting events.

### **Heather Haigh**

Occupation: Self Employed

From: Lock Haven, Clinton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a profound impact i on my life, beginning as early as age five. I taught music from 2001-2011 in another state and during my interview, taught a classroom full of four-year olds a song I learned in kindergarten twenty years earlier. It's what sealed the deal on my job and changed my life forever.

Throughout public school, music classes gave me the impetus to keep doing my best, even when everything around me seemed to be going crazy. I wanted to be my best because I was an important part of a team from the first moment I joined the band. I made my mark as a musician in our school and made sure I set the bar high for the others. Even at my life's lowest point, as a victim of sexual assault, my commitment to excellence through music was the one thing I could focus on to get through the dark times, of which there were many. The more musical activities I could join, the better I could cope. I spent my junior and senior year winters and springs traveling to PMEA festivals every couple of weeks and representing my school with pride. In addition to the emotional support my music classes provided, the constant musical analysis going on in my brain helped me to graduate in the top ten in my class, even missing several days per year due to festivals. There is no end to the positive benefits of music education. Just ask someone whose life it saved.

### **Sharon Valerio**

Occupation: Student

From: Sugar Valley Rural Charter School, Clinton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has helped me to manage my time outside of school better, because I not only have to keep my social life in mind, but also my duties as a musician, (concerts, rehearsals, parades, etc.) Music is like another language for me, and it has only enriched my life from learning more about it and participating in it. When I sing, it doesn't matter if it is in a different language that the audience will not understand, it is the swelling of the notes and the different ways which they can be stretched that portray the true meaning of the song. I love participating in music education because it is such a thing of giving. You work so hard just so you might make the audience feel emotion. In the end you are giving them the gift of your music, and that is beautiful to me.

## **COLUMBIA COUNTY**

### **Kyle Mausteller**

Occupation: Student

From: Benton HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Participating in my school's music program has opened my to new ideas and cultures. It has given me a place to belong and has made me a more confident person.

### **Carol Barnett**

Occupation: Retired University Administrator

From: Berwick, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a student, vocal music added joy, dedication and inspiration to my life from grade 1 through 12 in classroom and extra curricular activities. Instrumental music meant classroom instruction from elementary through high school, as well as discipline and cultural knowledge through ensemble work. As a parent, all 3 of my children benefited from school music programs, vocal and instrumental. Through participation they learned not only music pieces, but also social skills, self confidence, perseverance, and team work. They traveled locally, regionally and nationally to perform. They experienced Broadway shows and community theaters. As a community member music education in my local schools brings much enjoyment to the community at large through concerts and other musical activities at a very low cost (in fact, sometimes free). All these experiences are made possible by dedicated music education professionals and supportive administrators. My love of music began at home, from parents who themselves learned from dedicated music teachers, was nurtured by music teachers and has extended through my lifetime. I know I have passed this on to my own children where it was fine tuned by their tireless music instructors and I hope in turn their children (my grandchildren) will be impacted by music education in their lives.

### **John Zerance**

Occupation: Nuclear Chemistry Technician

From: Berwick, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a huge part of my life. Music classes in school taught me how to understand and appreciate all kinds of music. I took up an instrument in 4th grade and was band throughout school. Aside from music skills I learned teamwork, discipline. Most of the friends I am still in touch with were in band with me. I play today in two community bands. Both of my children play instruments. My son was inspired by his experience to go on to a degree in band instrument repair and now works in that field. Working with the band for my kids I became involved in community activities and was so moved that I got involved in local government as a school director, then a member of the sewer authority, and currently as a trustee for a charter school and a member of the Youth Aid Panel here in Columbia County. I can honestly say that I would not be the person I am today if I had not had learned about music in school. Learning to play an instrument or singing are higher order skills that require many disciplines of knowledge to be successful. Music education has been essential in my success in life.

### **Sarah Dent**

Occupation: Student

From: Berwick Area HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life in more ways than one. My time in the band has taught me responsibility, respect, creative thinking, and leadership. However, I am not the only one. While taking this path, I have met many incredible people and made wonderful friends. We have learned how to act in society both as individuals, and as a united group. I have learned how to depend on others, and how to shoulder their needs as well. Because of my time in the band, I am now unafraid to take risks, unafraid to stand up for what I believe in, and consider not only how my actions will affect me, but how they will affect the others around me. These life lessons have helped mold me into the person I am now. When I first started learning music as a child, I could not imagine how it would affect my life as an adult. Now, I cannot imagine what my life would be like if I had not joined the music program. Music education has changed my life for the better.

### **Katelyn Gallagher**

Occupation: Student

From: Berwick Area HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

A musician has many roles, not only a performer, but a teacher, a leader, and a team member. In my own experience, I began as an average player, taking private saxophone lessons to better myself. Today, my passion for music thrives through my leadership to better the ensemble. As Drum Major, I have learned how to raise the bar for myself and the ensemble in hopes of excellence. My countless hours of dedication and practice have benefited the music department at Berwick as well as my own self. A Drum Major is seen as the highest role of leadership in the band. You are a role model to the others and represent your HS every time you take that first step on the field. Through my leadership roles, it has become apparent that every action impacts the ensemble as a whole. Sometimes things can be difficult, but it is important to learn from these mistakes and move forward. In music and in life, you only get one chance to make a first impression. I strive to present myself in all that I do with my head up and eyes with pride. Marching band has revealed things about myself that have made me the successful individual I am today.

### **Hannah Gardzalla**

Occupation: Student

From: Berwick Area HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education may be small to some, but makes every day special and significant. Without music education, I would have nowhere to aim for my career. and I would live a boring, overall unprofitable life. Being in music has taught me that everyone has a special melody within them, and when that person is no

longer around, the choir is missing a subtle yet important part. Music is something I can use in order to release concealed emotions, and make the world a better place in the process.

### **Courtney Golomb**

Occupation: Student

From: Berwick Area HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been involved with chorus officially since my fourth grade year while I started with band in my fifth grade year. I immediately found that these both helped catalyze friendships between I and my musically talented peers. While I was friendly prior to joining either, band served as a confidence booster and encouraged me to entertain new friendships that I might not have otherwise. As the years of middle school approached we got our first taste of marching band. I had never been very competitive but this awakened a spirit in me that would not be tamed. For three years I waited anxiously for the time when I would be among those on the football field. When the time finally came it was so surreal. HS band was so different than middle school band. We had the opportunity to march for half the year and entertain those at the football games and for the second half of the year get to relax a bit more with concert band. I was never the best musician in a group but I still felt accepted. My only real regret is that I shyed away from music festivals due to my anxiety that I wasn't good enough to get in. While my friends started trying out in their middle school years I just used the excuse that I wasn't good enough. It wasn't until my junior year that I finally tried out for the county band festival and successfully made it in. This year being my senior year I decided I would try out again and that I would also try out for district band without much expectation of making it. As I walked to the front of the bus to get my score from our conductor I glimpsed him grabbing a folder. My head was racing as I realized I made it into district band and how I would now have to try out for regionals. I assumed district band was as far as I was going to go, but as it turned out my audition was good enough to get into regionals also. If band has taught me anything it's that my immediate insecurities are not always correct and that if you have the determination to succeed you will. It also helps to have good friends that, even if they don't make it, will continue to encourage you to push onward. Music has made me more daring than I could have ever imagined, and for that I am eternally grateful.

### **Andrew Miller**

Occupation: Student

From: Berwick Area HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has really created me for who I am today. The many music educators I have had have had a huge impact on my life in not only teaching me how to play music, but also many life skills including diligence, discipline, hard work, and focus. My music teachers have had such a profound impact on me that I am continuing my music education through college and hope to make it my career.

### **Zachary Stola**

Occupation: Student

From: Berwick Area HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education gives me an outlet no other subject can. It is a crucial part of my life and it encourages me to be myself. It is a place where I can go if I'm feeling good or bad. It doesn't matter. Music is always there.

### **Emily Brubaker**

Occupation: College Student

From: Bloomsburg, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I learned all of my music education through the Cocalico School District. My time there really opened my eyes to all the opportunities the world has to offer. Being apart of the High School's music department was incredible. We traveled to many competitions and share in memories that most people do not get to experience. Being in the Cocalico Marching Band has influenced me to join Bloomsburg University's

Marching Band. I was taught everything I needed to know to be prepared to march at a Collegiate level. I learned discipline, what it takes to be a leader and sense of commitment from being in marching band. I now apply those skills to the Maroon and Gold band where I am confident with my marching technique and my ability to lead others. I also apply the things I've learned through band in my own life. I share my skills of time management with my friends here at Bloomsburg. If it wasn't for being section leader in my high school band and having to be patient with my section to learn what they needed too I would not have the time management skills I have today. Being apart of the Cocalico's Music Department and now Bloomsburg University's is one of the best decisions I've ever made. Music Education is much more than learning an instrument or how to sing. It sets you up for life. It teaches you life lessons that you can't learn in a regular classroom setting. If it wasn't for the Music Education I received from Cocalico High School I would not be where I am today.

### **Kevin Haile**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Bloomsburg, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education is the focus of my life after family and God. Everyday I am working to make a difference in students' lives through music. I would not be where I am today without Music Education. Who knows what paths would have been in store for me had I not followed my heart?

### **Todd L. Hunter**

Occupation: Music Educator and Performer

From: Bloomsburg, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has provided me with a meaningful career as a music educator, and as a professional freelance musician. As a music educator for almost 40 years, I have been afforded the opportunity to prepare, improve, and guide my students in their lifelong pursuits. Although not all of my students continued in the pursuit of a career in music, many have remained in contact with me over the years telling me how their study of music, and participating in various ensembles has greatly helped them to become the successful individuals they are today, and how they have conveyed these values to their own children, as well as others. I have become a well respected and sought after musician and music educator. I have a vast network of professional and personal friends and colleagues. Music has filled my life with opportunities and experiences that I might never have had if I chose another vocation. I have been able to nurture this same love and appreciation for music and music education with hundreds of others, which has given my life a perpetual purpose and meaning. None of this could have been possible without music education.

### **Noah Crawford**

Occupation: Student

From: Bloomsburg Area HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me something stationary within my crazy years as a HS student, something that I know is constant, and that I will like. It has also lead to some great experiences at various festivals and competitions, the memories of which I will carry for the rest of my life.

### **Dante Green**

Occupation: Student

From: Bloomsburg Area HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me a solid foundation for my future career in vocal performance.

**Claire Hintz**

Occupation: Student

From: Bloomsburg Area HS, Columbia County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made me more confident.

**Ivy-Rose Kramer**

Occupation: Student

From: Bloomsburg Area HS, Columbia County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music allows me to touch other people in a way that can take them to a different place, it inspires me to keep playing and continue striving for something greater than myself. My school music program has given me a passion for music that I wish to share with the world. My band director has taught me that music can express emotions without words, giving the most reserved people, such as myself, an opportunity to bridge their comfort zone. Someday, I would like to be an inspiration for others, just as my music program has been an inspiration for me.

**Nathan Lincoln**

Occupation: Student

From: Bloomsburg Area HS, Columbia County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Simply put, music education has built up my confidence.

**Kyla Minster**

Occupation: Student

From: Bloomsburg Area HS, Columbia County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I believe that as a student it has taught me to be more disciplined and focused.

**David Zimmerman**

Occupation: Student

From: Bloomsburg Area HS, Columbia County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music gave me more confidence.

**Joseph Zimmerman**

Occupation: Student

From: Bloomsburg Area HS, Columbia County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music taught me to be more confident and helped me to express myself.

**Megan Osborne**

Occupation: Student

From: Central Columbia HS, Columbia County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a huge part of my life, and music education has only made it more important to me. Being able to learn more about singing and music in general is one of my favorite parts of going to school. Music education is an incredibly important part of my life, and has brought me even closer to the music I have loved since I was little.

**Patricia Heller**

Occupation: Author/Retreat Owner/Singer/Entertainer

From: Rhinebeck, Columbia County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Plays in grammar school in which I was cast as singing leads. Chorus in high school made me realize I had a voice that made people happy. I've been singing all my life, cabaret, opera, folk, all things I never would have tried without music education and inspiration from wonderful teachers...

#### **Olivia Bodner**

Occupation: Student

From: Southern Columbia Area HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in numerous ways. I can honestly and without a doubt state that I have found my true home within my school's music department. Not only has the department welcomed me and supported me through all of my music endeavors, I have made the closest relationships I have through music. Music education has helped me to become not only a more skilled musician, but also a more knowledgeable and confident musician. I have been involved in music since I was in 4th grade and I will continue to keep music with me throughout my whole life. I have the years that I had in music education to thank for the strong and firm musical background that will carry me through all my current and future musical endeavors.

#### **Mary Scopelliti**

Occupation: Student

From: Southern Columbia Area HS, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has changed my life for the better. I used to sing and hum around my house and it was fun, but music education really gave me a true outlet to sing. The teachers helped shape my voice and give it purpose. I know they can be my confidants and help me through tough times if I ever need them. Music itself gave me a chance to shine and distinguish myself from my peers, but also bring us together. Music education gave me the courage to get on a stage and express myself and put myself out there. I don't get crippling stage fright now because I know the show must go on. I can stand up for myself in a school debate or to someone who is putting me down. Although these skills come naturally to some, music and music education brought them out in me. I am so thankful our school has kept the music program despite numerous threats to shut it down. The program has given many people hope and will give them skills they will need for everything, from getting a job to singing their children to sleep. Not everybody has the means to get private lessons so having a music program is vital some of them. People depend on music everyday. Their favorite song could get them through a tough place. A movie might be made more intense by its soundtrack. Music makes life worth living for so many. I'm not really eloquent, but I really hope that I have given you insight as to how much influence and happiness music education has brought me.

#### **Russell Houser**

Occupation: Army Musician

From: Virginia Beach, VA, Columbia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education from 5th-12th grade at Central Columbia High School set the foundation for a twenty-seven year (and going strong) career serving our nation as a military musician. I am so fortunate for the generous music educators who helped me unlock this form of understanding (see Howard Gardner - another Pennsylvanian) and who helped me communicate in ways that were more satisfying and sufficient than words or writing as a kid. Currently, I am finishing my own terminal degree in Music Education and find the most valuable work I do sharing with two groups of community singers in NYC. The path of continually learning music has taken me from what I feel was a very out-of-control and definitely at-risk youth to an adult who still feels music is more adept for saying what needs to be said but this time WITH someone and not AT someone. Please continue to support the work of educators and especially music educators. Also, please continue to learn for yourself what music really is. I assure you, learning about music is transformation of the soul.

## CRAWFORD COUNTY

### **Emily Miksa**

Occupation: Student

From: Conneaut Area Senior HS, Crawford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is something no one can describe with words. It is a way to reveal all the secrets of the soul with just a few notes, and that is beautiful. Without music, I would not be the person I am today. Music has made me a more confident and wise person, and I could never imagine my life without music.

### **Jenna Ploski**

Occupation: Student

From: Maplewood HS, Crawford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life for the better by giving me something to always look forward to and strive to do my best at.

### **Benjamin Learn**

Occupation: Student

From: Meadville Area HS, Crawford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to come out of my shell. I was a very shy sixth grader going into seventh grade, so naturally I was concerned about making friends going into middle school. I had decided to do marching band because I had been interested in it and I had played the alto saxophone since fourth grade. So I walked into the first day of marching band practice as a still very shy seventh grader. However, one of the older alto saxophone players (who was also the drum major and was good friends with my sister) came up to me, helped me learn the music, and introduced me to the other band members. Everyone, band members and directors included, was very kind and I immediately felt comfortable around them and part of the group. Over the next six years, I developed lifelong friends in secondary school, most of them from band. Music education had turned me from a shy seventh grader into a not-quite, but almost outgoing senior. I am a person who can confidently look back and say that music education changed my life for the better and I will be forever grateful for that.

### **John O'Laughlin**

Occupation: Student

From: Meadville Area HS, Crawford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has provided me with something to look forward to every day in the midst of tests and memorization. I can firmly say that it has made me a more intelligent individual. It is a joy to understand music on a deeper level than simply listening to it and I have come to realize that music is an essential part of my life. Even though my career will not be in music I can certainly say that music has contributed to my successes so far and I could not have accomplished as much as I have without the joys of creating and listening to music.

### **Scott Dabundo**

Occupation: Student

From: Penncrest HS, Crawford County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has only helped me since I learned the function of a quarter note in "Hot Crossed Buns". Through the years, it has taught me punctuality, focus, and best of all, how to play in a band. PMEA has brought me one of the best musical experiences in my life.

**Kayla Sibeto**

Occupation: Student

From: Saegertown HS, Crawford County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has always been a huge impact in my life. I changed schools my seventh grade year of HS and did not know anyone at my new school. When the guidance councilor ask me what classes I would like to take I immediately asked for any music classes available at Saegertown HS. Music classes always made me feel accepted and comfortable so I concluded that in a new school, where I didn't know anyone, music classes would be the perfect place to make new friends. Through music education I have grown as a person and became more confident in everyday life. I have learned how to listen to others and how to collaborate as a team to arrive at the most successful outcome. Without music education I would feel empty inside. Music Education courses are by far the highlight of my day and allow me to express myself in a powerful way.

**Kristi Stoyer**

Occupation: Student

From: Saegertown HS, Crawford County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

"Tis you that are the music, not your song". I have been involved in my school music programs since I was 12 years of age. It has helped me grown and develop as a person. I have gained tremendous confidence from the positive musical environment and experiences. It is the main reason I enjoy coming to school.

**Joann**

Occupation: Preschool Teacher

From: Erie, Crawford County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my life since I learned how to play flute in 5th grade. I was always in love with my music th en and I continued with it through high school. Because of my interest in music and the time spent, I learned a lot and I also had a great group of friends who I am still in contact with 4 years after high school. I learned to me management skills, how to keep to a task, and that for hard work, th e or is always a reward or something new to work forward to!

## **CUMBERLAND COUNTY**

**Rebekah Vensel**

Occupation: Student

From: Boiling Springs HS, Cumberland County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is all around us. As a child I grew up listening to music in the car and singing along with my family. As I grew up, my siblings began to take part in musical activities such as band, chorus, the musical, and the local concert choir at our school district. I looked toward them as inspiration. I wanted to do the activities that they did when i became old enough. When the time came, I joined every musical activity that i could. When my siblings went to college they both wanted to major in music (One sibling majoring in music education and the other making her own major with aspects of music education, musical theater, and music business). Who knew that all three children would have such a love for music. As I entered HS, I began to audition for activities such as district chorus. The PMEA musical events help bring the most passionate students in music together. When I began auditioning, I never would have thought that my brother would take on this events with me, not as a student, but as a HS director. His passion for music never changed and music education helped him do what he loves. Teachers, such as these, inspire children to reach for the stars. As for me, music education in public schools has shown me a love for music. My public school music teachers have shown me that I can put together my two favorite things, music and helping people. Music therapy is where I am hoping to make my voice heard by helping those who may not be able to do so.

### **Alexandra Lynch**

Occupation: Student

From: Cumberland Valley HS, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is something that has affected me from the time I was very young and will be something that will affect me for the rest of my life. Not only has it nurtured a true passion of mine, but it has also assisted me in becoming more assertive and confident. Prior to getting passionate about my oboe, I was shy and was not a self-advocate. For example, in elementary school if I had wanted to use a jump rope that another child was using, instead of asking to borrow it I would have simply walked away and done something else.

However, once I began to work with music, I learned many life skills that I could not have been taught in any other subject. I have been fortunate enough to work with some exceptional music teachers in the past few years. They have given me much criticism, which prior to working with them I would have taken great offense to. However, music has also taught me the value in criticism, as it is the only way to improve. I am very grateful to all music educators who show their honesty and will share with students their errors if something does not sound good. I strive to receive the positive feedback on my work and am quite excited when I do receive it as I know it is genuine. In addition, through music education I have learned perseverance. I have been knocked down by many auditions; it takes strength to get up, and it can be exceedingly difficult to do so. After having difficulties in other activities, such as swimming and soccer, I would get upset and not participate the next season. As a musician, I've learned to accept these difficulties as motivation to work harder. Each week I look forward to lessons, excited that I can feel accomplished about learning something new and polishing my other skills. The music educators I have been lucky enough to work with support me both when I'm experiencing difficulties and when I am very successful. Music educators have impacted me greatly and have taught me skills that will impact the rest of my life.

### **Jessica Lynch**

Occupation: Student

From: Cumberland Valley HS, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me many great experiences and has allowed me to meet many people that I would not have had without it.

### **Miriam Dilts**

Occupation: Student

From: East Pennsboro Area HS, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to increase my self-confidence dramatically. I have been involved in music for most of my life, and joining ensembles allows me to make friends and improve my musical abilities. The music department creates an environment where close relationships are formed and I can have fun.

### **Lance Samuel**

Occupation: Student

From: East Pennsboro Area HS, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has provided me many ways to express and de-stress myself. It's helped me both socially and musically. I wouldn't be who I am today without it.

### **Joyce E. Gerstenlauer**

Occupation: Choral & General Music Teacher

From: Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life since the day I was born. My parents said I was always cooing and singing. At age 4 my older sisters got me to sing a silly song for a family reunion and they say I didn't bat an eye although I remember being really nervous to sing a 6th grade chorus solo, but I still loved doing it! I cannot

remember ever not loving music of all styles, so at age six I started playing the Accordion, at my neighbor's house which was followed by learning to play piano with my sister until I started private lessons in fifth grade. Going through public school from grade seven through twelve, I sang in every choir/ensemble, performed in every musical, playing piano for chorus, jazz band, and orchestra. I especially loved being in the high school traveling choir ensemble since we went to so many different places to perform. The beauty of the choir blending of harmonies made me want to sing alto to harmonize and "make" beautiful music. At my church I also sang in the children's choir up through my teen years and even was the adult Choir Director by eleventh grade. In tenth grade I also began to take pipe organ lessons which fell right in place after the piano lessons. As a teen I was shy but my "shine" came out in the music. Since our piano was in the downstairs, where there was no TV, I could practice whenever I wanted, so if I had a bad day at school or fought with my brother, I could run downstairs to play piano and sing away my troubles. Singing in the county, district and regional choruses was also the thrill of my life as everyone could sight read and learn the music quickly. In high school I was known as the "rehearsal accompanist" and taught all of my peers their festival and audition music, during my free time lunch or occasional study halls. I loved school in general, but my life was based around what class I had an "A" in so I could get out early and go to the music room and practice or help peers learn their music. By my junior year I knew that I wanted to go to college to major in music and teach folks of all ages how to sing beautifully, play their instruments and share it all with the world since music is know as the universal language! I was fortunate to be at a school that offered music theory courses and the director had time to work with me on my vocal development, through sectionals. Since getting a masters degree+ in music, I have directed/choreographed/produced over 40 musical plays, sung and soloed in various community and professional choirs and taught all ages in schools and churches for over 35 years. Without music in my life, it wouldn't be worth living!! it is a necessity of life!

### **Emily Palmer**

Occupation: Elementary Music Teacher/Vocal Coach  
From: Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was a student in high school who did everything. I played three sports, was editor of the school newspaper, 4-H Club, National Honor Society, president of my church youth group, took every AP English, science and math class and had over a 100% GPA. I also was in every choral ensemble and played in the concert band and marching band. Out of all those things, which of these activities had one of the greatest impacts on my life? The music education I received guided me to master the details as well as grasp the big picture. To push the limits of my abilities and strive for beauty in all that I do. To evaluate, create, and master. These are the skills I have learned in music that help me shape young minds today and that would have helped me in any career I could have chosen.

### **Jessica Post**

Occupation: Student at Maranathat Baptist University  
From: Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

What does music mean to me? First of all, I attended a private Christian school, and although our program was excellent, the smaller numbers in the school do not allow for as many opportunities to be in large bands. The PMEA band festivals gave me the experiences of a regular sized band filled with extremely talented peers. I had the opportunity to be under the direction of some of the best directors in the country. Second, music overall has improved other academic subjects. Anyone who has studied music extensively knows that music teaches virtually every academic subject including mathematics, physics, history, foreign language, etc. Third, the study of music taught me other skills such as problem solving and discipline. Problem solving further aided my academics and showed me how to work through dilemmas using logical processes. Music also teaches discipline. No undisciplined person would repeat something the same way a musician repeats a musical phrase to get it just right. Music does not teach students that mediocre effort is okay. Students are expected to do their best, and are expected to perform to their fullest. Music taught me to strive to do my best even outside the musical world. I strive to get the best grades that I can achieve. Music is the ONLY subject that drive a person to do 100% of what they can do, not just enough to get by or even a mediocre or fair

performance. It encourages a healthy sense of competition combined with a genuine respect for the others who are also extremely talented. Other qualities that music teaches includes loyalty, dedication, persistence, responsibility, time management, and a sense of community. A musician becomes loyal to his or her group and is dedicated to spending many hours to accomplish the set goals. Music taught me to be responsible through the many practice hours I had to do. I had to have persistence when a difficult piece needed extra work on my part, and because of the time spent practicing, I had to learn to manage my time to accomplish all for which I was responsible. Music taught me a sense of community. In no other subject can a person walk into a room full of complete strangers and become so closely connected. Within minutes of playing together, that group of strangers is connected on such a level that words are barely necessary. Friendships are made that could not otherwise be forged. Music expresses ideas and emotions that words cannot hope to touch on. For someone, like me who can have a hard time expressing themselves and what they feel, music opens the floodgate of understanding to the universe. Nothing in the world speaks the same as good music. Strangers make unbreakable connections, students learn qualities needed for life, musicians learn to do their best, and academics are enhanced, all through music. I would not be where I am if not for music. Music became my future because I saw the promising future of music.

### **Lynn Randle**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My first band director handed me a cornet when I could not make a sound on the flute that I so badly wanted to play on instrument try-out night. After blowing a few notes, she told me "you are a natural." By my fifth year I wanted to quit but thank goodness my dad asked me if I wanted to take all the talent God had blessed me with and flush it down the toilet? Wow, I do not think I would be in my current profession now if I would have quit then. After 7 years of instrumental instruction with encouragement, high expectations, and life lessons taught along the way, I moved half way across the United States to finish my last two years of high school. I still call or stop in to visit my first band director to let her know of the milestones faced and accomplished with each passing year. The band students at my new school became like a second family to me, and I spent as much time there as possible. I still keep in touch with some of them over twenty years later. My horizons broadened to now include jazz band, orchestra, symphonic band, a local youth symphony, and marching band, where I had been selected as one of two drum majors my senior year. This helped me to develop some basic leadership skills as well as gave me opportunities for basic conducting technique. When my director became ill during my senior year, I had the opportunity to lead the younger concert band, and was asked to conduct a selection at the upcoming concert. I finally knew what I wanted to do in college -- study music education. By the middle of my first year of college, I was trying to figure out how to financially continue to afford the next few years of school and started to consider the National Guard Band. After passing the audition, I decided to enlist in the regular Army Band. During my almost four years of service, I greatly enjoyed playing alongside so many talented musicians from all over the US. I marched in countless parades, performed for VP Al Gore in Yellowstone National Park, bugled for dozens of funerals, played ROTC graduations, Change of Command ceremonies, summer Music in the Parks performances, and a few International Concerts with bands from Canada, Ireland, and Scotland. I also toured with our Rock Combo, recruiting at many high schools in northern CA. Aside from music. I was the M203 grenade launcher for my squad. I don't think I would have that memory if my school had not offered an instrumental music program. So now after 15 years of teaching music, I have helped to develop, grow, and stabilize a string program at my school district. This journey has allowed me to teach at 10 buildings, engaging hundreds of students over the years. I hope I have helped them on their journey to love music and where it may lead.

### **Allison Conrad**

Occupation: Student

From: Mechanicsburg Area Senior HS, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music, I do not know where I would be. Music often provides an outlet for stress for me whenever my academic life is difficult. Furthermore, I have made many lifelong friends through my involvement in

music programs throughout the past 13 years of my life. These festivals provide a unique opportunity for advanced musicians across the region to come together and enjoy an amazing musical experience. Ultimately, music education is extremely important because music is a necessity in life!

### **Dave Yinger**

Occupation: Band Director

From: Pennsylvania, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education hasn't just impacted my life...it IS my life. From birth, growing up with a music teacher mom, I was constantly surrounded by music. From listening to her teaching piano lessons as a toddler, to learning piano and saxophone at an early age, playing in band at school, joining the marching band, concert band, jazz band, taking private lessons from some of the best teachers in the area, auditioning for district, regional, state band, performing in Carnegie Hall with the All-Eastern Honor Band, traveling to Europe with the Sound of America, band trips to the beach, summer jobs playing in bands at Hershey Park, cruising the Caribbean playing in a Carnival show band, teaching beginning and high school band...music IS my life. If my musical education hadn't been fostered and provided for by my local school district, none of this would have been possible. I owe my life to the music teachers I have had over the years, and am proud to have become their colleague in this noblest of professions.

### **Kirsten**

Occupation: Student

From: Shippensburg, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in the most positive way possible. Without music I wouldn't be the same person I am today. I have met my closest friends through music, I have also traveled throughout the US and soon to Ireland because of being involved in music education. My love for music even carried over to my college career and hopefully into my future career as an educator.

### **Alan Tolbert**

Occupation: Student

From: Shippensburg Area HS, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

If I could pick one thing and one thing only that has impacted my life for the better and without any penalty it would be music. Music has taught me how to be a true citizen and family member, Christian and friend. All core subjects are implemented that can and HAVE applied to my entire life. After practicing for two hours a day for the past several months to make my district band, making district band, and making regional band, my hopes for becoming a musician one day have been solidified. Music education is the only education that I truly need to become who I desire with my whole heart to be. I have made dozens of new friendships that I never would've made before with music education, and I have made leaps greater than anyone could imagine in my thinking processes and character. I truly love coming into band every morning and being a part of something that God has planned for me to do. Accomplishing what I have with PMEA and music education in general has been extremely fulfilling to me, and will continue to be fulfilling for years to come. I've learned to invent new things, act with others, and be a conveyer of true emotion through a performance. Music education conveys what a lecture hall cannot; the hope of God personified by giving love to others through my true expression in music. Music is power, and it can only benefit us. I challenge whoever is reading this to read Ralph Emerson's quote on success. Will you leave the world a better place with music education? Ask yourself that question. Thank you so much for your time.

### **Thelma**

Occupation: Systems Architecture

From: Camp Hill, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music allowed me to join a chorus & play which forced me to be social. I sing poorly but my friend Kim helped me sing well enough to get through an audition. That experience gave me confidence & allowed me to part of truly creative & judgement free group. Judgement free isn't something you see much of in high school & it is much needed to break barriers & build confidence.

### **Rhonda Charles**

Occupation: Student

From: Farmville, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Although I live in a different state I can still tell you what impact music has on a child my daughter was diagnosed with a central audio processing disorder and I played Mozart while she slept then she picked a band to start listening to and her CAPD is now no longer affecting her. This affects the learning process and music is needed throughout life. My daughter was 10 when she was diagnosed and is now 14 and doing great academically and yes she listens to music while she does homework. I also feel strongly about physical education and keeping it in the school systems in any state.

### **Catherine Hetrick**

Occupation: College Student

From: Shippensburg, Cumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education gave me outlets in which I could fully express my feelings and work through issues in my life I dealt with through singing and playing. The 7 years I went to public school music education helped me to meet people who became my best friends and who still are today. By enriching my education, music was something that wasn't just a one time thing. I have become a part of my life and as I went on to college I continued to participate in any musical organizations I could. The college I attended had no music major so we were all involved for just the love of music. That's how special music education is. You do it for the love and the passion that you have for it. Not just because you have to or to fulfill some credit. Music is for fun and love to me. And that's what I learned from my music educators in middle school and high school as well as college.

## **DAUPHIN COUNTY**

### **James Devor**

Occupation: Student

From: Central Dauphin East HS, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life in many positive forms. Because of these benefits from music education in my school I plan to further pursue music in college and perhaps even become a music educator in the future. Programs within music education have led me to meet many good friends with whom I interact often. My teachers have greatly impacted what I perceive to be important and positively affect my personal life. I have learnt skills such as organization, responsibility, communications and various other life-long practical skills. Music education has caused me to reach previously unknown heights, both in my own musical performance and socially. It has helped me to create connections with people that I plan to keep for a lifetime. Overall, music education has greatly impacted my life in a positive manner.

### **Ray Shearer**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Elizabethtown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was in choir from 5th grade through college. It open my life to experiences that I most likely never would have been exposed to with the dedication of the music educators in my life.

### **Jennifer Dobbin**

Occupation: PTA

From: Halifax, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by teaching me techniques in which to teach my children rhythm, counting numerics, and alphabetizing with note tunes. They have utilized these skills during school activities (chorus, band), after-school activities (gymnastics, dance, basketball, etc), and routine daily activities (singing/counting while washing hands, household chores, and relaxing to the Voice or listening to their MP3 players to unwind). I am very thankful that music education can be a part of my children's lives.

### **Nicole Hate**

Occupation: Case Manager

From: Halifax, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I'm a former member PMEA District and Regional Choir member in 1993 at my graduating school, Indian Valley High School under the direction of Mrs. Sherry Morgan. Music has been a part of my life since my early years. During elementary school I was a cheerleader and also participated in choir and played the trumpet in 5th grade. Singing is where I found my true love and committed myself in middle school being part of our school choir. It was in high school where I found my mentor, Sherry Morgan, who passionately shared her love of music and talents with me. I was exposed to music genres I've never heard of and found myself lost in this magical world. My junior and senior years I was nominated as secretary of our choir and also performed with a 20 member vocal group, The Ensemble. Sherry encouraged me to try out for district choir my senior year. Luckily, Indian Valley was the host school this year. Sherry made each of us a tape for our parts, singing each part and playing the accompaniment. I practice for hours and hours, spent an incredible amount of time in one on one lessons with Sherry and other members. My hard work paid off, as I placed 4th out of my section of soprano IIs. District choir was fast on our heels, lots and lots of continued practice and frustration and I just didn't think I'd do well. Sherry encouraged me every step of the way and did not let me give up. Amazingly, I placed 10th and while I did not move onto states I think back fondly on my experiences in choir. I feel incredibly blessed to have Sherry as a teacher, role model and after school our friendship.

### **Justin Leonard**

Occupation: Student

From: Halifax, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In 4th grade I was given the opportunity to learn how to play an instrument and i chose to learn how to play drums. Over the last 9 years I have gained guitar, trap set, mandolin, bass, and many more. I now just mainly play guitar and drums. When I was in 9th grade i was asked if I wanted to join marching band. I said yes and it changed my life. I am excelling at math and music. I have also grown greater in my church through the praise band. I enjoy playing instruments because it helps me relieve stress and I can always sit and fiddle...no pun intended. I am now a senior and loving every minute of music class. If I had to do it again I would only learn more instruments.

### **Brennan Rudy**

Occupation: Student

From: Halifax, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in a myriad of ways. Music has given me a passion that I was unable to find in any other classes, which made me a happier and more well-rounded individual. This helped me to succeed with my academics. Because of the music education program I was exposed to and the teachers I have received lessons from, I was able to perform at places such as the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee, which is a dream come true. Without being introduced to music, I would not have had the ability to make as many connections or have had as much fun as I have in the past several years. Nothing can compare to seeing the joy in audience members' eyes after an incredible performance. With the education and experience I obtained throughout high school, I can happily say that I will be pursuing a career in music.

### **Jocelyn Branam**

Occupation: Recruiting Manager

From: Harrisburg, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was growing up in the Harrisburg School District, I was blessed to be there during a time of dedicated and amazing music educators. At the time, the district was still supporting choir, orchestra, and band programs. I played my first instrument at age 8, the violin. I would go on to play that instrument for the next 14 years of my life. After playing several instruments through the years, I focused on voice being my primary instrument of choice. During my high school years, I was surrounded by music educators that saw my love for music and they did all they could to help shape my passion and knowledge of music. My choir and band instructors often spent hours with me after school teaching me music theory and essentials for conducting (classes not offered in our high school curriculum). I decided to go to college and pursue music further, and if I had not had those teachers taking the time with me in high school, I never would have excelled in college. I graduated with a 3.9 GPA in my major and an overall 3.4 GPA. Upon graduating with a degree in Fine Arts (music, theatre, dance concentration), I would find it hard to find employment in my chosen field. I was then contacted by the very same music educators that groomed me for greatness, and informed about a long term substitute position with the Harrisburg School District for a music teacher in one of the Elementary schools. No sooner did I interview, I was offered the position. I remember sitting in a class room for a teacher in-service one day and looking around the room. I was surrounded by the same wonderful music educators that had nurtured and educated me as I grew up in the district: Mr. Miles, Mrs. Schrader, Mr. Clements, Rich Askey, (the only ones missing were Mr. Robbins, Mr. Greene, and Mr. Corey). Sitting among them now as colleagues; it was one of the proudest moments of my life. They had impacted my life in a way that they would never understand, as they introduced me to my first true love, MUSIC! The experiences that I have had through music took this young black girl from "the hood" to places I never would have imagined. I got the opportunity to sing and entertain with people from all over our district, region, state, and country. And music education did that. It made me a well rounded professional as a performer and career woman, and also taught me how to interact with those different than myself at a very early age. I would go onto perform locally in shows and become the first Harrisburg Idol (Harrisburg Superstar) winner, other moments that would have never happened had it not been for the music education I received throughout my academic career. Though I have moved on to a more traditional career, music is never far from my heart!

### **Samuel K. Fisher**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Harrisburg, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have made a profession out of music education. Music gives meaning to life. It has helped me excel in other areas of thinking.

### **Greg Hutchison**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Harrisburg, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

At the end of middle school, I was unsure if I wanted to continue playing my instrument or not. My middle school director simply said, "We need the trombones, please play in High School." Looking back, that was a key moment in my life. My education was enhanced in every way by my music education. I loved coming to school because I couldn't wait to see my band friends. I couldn't wait to hear the music that we were going to work on in class. It was through rehearsals with my music teachers and peers that I gained confidence, learned the values of teamwork, and learned that no matter how good I was on my own, WE would only succeed together if we all worked together and helped the weaker players improve. After high school, I had travel experiences that I never would have had without my musical background and met hundreds of great people and performed for thousands because of what I learned in my public school music programs. As a teacher now, I have seen music touch the lives of thousands of kids and our community over the years. The great support of our school's community is proof enough that every school needs music in its halls. Without our school's music programs, the seniors who support our musical would miss the connection that they have with our kids, our parades would be without music, and many of our students would have no "fun" reason to come to school. Music IS fun, music IS educational, and it IS valued by our kids and community. I know that I would have been lost without it.

### **Carol Scott**

Occupation: Retired/ Part-time musician

From: Harrisburg, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was extremely fortunate to have dedicated talented music teachers throughout my public school years. We had a COMPLETE program -- Elementary classroom instruction and chorus, individual clarinet lessons in 4th grade, bassoon lessons in 8th grade, middle school classroom music and middle school chorus, band and orchestra, and high school band, orchestra, chorus and music theory. I went on to study music in college and am still playing the bassoon. Music taught me self-confidence and gave me recognition where sports and academics did not. I was accepted by my peers even though I was not the sharpest or the most popular kid in school. Without music education, I believe I would have fallen through the cracks and would never have learned the discipline of hard work which has carried over to other facets of my life, namely a 40 year career in the business world. Music education is more important than ever!!

### **Erica Wang**

Occupation: Student

From: Hershey HS, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music makes me happy, and music educators help me achieve that.

### **Sean Maguire**

Occupation: Writer

From: Hummelstown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me in several ways; too many ways for me to describe in 500 words (or less), but one thing that I can safely say that music education has taught me, is to love all and cherish the differences between us. Music in my life has been a bridge to other worlds, other cultures, and other people. It has shown me the light that resides in us all, even if there is darkness surrounding it. Music education showed me that perfection is truly in the eyes of the beholder, and that perfection is, in lamest terms, imperfection. The imperfections found within us all makes us unique, and allows us to safely say to ourselves that all is okay, because we are human. Music brings brightness and glory to everyone's lives that it touches. Just like in jazz, where a wrong note may sound sour, or too dissonant- in reality, that note in someone's eyes is perfect, because it fits so imperfectly in the piece. If I grew up without a music education (which is

also life lessons in some ways) from Londonderry Elementary, to Greg Hutchison, to Jonathan Pinkerton, my life would not be the same, at all. It has shown me how to appreciate everyone around me. Music breathes life into a world that is full of evil and darkness- but with it, comes utter beauty.

### **Brock Nye**

Occupation: Insurance Sales Consultant

From: Hummelstown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was never into sports so I never made friends with the sporty kids. Music education showed me I was good at something, and it helped me make friends that had a common interest with me. Music education is a great way to show the kids that think they are not good at anything, that they can be good at something. Music has so many different possibilities and helped me get through the tough times. I'm glad my school district had an amazing music education program that helped me make friends, taught me something I loved, and always gave me something to do that I enjoyed.

### **Christina Watkins**

Occupation: Math Teacher

From: Hummelstown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Reason for Music in Schools: There are many reasons for music in schools from an educational standpoint. Increases creativity, stimulates brain activity, promotes personal discipline...I could go on and on and no doubt find scientific research to back up my claim. However, I find the biggest reason for music in schools in my personal life. I was a member of marching and concert bands as well as school choirs starting in third grade. As a shy kid, the music rooms were places where being quiet was OK, where you could express yourself through your instrument or your voice. Music ensembles surrounded me with other people who were like me, who understood that fitting in was sometime hard, that striving for excellence was something to be commended, not mocked. Little did I know that my son, an only child, would need some of those same comfort zones. I am thankful everyday for Mrs. Deb Avery, Mr. Greg Hutchison, Mr. Matt Dickinson, Mrs. Deb Connell and Mr. Keith Richardson, for these outstanding educators gave my son a place to be himself, to find worth in his talents and to experience the joy of performing. He continues to make music a central part of his life in college, performing in marching band and conducting the pep band at a major university. Without music education, I have no doubt that he would not be the person that he is. Music in schools gave him the chance to be a leader, to learn personal discipline, to be part of a team, and most importantly, to make friends. Students come before teachers each day with many needs and music fills many of these needs. Please support music in our schools.

### **Paula McCreary**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Hummelstown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me in many ways. As a student I was involved in band, orchestra, and chorus. I had opportunities to grow in ways which included travel and scholarship money. As a teacher, I watch music bring my students and the community together. It is heart warming to see a packed auditorium for school performances. As a parent, my own children reap many benefits from music education, too. They have learned commitment and perseverance. They have gained a feeling of accomplishment after learning a piece of music that seemed impossible at the start. They use their music in times of joys and times of sorrow. They take their music everywhere they go.

### **Tina**

Occupation: Personal Care Asst. HS Life Skills

From: Hunmelstown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has enriched my students life EVERYDAY! She is a part of concert band & gets to be among her peers. The teachers care deeply that she is involved to her best ability!

### **Emily McKissick**

Occupation: Student

From: Lower Dauphin HS, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

"Music can change the world because it can change people" -Bono

### **Cassie Zinkan**

Occupation: Student

From: Lower Dauphin HS, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is no longer simply a pleasure to my ears. Music is raw emotion funneled into the eardrums. While some may say music is irrelevant or a waste of school money and space, I personally can't see any logical backup for their accusations. Music has created an escape for so many young people. Ask ten children what is most important to them and I can guarantee that at least one will say music. The phrase "music is my life" is such a popular phrase because it's true. We, as a generation, need music to stay. We need music, and music needs us to create it, develop it, and show it off to the world. I know my world has been rocked in the best possible way by music, and I appreciate every one of the people who have gotten me this far.

### **O David Deitz**

Occupation: Retired Music Teacher, Current Education Consultant

From: Middletown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My personal education in music at the primary and secondary school level was obviously strong enough to enlighten me as to a career choice, and my college training in music was equally rich. I was privileged to meet teachers who were steeped in musical training and education techniques; persons who continue to affect music learning and community understanding of the importance of music in the human experience. The opportunity to emulate and encourage that experience in my own teaching, family life, work as an education consultant and community member continues to be a life-long pursuit and purpose.

### **Joseph Harkins**

Occupation: Oboist, Composer, and Arranger

From: Middletown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

If it weren't for music education and music educators across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania I would not be able to be studying music as I am. I would not be chasing my dreams. I would not have had the support or inspiration or mental activeness I have known and used for so long were it not for my many educators in the musical arts. I cannot stress enough the importance of music education and the necessity of the skills of our many talented music educators currently working in this great state of ours. Without music, where would the forlorn child turn to? Without music, how could we call ourselves intelligent, cultured human beings? We need to not only increase the level of exposure our young children are receiving in music and all of the arts, but we need to push and advocate for the expansion of opportunities for music educators, musicians, composers/arrangers/songwriters, and the multitudes of multi-faceted musicians everywhere. With more opportunities and more resources our current educators can raise the bar and provide the inspired, dedicated, and well-rounded education our children not only deserve, but need to succeed as educated, intelligent adults in the real world. An education centered in music provides not only light, hope, and purpose to a child's life - it lays the foundation for better success in all the humanities and extrapolates the desire to

learn in each and every student. Music impacts the soul in more ways than one, and in the same light our music educators and musicians provide more services to our nation's future than one person could ever predict. Throughout my years in grade school and high school, my involvement in the musical arts awakened my desire to learn and better myself in not only my musical involvement but in every facet of my education. Because of these efforts I am currently studying music at an acclaimed music school at a state university, and succeeding. My involvement in music and the way music has impacted my life is reason to give every student this same experience and opportunity that I have been fortunate to have. Support music and support the arts - our future depends on it.

### **Michele McDevitt**

Occupation: Human Resources

From: Middletown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education at the elementary, high school and college levels has undergirded my lifelong love of music. It allowed me to learn about myself and other cultures, express myself and learn the special language of music. Through general music education I learned about various musicals, operas and ballets as well as the organization and tone characteristics of the band and orchestra. I started singing when I was 4 and sang in choirs through college, and now outside the school system as an adult. I started becoming involved in musicals at 11, through college, and now am a "theatre mom" at my childrens' school. I started playing clarinet in fourth grade, as my older sister did, and went on to saxophone and piano, again through college years, and taught 2 of my children clarinet. One of my favorite classes in my undergraduate degree was World Folk Music at Shippensburg University with Joan Applegate, and I used that information to teach humanities at community college. I have 4 children, 2 who play clarinet and saxophone, 3 who play guitar, 1 of those 3 also plays string bass, piano and percussion, and 3 sing publicly. My daughter is now in choir at college. I am very proud of the music education program (bands, choirs, theatre programs) at Middletown Area School District because the educators and volunteers provide students with a broad range of opportunities, treat them with respect, remind them that music is a personal discipline, and encourage them to grow their skills, gifts and talents. While certain families are proud of handing down a sports legacy in their families, I am equally as proud to hand down a musical legacy from my mother to my children. Music education supports this legacy by providing additional opportunities that the community and family may not be able to. The educators at Middletown identify talents in students and encourage them to try new opportunities. For other families, music education may be the only opportunity that students have to experience music. It provides a unique window to culture, discipline, confidence, expression, teamwork, and leadership for children that might not be sports oriented. It provides intellectual stimulation and employs math and science. It gives kids reason to be proud of themselves. As a volunteer, I very much enjoy helping with the music programs in the school district and in my faith community to see the kids get involved, discover their talents and have fun. Recent studies have shown that learning to play a musical instrument or read music stimulates the intellect. There should be more, not less, music education in the public schools, taught as another language, to connect to students in a richer way and allow them to expand their horizons and personal sense of confidence.

### **Stephanie Ponnert**

Occupation: Administrative Support Coordinator

From: Middletown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My grandmother was an elementary school music teacher. Music has always been a part of my life. From the lullabies that are sung by my parents to the nursery rhymes that we learn in preschool, music is everywhere. I learned to play the piano when I was in elementary school. Beginning in the fourth grade I began to play the saxophone until I was told that could no longer play, due to the orthodontics that I had to wear. While I tried other instruments, none of them seemed to suit me. In high school, I wanted to join the marching band, not as an instrumentalist, but as a member of the band front. While I was no longer making the music, I was adding visual interpretation to add to the experience. I fondly remember the long hours of band camp and traveling to competitions and football games. Fast forward 20 years, when my own son expressed an

interest in music. First he fell in love with the trombone, then the piano. I have seen how music has greatly enhanced his life. Music allows him to express himself in a way that is nonjudgmental and free. Through music, he has developed leadership skills, time management skills, and has learned important life lessons. Music is universal. Music transports you to another place, evokes memories, and brings people together. Music is the soundtrack of life.

### **Erich Schlicher**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Middletown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has become a life long career for me. My love for educating students in music is my passion. For 32 years I have never had a difficult time getting out of bed in the morning. I love that I have never had to go to "work" like so many people, because I always get to go to "school." Because my passion led me to Middletown, I also met my wife, and started a life in the town in which I teach. I am choir director at my church, teaching music to others who love to "make a joyful noise." As I am nearing retirement, I can't think of anything I would want to do differently, and I owe it all to my love of music in high school, my refining of music education in college, and my occupation which I hold so dear to my heart. How has music education impacted my life? It has led me to where I am today, a successful, hard working, well-respected member of my community. I owe my entire life to music education, and I have been truly blessed.

### **Kyle**

Occupation: Photographer at GTP

From: Middletown, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have learned to be a great singer and love to sing!

### **Jackson Bruce**

Occupation: 6th grade student

From: Palmyra, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I play the sax and my Dad used to play the sax in middle school. When I first started he picked up my instrument and was able to play right away. I was amazed he remembered! So it's like having my own tutor at home. My dad and I are close, but having this connection over the sax is awesome!

### **Austin White**

Occupation: Student

From: Pennsylvania, Dauphin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is what defines me. It has given me purpose and a new way to express myself. It isn't just a sound, it can be my sound. I can say more with an instrument than I ever could just by speaking. Receiving an education has allowed me to reach higher and stretch further than I ever thought I'd reach. I have been able to accomplish new things and play all kinds of instruments, even the cello and banjo! I've been able to reach a point of true joy in music because of my solid foundation and strong education. I've been able to tailor my own sound to define myself. Now every time I pick up an instrument and play, it is my sound and an expression that others can hear and enjoy. It is individual, unique, and conveyed in a language that all people can understand... music.

## DELAWARE COUNTY

### **Barbara Humes**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Broomall, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I can't imagine my life without music - nor remember a time when music hasn't been a part of it. From singing in the junior choir at church to gradually becoming organist and choir director, from singing in the chorus of the school plays to singing solo on stage of the Academy of Music, to teaching private piano students in my living room to teaching 600 students in an elementary school - music has given me the confidence to succeed, the inspiration to go beyond my expectations, and a joyful heart. Please see how important music can be in the lives of students in Pennsylvania.

### **Tim Lin**

Occupation: Student

From: Garnet Valley HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been an amazing part of my life. When I first picked up the euphonium in 4th grade, I had no idea what it would turn in to. During my life, music has always been constant, no matter what changes befell me. I've always enjoyed playing music and I think it's an art that needs to be recognized more. As I've gone through the years, I've met many friends and wonderful people while playing and they have changed my life. I think that without the quality music education I received, I would not be the person I am today.

### **Hiroto Saito**

Occupation: Student

From: Garnet Valley HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my life for more than 10 years, and it has opened my life up to new experiences and relationships that have made me a more sophisticated, better person overall. Through my attendance of music summer camps, I was able to meet new people and make new friends that I keep in touch with to this day. I was even able to meet my great teacher Kim Fisher through Philadelphia International Music Festival. I have played violin for my school district, Garnet Valley, since the very beginning, and I feel that because of the great teachers they have here I was able to progress musically and as a person overall. Music has inspired me to reach for goals, and was what pulled me through during hard times.

### **Haley Watson**

Occupation: Student

From: Garnet Valley HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by making me have many opportunities to do many different things such as participate in different types of music festivals, like PMEA. Also, it has given me many social opportunities with the other band members and especially in marching band, which greatly helped me try to get over my shyness.

### **Douglas Barger**

Occupation: Student

From: Haverford HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Life

### **Cynthia Hosan**

Occupation: Student

From: Haverford HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without the music program at my HS, I would feel like a total loner. I would not have the friends that I have now through that program. Also, without a marching band to be a part of I would not have a good sense of discipline and responsibility that they teach you there. The encouragement from teachers and the joy you feel when you accomplish a goal is something that is hard to do without. Music has always been something that I have enjoyed and the music program at my school has given me a greater appreciation for musical literature and a vast amount of knowledge about musical periods and such that I would not have even known one thing about if I was not in the music program.

### **Davis Kurdyla**

Occupation: Student

From: Haverford HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been and continues to be an integral part of my life. Since my early childhood when I started learning the piano, I have always loved listening to and learning music. I strive to accomplish as much as I can, and to get better each day. Not only does it help relieve stress, but music is also a creative outlet where I can express myself. I would not have made it to where I am today without the music and music educators I have been blessed with.

### **Christopher Lee**

Occupation: Student

From: Haverford HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without a music education, I would never be able appreciate music with the level of depth that I do now. If I didn't play the piano, I wouldn't be able to tell you the difference between Bach and Beethoven. If I weren't in a choir, I wouldn't be able to experience the satisfying reward of making music together with others. If I didn't sing at all, I don't think I would be the same person. When my mother went to HS in Korea, there was no choir—actually, there wasn't even much of a music program. Sometimes I feel sorry about her missed opportunity, but it reminds me that I'm truly lucky to grow up in a time and place where educators understand the true value of teaching music to their students. It enriches the mind, and it deepens the soul. But I would never know how powerful making music with my peers can be without my teachers and directors, and I would never know how happy it can make me. There's something magical and unique about the cooperative spirit of a passionate choir, just as there's something thrilling yet mysterious about channeling your energy singularly through the keys of a piano. That's how music, whether done alone or in a group, becomes a true art form, and for that reason, I will never underestimate its ability to move, enrich, and change me as a person.

### **Stephen Li**

Occupation: Student

From: Haverford HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

By participating in school orchestra, it has helped me open up my communication to a wide range of people around my local community.

### **Matthew McGinley**

Occupation: Student

From: Haverford HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has changed my life for the better. There have been many experiences that I will remember for a lifetime. I have developed friendships and learned skills that will help me throughout my musical career and

life. Jazz ensemble is one example that has taught me to be myself through music. Through this program I have developed self confidence, discipline and knowledge. I've learned leadership skills by playing first trumpet and have had to collaborate with other musicians and their style of playing. I have had to learn to be flexible and listen to the ideas and input of others. Music education has taught me to set goals and work towards them. Specifically, PMEA festivals have shown me that I can always work harder, learn more and achieve high standards. In all, music has been a large part of my educational life and will continue to guide me as I move towards the next phases of my life.

### **Nellie O'Leary**

Occupation: Student

From: Haverford HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Since about fourth grade, music has always stood by me as an anchor through the chaos of life. I've constantly been involved in choral programs ever since then, absolutely stunned by the sounds a choir can produce if groomed well enough. My life took a complete turn when my voice developed in sixth grade, urging my parents to enroll me in singing lessons at the Napoli School of Music. Since then, I've attended a plethora of music schools and had many teachers, learning what it means to be a choral student and how to train my voice. I've learned so much about music and the way it can both heal and entertain others, and I hope to continue doing so in the future.

### **Madeleine Pelchat**

Occupation: Student

From: Haverford HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has improved my life by allowing full expression of self. My mother first sent me to music school when I was three years old, as she believes music has a large impact on development. Through the years, I practiced percussion, piano, and vocal techniques with various music teachers, working on pieces that weren't always my favorite. However, practicing this music allowed me to express myself through music that related more to me.

### **Sofia Ryan**

Occupation: Student

From: Haverford HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my life since 3rd grade, when I joined the school choir at Garrettford Elementary School. From there I have been a part of any singing group that I've had the opportunity to join. From District Choir to Seventh Heaven to Chamber Singers, Music has given me an environment in which I thrive. I use the music education not only for an outlet to relieve stress, but the education given to me from my HS and middle school directors made it possible for me to earn a paying job as a choral scholar at a local church. Music is one of my favorite hobbies, and having an accessible outlet at school is a key part of my happiness and success at school.

### **Nathan Buonviri**

Occupation: Professor

From: Havertown, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am a professor of music education at Temple University, a former high school music teacher, and a professional musician. Why would anyone care to know my biased opinions on the importance of music education in our lives? Why? Because I did not know I would be any of these things when I was in the third grade. But in that year, my mother somehow wrangled the administration of my small-town elementary school to let me begin trumpet a year early. I started elementary band with a small group of students who cared as much about sound as I did---much more, we came to realize, than our classmates. My first musical hero was the director of that band. I developed immediate respect for a person who could play all of those

instruments, demonstrate anything we needed to know or be able to do, and lead us to performing music together in front of the rest of the school and community. Both of my parents were teachers, my father in high school mathematics, and my mother in middle school literature. Teaching seems to have been "in my genes"; music was not. Neither of my parents claim any credit whatsoever for my musicality. Luckily, they gave me the opportunity to study music and supported me from an uninformed but encouraging perspective. I count myself fortunate to have played in that elementary band for obvious reasons: it has undoubtedly led to all I have done in music over the years. But even as an 8-year-old boy in that group, I had already recognized that all of my bandmates and I, no matter what path we might take in life, were benefitting in a way that other students were not. Music opened to us a world that cannot be understood except by stepping firmly into it and experiencing it firsthand. On behalf of them, I encourage all of you to continue to support music in our schools in every way possible.

### **Lauren Brasch**

Occupation: Student

From: Marple Newtown HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been a true blessing in my life. Music has shown me new friendships, become my passion, and brought me true happiness. For years, playing, listening to, or even just thinking about music has been one thing that I can always count on to make me happy. I find every single facet of music and all of the concepts behind it to be absolutely fascinating. It has been so important to me that I want to spend my life surrounded by music by teaching music education. I would not be the person I am without music and music education. It contains more feeling, expression, and meaning than any mere words; and I believe that music gives life meaning.

### **Kristen Chorney**

Occupation: Research Associate

From: Media, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been involved in music education for 14 years (3rd grade through my senior year of college). Not only have I learned a lot of valuable life lessons in that time but, I have also made the majority of my friends in band and chorus. I have learned to be on time, work hard, time management, organization, always keep an open mind, and many many more skills. My time in band, marching band, chorus, and other music activities are the ones I remember the most in my elementary, middle school, high school, and college career. My music education even brought me to PA Intercollegiate band three times when I was in college. Now that I graduated from college, I plan on continuing to play in an ensemble and to always have a passion for music!

### **Jacob McCann**

Occupation: Student

From: Penn Wood HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been the strongest and most important part of my education. Through experiences like marching band, I've learned not just about music and marching but also leadership, perseverance, and more.

### **Emily Han**

Occupation: Student

From: Radnor HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been an important part of my life because it is a way of expressing myself.

### **Jonathan Lee**

Occupation: Student

From: Radnor HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From a music education, I have learned to appreciate the various colors of music and find satisfaction in each piece.

### **James Speranza**

Occupation: Student

From: Radnor HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I know this sounds cheesy, but music makes me who I am. It's hard to understand if you've never picked up an instrument before, but when you play music it's like you can express yourself however you want. Music helps me learn about myself, and it helps me put myself out there more easily than I normally would. And good music education provides all sorts of other opportunities for that kind of learning – I literally got to travel Europe because I played the oboe, and I gained so many valuable experiences along the way. So music education really does make a difference in my life every day. I honestly don't know what I'd do without it.

### **Jeffrey Zhou**

Occupation: Student

From: Radnor HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I started piano at the age of 6, and string bass at the age of 8. I absolutely hated every moment of practice and playing. But look where I am now, the Region VI Orchestra Festival. To be honest, I didn't see myself as an advocate of music when I started. I felt quite the opposite. But music has brought me what nothing else could have. It has given me a gateway to my soul. Everything that words cannot express I translate through music. And I hope that others will feel the same, whether listening or playing. Keep on, musicians. "Where words fail, music speaks." ~Hans Christian Andersen

### **Madison Baltazar**

Occupation: Student

From: Strath Haven HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me a learning environment where I can learn to be creative and express myself through music. It has also taught me many values that have helped me not only in music but in other aspects of my life. Playing in ensembles has taught me how to work better in a team and how to cooperate with others in order to create something meaningful. Practicing my instrument has made me much more dedicated and improved my focus and concentration skills.

### **Andrew Casey**

Occupation: Student

From: Strath Haven HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me a goal to achieve everyday. It has kept me active in the school community which has allowed me to improve my school grades. It gives me something to work towards every time I go to practice. Practicing an instrument gives me free time to do something that I want to do and something I have as much control over as I want. It is such a big factor in my life and I'm glad that in fifth grade I decided to pick up an instrument. It has affected my life in more ways than I could ever count. I am so appreciative of what my music program has given me in the many many years that I have and will be involved in.

### **Alex Jensen**

Occupation: Student

From: Strath Haven HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a huge part of my life since an early age. From playing trombone to singing in a choir, I have always loved music and have developed both as a person and a musician due to the enthusiastic teaching that has always surrounded me. Great memories come from great experiences, and that has certainly been

the case. My music teachers have always been kind and understanding, but also determined to make me play to my full potential. From the first time that I put a trombone together, I have had constant encouragement. From my parents helping me practice at the very beginning to my teachers expressing endless patience with mistakes, the entire community surrounding me has supported me and boosted me to a level that I never thought that I would reach. Playing at high levels while being surrounded by people who love music as much as you do is just amazing. You want to play, you want to keep playing, and you never want to stop. When you go to a school with such a heavily ingrained music program, it's a mistake not to join. The friends and memories that are made are things that should be treasured for life. From funny rehearsals to even just playing games after a marching band performance at a football game, music holds a special place in my heart. Whenever I meet an older trombone player, they always tell me, "Don't stop. You'll love it." That has certainly been the case. I will treasure my musical experiences for the rest of my life.

### **Christopher Prugh**

Occupation: Student

From: Strath Haven HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made me much more involved and gave me something to aspire towards. I started playing in eighth grade, and since then, I have fallen in love with percussion. I was committed and, with enough effort, was able to accomplish my music goals, such as making district, region, and state band. Music has become something I love, and something that I will always be able to improve upon. It has inspired me to try to be the best I can.

### **Garrick Schultz**

Occupation: Student

From: Strath Haven HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I've always loved to sing since I was a kid. It was starting music education that made me realize that I was actually pretty good at it. My voice has improved so much since I was a kid, and I can't imagine what it would be like to not be able to sing well. It's such a large part of my social life and extracurricular involvement.

### **James Ashbrook**

Occupation: Student

From: Strath Haven HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was in 4th grade, I started playing the horn. Today, I am a dedicated horn player who wants to pursue playing it as a career. Without music education, I may have never been introduced to the horn and my passion for music. In this way, music education has changed my life.

### **Lauren Longhi**

Occupation: Student

From: Sun Valley HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was 6 years old my parents bought a piano for our new home. Of course since there is a piano in the house there had to be someone to play it. This is where I come in, my parents forced me to play the piano. Although I disliked learning to play the piano when I was younger, I thank my parents to this day for introducing me to music. I started singing in the choir when I was in 4th grade, and have not passed up a year of choir since. Music Education impacted my life by giving me an escape from reality. When you are in HS all you can think about is homework, college, sleep, drama. Music students are fortunate enough to be able to spend 50 minutes to relax and focus on the music in the classroom that is being made rather than the troubles that are stressing them out. Music classrooms are not only a place to learn music, but it is a place of security and comfort. Knowing that your peers and teachers support you with every decision that you make is a great feeling. Music education has also taught me that everything is possible. My 10th grade year I only made it to District choir and did not advance on. My goal the next year was to make it all the way to State

Choir. My voice teacher had so much faith in me and told me that I could make it all the way. So my 11th grade year my mind was set, I worked the hardest I ever could and accomplished my goal. I made it to All-State Choir in 11th grade with the help and encouragement of the music educators in my life. Music Education has impacted my life by teaching me that there is always a safe place to go to and that anything is possible.

### **Alicia Song**

Occupation: Student

From: The Baldwin School, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From the age of five, I was fortunate enough to be exposed to my first taste of music. From then on, I have had this unwavering love for music that has allowed me to explore my own talents and realize my potential. As a pianist and a violinist, music is a huge part of my life that I believe influenced me and encouraged me to experience new things and explore new opportunities. I have grown through music. Without it, I would not be the person I am today. Furthermore, I have learned to express myself through my music. I find it very comforting, like a safe haven, when I play my violin and piano. If there is an emotion I am unable to communicate through words, I am able to express myself through my instruments. I am so grateful to have my music teachers, family, and friends supporting me throughout this entire music journey. Their support and encouragement play big parts in my music career. I have found many new friends and even people I would consider close family in the music field, and I could not be more thankful for such an inspiring community.

### **Weiwei Wang**

Occupation: Student

From: The Baldwin School, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been an indispensable part of my life. I have learnt a lot from my daily practice. To master an instrument takes consistent effort. I become more persistent and responsible. Though sometimes practice can be tedious, the process of polishing and making a piece better not only hones my skill but also shapes my personality. Both in my academic study and in music, I always try to find ways to improve and get better. I truly appreciate music and thank my parents for supporting my music study.

### **Matthew Chow**

Occupation: Student

From: The Haverford School, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me something else to enjoy in life other than the stress of school. It gives me an opportunity to express myself and touch other people with what I have learned.

### **Owain Thorogood**

Occupation: Student

From: The Shipley School, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Band and orchestra have provided me with the unique opportunity to enjoy close time with friends while also being a part of a larger ensemble. It is truly rewarding to hear a piece come together after weeks of individual and group preparation. Furthermore, my family and friends have really enjoyed the concerts my ensembles have put on, and it is nice to contribute to the community in doing so.

### **Kathryn DiBona**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Darby HS, Delaware County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is an inspiration to me. I have grown not only as a singer, but as a person.

**Shawn Weaver**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Darby HS, Delaware County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been in my life. I live to enjoy the experience, and to meet new people.

**Jennifer You**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Darby HS, Delaware County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has opened my eyes to new experiences, and has helped to shape who I am

## **ELK COUNTY**

**Simon Glatt**

Occupation: Student

From: Elk County Catholic HS, Elk County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made me a more independent person and I have found new ways of life.

**Elizabeth Glatt**

Occupation: Student

From: Elk County Catholic HS, Elk County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life in so many ways I don't even know where to start. My music education made me into the person I am today. For that, I am so ever thankful for the opportunity given to me in the fourth grade to become a member of a program so rich in education. As a senior, I reflect on my past years of all the lessons learned and memories made at music functions; for these were the best moments of my life. I hope music education lives on for others so that they may too experience the joy of making music and memories.

**Mitchell Smithbauer**

Occupation: Student

From: Elk County Catholic HS, Elk County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Prior to joining my school band three years ago, I participated in little to few activities. Learning about music, how to play it, and how to speak through it has broadened my creativity. I began to do better in my math classes as a result, as well. Music has given me something to be passionate about, and it continues to inspire me as I expand my knowledge through PMEA festivals.

**Brent Rounsville**

Occupation: Music Education Student

From: James City, Elk County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my life. Ever since I was younger, it was there for me when I needed it. When my father passed away, the first thing i did was pick up a guitar and write a song. I ended up joining everything I could, teaching myself as many instruments I could, and now I'm a Music Education major at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania. Music is all I know.

### **Jesse Tucker**

Occupation: Student

From: Johnsonburg HS, Elk County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life in a major way, from influencing the way that I listen to music to changing what I kind of music I listen to. There are many different directions to go with music, many of which have been thoroughly explained to me in my musical career.

### **Daniel S. Sensenig**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: St. Marys, Elk County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

How has music impacted my life...music is my life. From my occupation, to my family, to my hobbies... music is everywhere. I have the greatest job in the world because I get to do what I love (share the transformative power of music with students) everyday and get paid for it. There is something about music that brightens the soul like nothing else. What better calling in life than to be able to help inspire young men and women through this noble art form. Music is a life long adventure. It has taken me, my family, and my students all over the globe. I have the added bonus of sharing this great gift with my wife and children. Music is a great equalizer. It brings together all kinds, from all walks of life, with their own baggage and equalizes all their difference for the common goal of music. We are certainly lucky to have such a great gift and must do everything we can to preserve it, but most importantly...USE it!

### **Rebecca Kleppinger**

Occupation: Student

From: St. Marys Area HS, Elk County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. As I grew older and stopped playing school sports, music is what I turned to. If we didn't have music classes I'm not sure what I would be doing today. The ability to sing is a wonderful talent I have, and with music classes teaching me new things everyday I will only continue to get better and keep succeeding.

## **ERIE COUNTY**

### **Nicholas Graef**

Occupation: Student

From: Collegiate Academy, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It is easier for me to express myself because I am not athletic. Music helps with depression. This PMEA experience has helped me grow as a musician and helped me to excel in school.

### **Michael Heid**

Occupation: Student

From: Collegiate Academy, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Led me to different opportunities that I couldn't reach without it. I was able to meet a wide range of people through music. Thinking and listening skills have improved with music. I feel more confident as a musician with constant music in my life.

### **Devin Mulvihill**

Occupation: Student

From: Collegiate Academy, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I learned how to sight read. Music is fun for me and has helped me meet new people. After being in a choir I have gained a lot of confidence in my singing.

### **Julya Polaski**

Occupation: Student

From: Collegiate Academy, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has changed my focus and made me consider music in higher education. Music gets me through my school day and has helped me to collaborate with others. It has made me more of a leader because I am a more experienced musician.

### **Gabriel Skrabacz**

Occupation: Student

From: Collegiate Academy, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has created a social outlet for myself to meet new people with similar interests. In practicing music, I gained skills such as, leadership, vocal ability and responsibility.

### **Sara Warnshuis**

Occupation: Student

From: Collegiate Academy, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Learning music has given me more confidence as a musician. I have learned sight singing with solfege signs which has helped my reading. Learning the music has made me work harder. I have also learned better technique with my voice even though I have more to go.

### **Johanna Nordland**

Occupation: Student

From: Corry Area HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

All my life I have been surrounded with music. It has increasingly become an important part of my life. In the more recent years I have taken every musical opportunity that has been presented to me and used them to become a better musician. Being able to participate in band, marching band, and other band related activities has helped me not only express myself to those around me but also helped me realize how essential music is to my life. The thought of not continuing with music is not only a scary thought but one I don't plan on ever seeing happen. I believe, not to be cliché, that without music I would not be the person I am today.

### **Samantha Schreckengost**

Occupation: Student

From: Corry Area HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The main way music has impacted my life was by influencing my future career. When I graduate I plan to attain a music education degree so I may further my education as well as teach others about my passion.

### **Zahraa Alquraishi**

Occupation: Student

From: Erie, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. Music is an inspiration to me. It also has built the confidence and skills I need to do well in other classes as well. Without music education, I would have never found my true passion. The lessons you learn come into play in every day life. Without the amazing music education I receive I would be lost. Music has been proven to heal and help people grow. It's a necessity.

### **Nicholas Graef**

Occupation: Student

From: Erie, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me in so many ways. I am not athletically inclined, but I thrive in music. I feel like the music department is a second home. I feel welcomed. The music and theatre programs at my school are fabulous. That is what inspired me to want to pursue musical theatre as a career because I loved singing and acting so much. If I didn't have access to these programs, I never would have discovered these talents that I have and enjoy so much. They make me feel better about myself and more confident. I feel talented. I now take voice lessons as well. School programs allowed me to fall in love with something that I never imagined I would. I can express myself and share my talents with my school and peers because of music in schools. I don't know what I would do without music, my favorite class each day.

### **Dana Kuhn**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Erie, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has always been an essential and integral part of my life. As a young child, I was engaged in general music instruction in the public school system. From this public education experience, I was able to recognize my musical abilities, build upon them and eventually apply them to private study. I began studying piano and voice privately, and continued to remain an active member of my school's music offerings, such as drama productions, school chorus, extra curricular singing opportunities, district, regional and state festivals, Tri-M, and more. The musical experiences offered and available to me have shaped me into the woman I am today. I continue to perform with a small select ensemble in the Erie area, am a hired vocalist in the Erie Area, and have spent many years directing a Summer Voice Camp for children and teens in Northwestern Pennsylvania. Music has impacted me further than any other course of study. I have learned the value of the following through music: responsibility, determination, self-confidence, hard work, dedication, practice, effort, enthusiasm, teamwork, communication skills, expression, problem-solving, sensitivity, community, reasoning, time management. Although I have continued in the field of music, I am convinced that my participation in music programs have prepared me for any field in which I might choose to work. The above values and qualities are needed for any field of study and every profession and job in the American workforce. These values carry over into every aspect of our lives-family, work, friendships, and continue to shape future generations into sons and daughters who respect and value the arts in our culture and of other cultures. The trend in education is to dig deeper into the problem-solving and creative aspects of the mind. We are a generation that wishes to teach our students the tools needed to think and create for themselves. We are a nation and generation that wishes to have the best scientists, the best mathematicians, the best engineers, the best teachers, the best communicators, the best architects. What better way to accomplish this than exposing them to the very art which allows for such creativity and growth in these areas? Music is all of these valued subjects all rolled into a perfect gift of sound and expression. I am so grateful for the opportunity to have learned, loved and lived music, and grateful for the teachers who believed in the power of music as well.

### **Amanda Pataki**

Occupation: Engineering Student

From: Erie, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I learned multiple instruments and was able to be a member of the bands at Penn State. Being in the band in college was a good stress reliever from engineering classes. Being able to put band on my resume has also had a positive impact on my job search. If the person looking at my resume used to be in band or play an instrument, they usually make a comment and ask me about it. If the employer has some connection to music, they seem to value more highly. Music has also made more rounded of an individual. Music has been a big part of my life at stressful times. I've used it to blow off steam or just express myself. I had a dark couple months of my life where I lost someone close to me tragically. In that time frame, I found myself going to the piano and pouring my heart into sad, depressing songs. Somehow, I always left the piano feeling better than when I came to it. If nothing else, music has helped me keep my sanity when I needed most.

### **Colleen Dougherty**

Occupation: Student

From: Fairview HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is more than a class that you attend to get an easy A and a free period to pass the time. These classes instead have provided me with countless amazing opportunities and caused me to become the best version of myself I can be. I have gained experience with leadership, cooperation with others, teamwork, interacting with adults, and all of the different subjects that pertain to music (language, math, physics, etc.). I give credit to all of my band directors and teachers to allowing me to fully apply myself in all of the various classes I have taken over the years, as well as our school for keeping the music program strong and functional. Music education has changed me for the better and I thank my lucky stars for being allowed the opportunity to have music in my life.

### **Lilly Myers**

Occupation: Student

From: Fairview HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music for me has been a wonderful journey. It has taught me discipline, how to deal with people, and how to strive to be the best person I can be. Playing the French Horn is very frustrating, because of the close partials, but it has really taught me to continue to work hard to achieve my goals. I have used these skills, and I will continue to use them for the rest of my life. Music has been a haven from the world around me. When things do not go the way I want them to socially, with school, and sports, music has given me the skills to step back, take a deep breath, and re-evaluate the different situations. It continues to be a constant in my life that still allows me to grow and develop as a musician and as a person. Music has left me unsatisfied. I constantly want to do better and push myself to be the best I can be. It has taught me to always try to be the best I can be.

### **Mary Pratt**

Occupation: Student

From: Fairview HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been a part of my life as long as I can remember. I was in a music program that taught me to listen starting around the age of four or five. From there I really enjoyed music class until I was able to join band in fourth grade. Since then I have learned countless amounts of things about music that have also helped me to mature and learn how to interact with others. I also made the majority of my friends through band and music classes, and I continue to make new friends thanks to music and music education everyday. I would not be the person I am today without music education as a part of my life.

### **Isaac Ripple**

Occupation: Student

From: Fairview HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is one of the most important aspects of my personal education which has undoubtedly impacted my life in many positive ways. Without positive reinforcement to pursue music at young age through excellent student teachers, my band director, and especially supportive parents, I cannot honestly say that I would be on track to study oboe performance during my college years ahead. I believe that all students should have some form of music education in their lives, especially during their formative years in elementary, middle, and HS.

### **Jordyn Sanner**

Occupation: Student

From: Fairview HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is an escape in my busy lifestyle. I have worked with my director since fourth grade, and I am now a senior. I have come to really trust my music director; he is almost part of my family. Everyone needs someone to make you strive to your best, and my participation in the music program has given me the opportunity to find that person that has truly encouraged me to strive for excellence. Because of my participation in music, I have found a new confidence and passion in life. Music is a language that speaks to everyone, and it's a talent that I can use for the rest of my life. I have acted as a leader in teaching younger students the inner-workings of their instruments. Music has helped me form new friendships, and I would not trade my experience and involvement in the music program for anything. Life lessons can be learned through music. I've learned discipline through hours of practice; I've learned the importance of creativity through transposing music. I have a new appreciation for music through my participation in the music program, and I believe all students should be involved in music in their schools in order to reap the benefits of their music programs as I have previously discussed through my involvement with Fairview's music program.

### **Jacob Widger**

Occupation: Student

From: Fairview HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Before I found music in school, I didn't really have anything to do. I felt bored. Not everyone can play sports. But I believe everyone can play and enjoy music. I joined concert band in the 4th grade and I've loved it ever since. Now I enjoy listening to, playing, and writing my own music. I've been in all types of music programs from jazz band to chorus and I've loved every minute of it. Not only is music education educational, but it is also very fun unlike most educational classes. I'm excited to come to school everyday just because of getting to play music. Music is my life, and I couldn't imagine my life without it.

### **Jake Widger**

Occupation: Student

From: Fairview HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my life every since I was a child. My mother, being a music major, has taught me over the years, how to sing, and play many instruments. Once I was old enough to join a class to learn music, I was on it. Music education is very important to me and all students because of the joy it can bring to one's self by playing, listening to, and composing music.

### **John Bateman**

Occupation: Student

From: Fort LeBoeuf HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted me as a person. It has allowed me to make so many friends. It has allowed me to work in a team. I just love making music! It has made me who I am today!

### **Samantha Borland**

Occupation: Student

From: Fort LeBoeuf HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a huge impact on my life. I have been involved in music at my school for seven years now and I decided my third year that I wanted to become a music teacher myself. It has impacted my life so much that I would like to do it for the rest of my life as a teacher and help others to have the experience that I have had and I want others to share my passion towards music.

### **Gregory Steele**

Occupation: Student

From: Fort LeBoeuf HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life, as it has given me something to do with my free time. If it were not for music, I would not have the character I have today.

### **Courtney Cyparski**

Occupation: Student

From: Harbor Creek HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a way to express myself in the way some students express through sports or art. If I ever needed some alone time to myself music has been there for me. Music and band are ways to meet new people and learn skills that I will use throughout my life such as being responsible, multitasking and having confidence. Music isn't only something that we listen to, but we create something that is so beautiful that words can't express it. Music creates a family between strangers that get to know each other without even speaking. Without music I wouldn't be the girl that I am today, so much that I can't even imagine my life without it. I can never repay those who have influenced me at all of the events I have attended for music, such as District Band and Region Band. These people have taught me and moved me so much by their words. These events mean so much to me, to see all of my friends in band and to make music that brings tears to the audience's eyes. Seeing the audience be moved by the music that I and the other members put on is the best feeling I could ever have.

### **Morgan Rennie**

Occupation: Student

From: Harbor Creek HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. For starters, most of my friends were met through the music program and is a thing that connects all of us. It also taught me many things, such as how to multitask better, how to read music notes, play my instrument, understand how one person can mess up a whole form, and much more. It also gave me almost all of the happiness in my life. Before I went into band, I suffered from very bad depression and had only a couple of friends. I made friends, found a new thing to make my world brighter, and it even helps out my brain too! It created a constant in my life, and it was something that I knew that I could count on to be there when everything else in my life was leaving. There is so much that music education has done for me that I can't even summarize in a few words, but if I had to pick a couple, these would be them.

### **Kevin Ferko**

Occupation: Student

From: McDowell HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been apart of my life since I was in 4th grade. Music has allowed me to meet new people, that I otherwise would not have met. I love to participate in PMEA and other related festivals as I, not only meet new people, but I also learn more than just music related topics. Music has always been a part of my life, and will always have some spot in it. Without music education, I would not be the person I would be today, and I could not imagine my life without it.

### **Jack Mannion**

Occupation: Student

From: McDowell HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It gave me the necessary guidance in what I want to do with my life. It also helped me express myself while getting out all of my negative feelings and made me feel better whenever I was down.

### **Ryan Marsden**

Occupation: Student

From: McDowell HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is my life. I spend more time in the band room than I do in my own home. I couldn't be happier. I love going to PMEA festivals, competing in marching band competitions, performing in orchestra and band concerts, and playing in pit orchestras for school plays. Without music education, my life would be bland. Without music education, I would be boring. Without music education I would be nothing. Music education is my life.

### **Mitchell McVeigh**

Occupation: Student

From: McDowell HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has done more than impact my life. Music education has developed me as both a musician and performer, but also as a person. It has shown me the benefits of teamwork, hard work, and independence. The people we are constantly surrounded by are examples of exemplary performers, teachers, and people. They allow us to express ourselves in ways not possible in any other subject. Music education is truly a gift to all.

### **Ethan Moore**

Occupation: Student

From: McDowell HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had an extraordinary impact on my life, and an exceedingly positive one. The best part of my day is when I get to enter the band room and practice as an ensemble with my friends and peers. Music education has taught me so much about being a part of a team. I played sports when I was a youngster, and I learned even more about teamwork as being in an ensemble than I did playing basketball. Between the listening to others, playing in tune and cooperating with other members of the group, I have developed more as a human being and as a student. Music education is likely the biggest part of my life as a student, what with Marching Band, PMEA, the school plays, band classes and playing as a quartet and being in the Junior Philharmonic. Music education has honestly had a bigger impact on my life than my parents.

### **Hannah Wisniewski**

Occupation: Student

From: McDowell HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has improved my HS career immensely. I have taken chorus for all 4 years of HS. And through the PMEA Chorus Festivals that I have attended I have discovered what I wanted to do with my life, and that is to teach and conduct music. Also with help from the music teachers in my life, I have learned so many things that I would need to learn to become a music teacher. My music teachers have also given me the opportunity to start teaching in small sections, and that has helped me learn what I would expect in a real teaching position.

### **Samantha Adams**

Occupation: Student

From: North East HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am fortunate enough to attend a school that has a thriving music program. The teachers and staff are incredibly dedicated and supportive, and have encouraged me to push myself and excel. Without the music program at my school, I would not know what to choose as a major in college. My directors have shown me what a joy it is to work and live in the music industry, and I have decided to make that a reality in my life as well. These PMEA festivals have fostered wonderful, lasting friendships in my life and I have learned countless lessons that I will hold with me for a long time to come. The impact of music on human lives is difficult to put into words, but it provides a certain escape that I have never found any other place in the world. I could not replace music with any other subject or activity, and I will be forever indebted to the music educators in my life.

### **Kallan Corwin**

Occupation: Student

From: North East HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is everywhere in my life, from my mom screaming at the top of her lungs to the song Hotel California, to taking trumpet lessons in the 5th grade because I wanted to be a mexican little girl. At the time of being a 10 year old as a 5th grader, I never would have thought how music education would impacted my school life and my home life. As I said, I started the trumpet as a ten year old, which basically means I thought I was on top of the world because I could play Mary had a Little Lamb and that was it. But, when my mom got married to my step-dad I had to move schools and return my beloved trumpet back to the school I was borrowing it from. And the first day of my new school at time, I saw the majestic french horn and started on my musical journey. As I got better on the french horn my director suggested I should go to PMEA District 2 and compete for 1st chair on french horn 2. Like everyone, I was nervous to audition, and thought I was going to pee my pants. Luckily I didn't and placed 1st chair and screamed in excitement, also I progressed to PMEA Regions. PMEA and music education has let me discover what I can really do, and make me feel like I have a placing in the world. And I will always have music education in my life and to let me discover more about myself. Thank you PMEA.

### **Jonathan DeGrosky**

Occupation: Student

From: North East HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I owe most of who I am to music education. I am saying this not just because my dad is my band director. I have been going to band practice since I could walk and have loved participating in all of the music groups I have been a member of. I have made many friends through participating in band, friends from my school and friends from far away. Music has taught me that practice is a fundamental part of being successful. Nothing comes easy, everything takes work. While I have chosen not to pursue music as a college major, I will definitely continue to be involved in music in college, and for the rest of my life.

### **Alyssa Johnston**

Occupation: Student

From: North East HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Before I was involved in band and music education, I never thought about music because it never seemed to be of any importance. If I had never been exposed to music, my life would be very different. Music education has made me realize the power in something sometimes is very simple and I am very grateful that I have had the chance to experience such a beautiful thing. There is something very comforting about something that can say so much without saying a single word, and without music education I would have never realized this. After realizing this, music has become a very large part of my life and it seemed like people hadn't always been there for me, but music had. Music education gave me the chance to experience the feeling of music washing away the crap of everyday life and it helps many people escape from the reality in which they live in, which I think is amazing. Music has the power to convey many feelings and experiences, which in many cases help the audience deal with everything they have ever felt all in a few minutes. Just knowing you're not the only person dealing with something or experiencing something makes life seem easier. Not everybody has experienced this but it has helped me a lot in the past two years dealing with "issues" and what not. Without music I don't think I would be the same person or even be alive at all. Music saved my life. (yep I'm one of those kids)

### **Maria Komorowski**

Occupation: Student

From: North East HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music enhances my life and contributes to my growth as a well-rounded member of society. For me, playing music has always been a form of emotional release that I can always depend on. No matter what the circumstance, music can comfort me in a way that speaks to my soul. In a world that has an increasing emphasis on technology, music remains as a constant force that balances new developments with the warmth of humanity. Music inspires me to grow and question the world around me. It enhances my ability to multitask with technical studies and the beauty of sound. This has had larger implications in my educational life because it encourages me to pursue progress, while maintaining the thoughts on its impact on mankind. Without music education, my life would feel hollow. Although I would be well prepared for any tests that come my way, I would not be filled with the soul and inspiration that drives me to make the world better.

### **Morgan Palmer**

Occupation: Student

From: North East HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life because it has given me an easy way to communicate words, thoughts and feelings to others in a way that is physically impossible to in any other way, shape or form. It is also a way to escape reality for a while. If I am having a bad day or if I am stressed about something going on in life, I have the ability to turn to music, whether playing or just listening, to clear my mind and relax a little bit before going back to my every day life.

### **Sarah Penfield**

Occupation: Student

From: North East HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was younger, I never knew what I wanted to be when I was older. Everyone kept asking me, and the answer changed everyday. I never had a concrete answer until recently. My mother forced me to take piano lessons when I was in 1st grade. I hated it. The practicing became a chore. My older brother was great at the piano. He would always show off in front of our family. I never really had an appreciation for music until I was in 5th grade. At North East, everyone has the opportunity to chose an instrument and play in the band.

This is when I found my passion. One of the choices was the clarinet. My great-grandmother played the clarinet, so I decided to give it a shot. Ever since, I have loved music and playing the clarinet. Later, I started playing the bass clarinet, the guitar, the violin, and I resumed playing the piano all because of the clarinet and my new found love for music. I'm thankful my mom had me play piano. The opportunity the school gave me helped me find something that I was passionate about, something I wanted to do for the rest of my life. As time went on, I learned more about music from the great music program at my school. I started to look into the math behind the music, and I took a class at my school called The Math of Music. Here, I learned about frequencies and the physics behind sound. That is when I found my calling in life. Now, anytime someone asks me what I want to be when I am older, I say an Acoustical Engineer. I would never have considered this if it weren't for the music education provided by my school. Music education has not only helped me with my life decisions, but it has also given me many great memories and experiences. Our school has an amazing marching band program. We were able to compete in the Bands of America Grand National Championships competition. I met new people and created some wonderful memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life. PMEA has also given me some amazing experiences. Last year, I attended District 2 Concert Band, Region 2 Concert Band, and the All-State Wind Ensemble. This year I am attending not only the concert band, but also the orchestra. At these festivals, I have the opportunity to meet other musicians and to meet great composers and conductors. Here, they pass on the wisdom that they have learned to everyone in the band, and there is no other experience like it. I am so thankful that I go to a school that has a spectacular music education program. Music has shaped who I am and who I aspire to be. I would not want to go to a school that does not offer an education in music.

### **Sarah Scarnati**

Occupation: Student

From: North East HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has, over the years, had a great impact on my life. I know that if I had been asked two or three years ago to whom I owe all of my success, I would have said myself, which is partially true because I was doing everything I could to be a good clarinet player. But now, looking back, I realize that I could not have gotten this far on my own. I owe the majority of my success to the people who stuck with me and made me understand that I did not know everything, even though I thought I did. I remember the day when I first started learning how to play music, really play. We were sitting in band class and all of the sudden Mr. D said "by the way, you know when your practicing and you mess up, you don't just go back to the beginning and start over." Um what? You mean to tell me I have been doing it wrong this whole time? This realization worked wonders for. I started to ask for help on the things I didn't quite understand and soon I was able to play music with more fluency and the ending sounded almost as good as the beginning, but I didn't think I was good enough yet. After becoming pretty good with practicing, I asked my dad to get me set up with private lessons to learn more in depth about the clarinet. After my first lesson I realized that I really did not know everything. Before these lessons, I had not played scales with more than two sharps or flats, never gave any thought to technique, and never played a dynamic. I began learning and applying these skills to my music and all of the sudden, I got good really fast. I soon noticed that when I played it sounded more like music than noise. The softs became soft, and the loads were loud, but played with quality, something I had lacked in my playing. Looking back over my experiences, I now know more than anything else that I did not reach this level alone. If I were a book and had to credit all my sources, there would be many names on the list, and I am truly grateful to every person who helped contribute to my success.

### **Payton Markijohn**

Occupation: Student

From: Northwestern HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made me a better person. It has allowed me to grow in a field that I feel passionately about. The qualities and skills that I have learned through music are ones that I will continue to use for the rest of my life.

### **Lacey Shumake**

Occupation: Student

From: Northwestern HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The teachers who know me best are the ones who have brought music into my life. Music allows me to connect with other people and to learn more about myself. Even as I change through the years, I know that music is the one thing that will change with me. It has always been a solid point in my life and it always will be.

### **Kyle Steinle**

Occupation: Student

From: Northwestern HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a very large part of my life. It has been an escape for when things have gotten rough in my life. Especially when I am at school and I have a big test or a lot of work to do, chorus class has been a place where I can relax, sing, and do what I love. Music is a great source for positive energy when I need it and a great source of relaxation and happiness in my life.

### **Sydney Eastman**

Occupation: Student

From: Union City HS, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music educators have impacted my life in ways I never thought possible when first beginning to play the flute in elementary school. I did not know the world in which I was entering when I decided to join the band program. My band director, Mr. Jerry Black, introduced me to something that I would not have been able to find anywhere else- the gift of music, creativity, and so much more. I have played in a community band close to my hometown for the last year and would not be able to do it without the support from my music teachers. Through my band director I was advised to begin taking private lessons which allowed me to expand my musical palette. With her help, I have successfully competed at the PMEA District and Regional festivals every year from my sophomore through senior year. From going to these festivals, I have developed long lasting friendships that will last me a lifetime. I have met people with similar interests I would not have met without my band director's encouragement in elementary school. Music has given me confidence in ways I would not have without it. I feel as though music is a major part of my life. Thanks to my music educators, I will continue to enjoy the gift of music for the rest of my life.

### **Natalie Prischak**

Occupation: Student

From: Villa Maria Academy, Erie County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life. Understanding music has opened up many doors for me and given me opportunities not many people have. Being able to create music everyday is not only a relaxing, freeing pastime but has also improved my math skills and creativity. Music gives me my own special way to express myself to others and has helped me form connections with people from all over. I truly do not know where I would be without music in my life.

## **FAYETTE COUNTY**

### **Angie Berna Milliren**

Occupation: High School Choral Director and Multimedia Adviser

From: Fayette City, Fayette County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From fifth grade as the school choir accompanist, I have always known that music education was my calling. From middle school (where music saved me from the bullying and pain of puberty) to high school, I found my

home and my life's goal. During my high school tenure, I continued my active pursuit of music through continued private study and participation in both PMEA and community ensembles. My high school choral and band director, Mr. Henry Aloisi, was the center of my musical universe. He was a gifted woodwind player and his warmth and love for music made me dream of, one day, filling his shoes. I was his accompanist for choirs as well as the first chair saxophonist in his ensembles. He spent numerous hours fostering my piano skills as he taught me to properly accompany. During my junior year, at age 15, I was selected to be the accompanist for California University's community choir. My private piano instructor was the director and was looking for a professional accompanist. I was beside myself with happiness that I had, indeed, arrived as I made many connections that helped me become who I am today. The role of PMEA was pivotal in my success. As a student from Belle Vernon Area, I participated in my first PMEA event in 1989 at Burrell High School in New Kensington. I had no idea that the wonderful woman, Mrs. Karen Wilson, hosting would become my dearest friend and mentor as I began my teaching career. During my student teaching from IUP, I met this woman's husband (who ironically was my student teaching cooperating teacher). As I grew as an educator, they were there to show me what I needed to do and I aspired to be a teacher who demanded excellence while earning the respect of my students, their families, and the community who supports my program. After singing my first semi-professional opera in 2003, I had considered a career in music performance...but something in my heart told me I would not be satisfied unless I was fostering the next generation of music teachers. I truly love the relationships I have cultivated with my former students. I am watching several of them as they grace the stage in Europe and live the performance life of which I once dreamed while others call from time to time when they see or hear something they learned in my class that transports them back to 143 (my classroom). It is impossible to fully explain the impact music education has had on my life. It definitely has left a lasting impression that I will carry throughout my life. From those who have passed who molded and shaped me to those who are starting to carry the torch, we share in the past, the present, and the future. In no other art form can one feel so connected to others they just met but by the sharing of the love of music.

### **Ralph C. Bill**

Occupation: Retired Music Teacher

From: Uniontown, Fayette County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was raised in a musical family. My grandfather played taps at Arlington National Cemetery, while in the Army, my uncle played in "The President's Own" Marine Band, my father taught music 35 years at my H.S. alma mater and had his own Big Band, as for me, I'm a retired Music teacher of 32 years from my H.S. Alma Mater and continue to play in several community bands, local bands, and High School Musicals. Music and music education gave me a career and opportunity to continue to play, love, and enjoy music for the rest of my life.

## **FRANKLIN COUNTY**

### **William Kick**

Occupation: Professional Engineer

From: Chambersburg, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education was very influential during the formative years of my life, and left a lasting impression which remains to this day. Music education exposed me to, and helped me appreciate, various music genres and musical instruments that I may never have encountered otherwise. While I listen to a wide range of music styles, my enjoyment of baroque, renaissance, classical and jazz music is a direct result of the education I received as a young teen. Also, as a child I was not an athlete, but I learned the values associated with competition, work ethic and developing one's talents through my involvement in concert band and marching band. Some of my best memories are from that time of life. Finally, even though I put away my drum years ago and no longer play with regularity, enough of my music education remains to facilitate my role as a sit-in drummer for my church praise band, when needed. This is a role I enjoy and am happy to fill. Although I am

immersed in the analytical world on a daily basis due to my profession as an engineer, I have found that music and the arts are existentially vital to a fuller life.

### **Marisabel Cordova**

Occupation: Student

From: Chambersburg Area HS, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many different ways. It was always an escape for me. When I don't understand how to do something it pushes and drives me to accomplish that task. I enjoy the companionship and friendships I make through music. Through music education, I am encouraged to push myself harder and it makes me a better musician in whole.

### **Elizabeth DeVito**

Occupation: Student

From: Chambersburg Area HS, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has fundamentally impacted how I perceive schooling. In ninth grade I was struggling with insecurity and depression, but participation in band kept me coming to school everyday. My school days are much more enjoyable as I have more music classes to take throughout the day. I find the rest of my education much more enjoyable as I have made great friends through my musical activities and now have many positive experiences associated with my school. I plan on continuing in music as a music teacher so that I can provide this experience to other students.

### **Joshua Long**

Occupation: Student

From: Chambersburg Area HS, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is imperative to the health and wellbeing of individuals and society as a whole. Music Education, being the primary and initial catalyst of musical growth in most individuals, shares the importance of music and the arts themselves, while also bringing students and teachers together in a constructive, educational, and entirely beneficial environment.

### **Katherine Ruthrauff**

Occupation: Student

From: Chambersburg Area HS, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since I was little music has been my favorite of all. From singing, to violin, to piano; I look forward to going to my music classes everyday. I don't know what I would do without music. Singing with the Glee Club at CASHS has made my entire HS experience. I've made so many friends and had so much fun through all my music classes and festivals that I've attended.

### **Kathleen Kent**

Occupation: Mother

From: Dothan, AL from Chambersburg, PA, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

There is a huge difference in the exposure I had in school-my parents didn't play music at home- and the exposure my children had in Alabama, where there really is next to no music education. Through my school experiences, I was exposed to country and so many things other than the "popular" MTV genre. I have passed this on to my boys. Now, they are both in college and on an everyday basis, not just in classes, they realize the broad spectrum of knowledge and experiences that this exposure has brought them. So, many of their classmates have never been to a classical concert and don't know any of the famous jazz musicians. For my sons, these various music styles are used on a daily basis in papers class discussions and just as background. I am proud that they have an open mind to new experiences because of the wide variety of

music they were exposed to when younger. My husband didn't have music education coming from a small rural school, but his parents played various kinds in the house regularly. This exposure helps the mind develop, open to new ideas, and often relax when necessary. I also participated in band and choral and the friendships through those intense experiences are the ones I still have today--not so much to the girl next door who I rarely talk to now because we don't have the same experiences. When my sons both took Music 101 at Troy University, 4 years apart with different teachers, they were often engaged with Professors as few others could because they others had a narrow one or two genre topical knowledge of music. The biggest part of music education is the presentation of opportunity to explore and open your world and mind to new experience. And, to crave those experiences.

### **Kaitlyn Bowser**

Occupation: Student

From: Greencastle, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my life since I was in fifth grade. Ever since then, I have taken every opportunity to learn and grow through music. It has strengthened me academically and socially. Most likely, if I wasn't in band and chorus, I wouldn't have met the majority of my close friends that I have now. Then, there is the music itself. It's a special privilege to take part in performing a piece of music and being able to watch how the audience reacts. I would not be the person I am today if I hadn't been able to have access to music education.

### **Lorrie**

Occupation: Student

From: Greencastle, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has made me who I am today. Without music I would not be able to deal with really anything. I would not be able to take music appreciation so I wouldn't have any motivation for school. My grades would plummet. My life has been so important because of music. With music I feel like I can walk out the door and start a huge project and get done in seconds. Music has impacted me by giving me power, giving me the self esteem that I lose each and every day walking down the high school hallway. It makes me smile, be able to make and keep friends. Even though most come and go those who have stayed have music in common with me. Music is how I have kept my best friend for 3 years. We both play French Horn, we listen to Pentatonix. Music comes in so many shapes and forms and it's lasted so very long throughout any culture's history so I mean it has to be important somehow. I see it but not everyone does. Music education has brought me closer let me do something I love . Marching band concert band, choir, music appreciation I have just learned so much with music and music education.

### **Harrison Scott**

Occupation: Student

From: Greencastle-Antrim HS, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been something I have been able to enjoy in my free time. I highly respect my music instructors, both private and public teachers and have enjoyed learning from their experiences.

### **Regina Tremi**

Occupation: Sr. Workers' Compensation Administrator

From: Mercersburg, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has truly made my amazing 15 year old daughter who she is today. She is a straight A student with an inspiring heart. Music has taught her more than just a melody, it has made her a kind, generous, and helpful person. The entire band at James Buchanan High School is a wonderful group of 100 young adults, I've never met a group of kids who were more mature and level headed. It is true that music makes a difference and should NEVER be forgotten or cut from any school program. These kids do get better grades and seem

to be better citizens because of it. I have become involved in the school music program because of my daughter's involvement and it has greatly impacted who I am as a person and within the community.

### **Kia Tremi**

Occupation: Student  
From: Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my life. I can not imagine what my life would be without it! It has brought me so many opportunities I never dreamed of. I have met amazing people along my musical journey. Music had impacted my future too. It has also influenced my learning in an unbelievable way. It has opened up my mind to see things differently and to think differently. Music is also my escape. When I am angry, sad, stressed, whatever I may be feeling, I always turn to music. Sometimes I plug in my headphones and block out the world, but, in my opinion, nothing is better than playing music. No matter what instrument I am playing I always find myself smiling and off in my own musical world. Nothing else can give me that satisfaction. Most importantly, music is universal. It is a language that EVERYONE speaks. All around the world music is a huge part of different cultures. It connects the world in a truly amazing way. Can you imagine how boring the world would be without music?! During car rides we would just sit in awkward silence until a conversation strikes. Movies would not be as interesting because the music is what sets the tone of the scenes. Most importantly, none of our favorite bands or musicians would even be known. Their talents would have never been discovered to share with the world. Music is more important than you think. Take a look around and you will realize how much it has impacted every single one of us. Music is a necessity.

### **Ronald J. Eshleman**

Occupation: Retired Music Teacher  
From: Saint Thomas, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I spent 30 of the last 40 years as an educator in the Tuscarora School District. I helped develop a delightful High School Choral program that is now directed by 1 of my students. I wrote and implemented a 3 year "Guitar In the Classroom" program for the James Buchanan Middle School. I raised 3 children at Tuscarora. He is in Texas as the husband a career Army wife. He has 4 children and plays guitar and sells and does studio work along with Ebay sales. Another is a Worship Pastor in Dayton , Ohio and is a fabulous career musician. My daughter is a District Chorus participant and college graduate, now the wife of a Children's Pastor and teacher in the Philadelphia area with special needs students. I say this to say, MUSIC has SO affected my life, my wife's life, and my children's lives! Music education and activity at school and church has totally impacted our lives. Unexpectedly I was forced into retirement due to hydrocephalus. I walk with a walker and continue to deal with a debilitating situation. I guided my replacement who is in her second year at JBMS. I pray for and encourage her often. Please realize the significant VALUE of music in our schools. I witnessed many students lives changed and fulfilled by music experiences! Teaching and learning are so necessary for the well rounded person. From guitar classes to Middle School and High School Choirs, Show Choirs, Orchestras, Bell Choirs, internet videos and on and on ... I can't imagine life without music! THANK YOU PMEA. Thank you Pennsylvania legislature. Thank you Tuscarora School District. Thank you students and parents of the last 40 years! Thank you Messiah College, GAMA and the many others who impacted my journey! It was a fabulous ride!

### **Nicole Albright**

Occupation: 5th Grade Band Director - Chambersburg School District  
From: Shippensburg, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was attracted to music and playing an instrument the moment my Father took out a saxophone and showed me how to play "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star". From 4th grade on I had a string of encouraging and empowering music educators. From Mr. Crum in 6th grade band who gave us "Crum stripes" to put on our instruments when we passed certain goals, to Mr. Grane as a private saxophone instructor who taught me what it was like to make a saxophone sound like more than a chain-saw. All of the amazing educators that

taught while I was in school made me want to pursue Music education as a career, instead of a hobby. It is a great reward that I have now returned to my school district to, in some cases, work with these fine educators. I will continue to try to impact students lives as the educators of my generation have impacted mine.

### **Lisa Souders**

Occupation: Sr Analyst

From: Shippensburg, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I can remember as a small child the music programs we put on for our parents and the many songs we learned that I later taught my children. Even today I use the Fifty Nifty United States song that I learned in elementary school to remember all the states in alphabetical order. Because I so desperately wanted to learn to play the clarinet when I was a child but couldn't because my parents couldn't afford to purchase the instrument, I was more than eager to support my children when they expressed interest in music. My daughter participated in chorus and the school musicals. These programs helped her to create lifelong relationships and a confidence that has helped her to be successful in her career. My son, still in school, is also active in chorus, the school musical, marching band, pep band, concert band and jazz band. My son fell in love with music because his fifth grade band teacher made band fun! He was challenged and moved and excited. He has an appreciation for music well beyond most 15 year olds. Band has sparked an interest in all forms of music and has opened the door to opportunities that he may have never experienced had he not had the opportunity to learn to play an instrument in school. Learning to sing or play an instrument gives children confidence that seeps out into other areas of their lives and this confidence then takes them to great places where they meet great people and do great things.

### **Cole Souders**

Occupation: Student

From: Shippensburg, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted me in so many ways. Its given me purpose in life. A purpose to touch the lives of people around me. When it comes to my interests, I've always had many and will always have many, but I was never stellar in a single category. I was just all-around mediocre at them. When I started playing music, I knew that instant I could be great at something worth while. Music has introduced me into so many ideals and lessons that can be used in everyday life. Music has also introduced me to some great people, some of which I am able to call my friends. The experiences that music has given me are those that most would never anticipate. Thanks to my educators, my abilities in music have allowed me to make disitric band as a freshmen, open concerts for Freddy Cole and Bill Cosby. I have had the pleasure of meeting other students and have been able to collaborate and create art without judgment or structure. I am forever indebted to my parents, for there support. I am truly grateful for these opportunities that music has given me and will continue to provide as I grow as both a person of society and a musician. I would not be the person I am today without music.

### **Becky Coldsmith**

Occupation: College Student

From: Shippensburg, Franklin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a major part of my life since I was born. I first started taking piano lessons when I was 5 years old. I continued lessons until I started taking clarinet lessons when I was 10 years old. Since 2005 to the present day I am still playing the clarinet. I currently play the clarinet in the Shippensburg University Marching Band. And I now have the opportunity to travel with the band on December 28th to Ireland. The SUMB will be touring Ireland for a week and marching in the New Years Eve Parade of Lights! Music has provided me when so many experiences and friendships. I have been blessed with the ability to travel with such an amazing organization. At Shippensburg University I am studying Elementary Education. One of the biggest things I want to emphasize in my own classroom when I graduate is music. With music getting cut from schools left and right out of school districts it is very important for teachers to include music

and transitions into their everyday curriculum. Music opens doors to unlimited opportunities and I advocate music education!

## **FULTON COUNTY**

### **Joyce Mills**

Occupation: Business Analyst

From: Waterfall, Fulton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a child, music was the class I longed for in school. I was shy & felt empowered because I could sing a little better than most kids. I took piano & organ lessons for 9 years & enjoyed singing in my high school & church choirs. Music brings out emotions to the fullest. Whether its a song you just have to sing to, dance to, cry to or just bring back a memory of a time or experience. Music has been a huge part of my life. My children all play instruments and my daughter is a singer. I know they can't imagine their mom not singing to them or promoting music in their lives. Music=Life!

## **GREENE COUNTY**

### **Michelle Wendell**

Occupation: Health and PE teacher

From: Waynesburg, Greene County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education played a huge part in my school career. I was involved in the jazz band, marching band, steel drum band, the wind ensemble, and concert band as well as a few sports. Being involved in all of this helped me become a very disciplined student, since we toured a lot and had lots of different concerts or competitions that would take us out of school. It also helped me learn time management and dedication early on. Most days I was at school from 7am to 4 or 5pm doing music related things, I was also here most weekends. I got to take a lot of trips and experience a lot of things that I would not have been able to do or see. I also feel like being part of the band or music family was a great experience for me. I feel that music and music education are very important parts of school and should not be taken away. I wouldn't trade the experiences that I had in music for anything as they taught me some of the greatest lessons.

### **Brady Hogue**

Occupation: Student

From: Waynesburg Central HS, Greene County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has affected me by turning me toward a world full of beauty and eloquence. It has impacted me so drastically that music education is actually what I am choosing to pursue as a career. I wish to attend a university in order to become a music educator in our public schools. I have learned many valuable things about music through my experiences in honors and district festivals. Getting to work with such fine conductors at these festivals have inspired me not only to become something only means a lot to me, but also to have a deeper impact on my students.

### **Caleb Jackson**

Occupation: Student

From: Waynesburg Central HS, Greene County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a very big impact on my education and on my life as a whole. My music classes during school are an escape for me. These classes allow me to take a break from the normal hecticness of the day by allowing me to do what I love, and that is make music. Music education in school helps me focus on my other academic classes by relaxing my mind. I plan to further my education in college and base my career in music. I have learned music theory and technique in school that has helped me become a better

singer and instrumentalist, and therefore has helped me become one step closer to living a life full of music. Music education has helped me in many ways and I am extremely grateful for it.

### **Braxton McCollum**

Occupation: Student

From: Waynesburg Central HS, Greene County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly affected my life. Not only do I express emotion through music, but I make relationships with the people I meet through the music program. Music is a way for me to escape the stress of daily life and enjoy creating beautiful melodies and harmonies with all of my friends. I've had the opportunity to attend and participate in many events through the music program, from symphonies to large overwhelming choirs. I have also met some amazing people through music. Nothing is better than to hang out with friends who share the same passion as you. I enjoy and look forward to the time when I can go to the music suite in my school and spend time creating beautiful music. Music has been and always will be a part of my life.

## **HUNTINGDON COUNTY**

### **George Higinbotham**

Occupation: Retired Social Worker

From: Alexandria, Huntingdon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was a professional musician for 20 years, taught music for 9 years and am currently a member of the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra. My earliest training was in grade-school music that started in 1st grade. In 4th grade I started instrumental lessons and continued through high-school. In college I placed well in the marching and concert band due to solid, early music education even though I was not a music major. This basic music education gave me the background to continue playing and teaching the rest of my life (I am now 68 years old). There is no doubt in my mind that the early music education developed my ability to understand and play music and helped me succeed in other academic subjects through high-school, college and later a masters program. Currently I also play in local high-school musicals and through my social work background have been able to track at-risk students who (in some cases) became involved in music to the point of going to college instead of getting in trouble with the law.

### **Ryan Wade**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Huntingdon, Huntingdon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Because of my involvement in music classes, I was able to cope with a rough childhood. Music gave me a reason to get out of bed in the morning. It helped foster meaningful relationships that I still have to this day. It helped me to feel like I had a place where I belonged in my school. I wasn't much of an athlete, but I excelled at music. Music helped me cope with the loss of my father when I was a senior in high school. Music was and continues to be a huge part of my life.

### **John R. Kovalchik**

Occupation: Retired Music Teacher

From: Petersburg, Huntingdon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been my life. I went through two school systems in an area where music education was supported and encouraged. I am especially grateful to two music teachers who instilled and reinforced myriad positive traits in my own life that compelled me to enter the profession myself. As a music teacher, I know I have impacted thousands of lives in a most positive way. I have the letters to prove it. Expressions of valuable life lessons are woven throughout all of them, even by students who no longer perform. They still are so thankful for the enjoyment they have received simply from being a part of something so much bigger

than themselves. I am now retired from teaching, but I didn't leave because I didn't like it. I was losing the strength and energy that it takes to do the job right. However, I can still perform and that positively impacts my quality of life to this day. That may be the biggest reason for music education.

### **Diana Miller**

Occupation: Band Director

From: Huntingdon, Huntingdon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has taught me not only how to express my emotions, but how to express them with others. Music in a rural area allows my students to feel like they're important and that they matter; they don't have to just work on a farm or take whatever job comes their way after graduation. Music gives them the opportunity to see beyond their own small town, and realize their own potential and identity. Music education lights a fire under my students, and gives them hope for a better world in which they can be active participants. For my students, music education is a golden ticket to tomorrow.

## **INDIANA COUNTY**

### **Lauren Morus**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Blairsville, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Despite my high academic achievements, I recall feeling depressed and lonely throughout grade school. I was the student that was usually forgotten about in the classroom since teachers didn't have to worry about my behavior. I was very shy among my peers. I remember that I really enjoyed playing the recorder in 3rd grade. In 4th grade, I decided to join the band. Realization swept over me for the next 8 years: I was part of a team. I felt creative. I started making genuine friends with common interests. I also started to put myself down a lot less. Music was the creative and rewarding subject I needed to develop into a well-rounded citizen. I now teach music in a public school. I have seen students with special needs make leaps and bounds in social skills, shy students breaking out of their shells, and gifted students pushing their creativity in the classroom. My high school choir recently scored an "excellent" rating at an adjudication festival, but our most rewarding moment was going Christmas caroling at local nursing homes and socializing with the community. It is clear that music makes a vital, positive impact in early childhood all the way through adulthood. I am blessed that I have experienced this and that I relish the opportunities where I can share my passion with my students.

### **Hayden Michael**

Occupation: Student

From: Homer-Center HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a large part of my life since I was very young. After I moved to Pennsylvania I was able to participate in the district band and chorus festivals. They are so much fun and are valuable experiences that I would not have missed a second of. Music helps me to learn, and makes me a better person as a whole.

### **Yong S. Colen**

Occupation: IUP Professor

From: Indiana, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My daughter has benefited greatly. She has for the past four years taken cello lesson at East Pike Elementary School and has played in its string ensembles. Our family has very much appreciated this resource and support. However, in the past two years, I have noticed music teachers retiring and not being replaced. In short, lessons days/times have been reduced to address the budget shortfall. Please advocate on behalf of my and other children who will benefit from fully-funded, music ed. in our public schools. Thank you.

### **Vincent Fritz**

Occupation: General Labor (summer job)

From: Indiana, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is the reason I still stand to this day. When I was younger, I went through an area of my life where the days just got harder. People became meaner and more hate filled, my parents didn't understand and became mad when I was too scared in class to think. My grades drop, I became paranoid. And I wanted to end it all. The one thing that held me to this earth was a 100 person marching band I was in. But it wasn't your average run of the mill competition band, this band was worried more about music than to march well. The music had meaning, feeling even. Near the end of that area in time I lost all forms of emotion. But when I walk in to a practice room, an audition, or the final performance of an ensemble I am a part of, I play my heart out. Music was my only saving grace. I now go to college at IUP, for music education. My majoring instrument is trombone, and I am soon going to audition to be a voice minor. I am a sophomore and I've never been happier. Music is the reason I live to this day. And my belief is that if music can save someone like me, then I can help it save others and I hope that one day I can help someone by introducing them to all that music can give. Music became my hobby, my career, and my life. And I wouldn't have it any other way. As the famous saying goes, "Where words fail, Music speaks."

### **Laura Herrington**

Occupation: Financial Assistant/Marketing Coordinator

From: Indiana, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life tremendously as all 4 of my children have been involved in the music program in our district throughout their schooling years. My 3 oldest children (2 are now in college and 1 is a junior in high school) have all participated in their school's marching band, orchestra, symphonic band, wind ensemble, jazz bands and pit orchestra as well as several extra curricular string ensembles and choruses. My youngest child is in 5th grade and has been learning percussion for 2 years and violin for 1 year. My one daughter in college has chosen to pursue a degree in Music Education and my son, who is a junior in high school, plans to pursue a career in Music Education as well. I initially home schooled my children and when it was time for them to go into the public school system, the band and orchestra program is what helped them to transition so beautifully into their new environment at public school. They immediately found a family with their fellow musicians and their friendships revolved around these "band geeks." My husband and I as well as our extended family have been so blessed to see and hear our children perform over the years in numerous concerts and performances, I cannot imagine how life would have been had we not had those opportunities. My children's personal growth, personalities and character development have all been positively affected by the endless lessons and opportunities they have had throughout these 14 years. If it weren't for the school's music education programs, none of my children would have had the opportunities offered them because I could not afford to give them individual, private music lessons or to purchase instruments for them to learn on. Also, my 3 oldest children were able to travel to Florida, California and soon to Arizona with the marching band, opportunities I know they would not have gotten if it weren't from a school trip. So, please, I plead that you would continue to provide music education in the schools so children will continue to reap the many benefits provided by the various music education programs.

### **Ashley Hill**

Occupation: Physician Assistant Student

From: Indiana, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I can't remember a time in school that I wasn't involved in music education. Even in college, music has been a huge part of my life. I was fortunate enough to participate in PMEA chorus festivals for 2 years reaching the regional level both years, and county chorus festivals for 5 years. I believe that my music education at my own school was improved drastically by these opportunities. My music education at my school is what kept me going. I loved all of my music classes. As a vocalist and a pianist, music education is very much a part of

who I am. I have been involved in some sort of music education since I was in first grade. The experiences I had made me a much more cultured individual. Music is something that is universal, and I learned that because of my music education. Music allows you to communicate with people who don't even speak your language. On a trip to Africa, I found myself in a unfamiliar country where I could not speak the language and had no way to communicate, except for when we began to play the drums and sing and dance. The music is what brought us together. It was how we communicated. I know that there are lots of studies that show how students in music education do better on tests and exams overall, and I believe it because I was one of those students. I participated in every vocal music opportunity afforded to me in junior high and high school. I gained opportunities that I would not have otherwise had. I met people who I would not have otherwise met. Even coming to college, I found myself on a spring break mission trip with a guy that I had sat next to at regional chorus my junior year of high school. My music education changed my life. I think the best way to describe my music education and the impact of music in general on my life is by the words Joseph Martin uses in "The Awakening." I have sang the song many times, and it never ceases to leave me speechless and blow me away every time I hear or sing it. The song begins with describing a world with no music and it says there were "no hallelujahs, not one hosanna. No song of love. No lullaby, and no choirs sang to change the world." But then, the tone changes once the dreamer awakes to a world full of music and it says "let music never die in me, forever let my spirit sing. Let all our voices join as one to praise the Giver of the Song." That's what music means to me. I am a student in a science filled field. I work in a lab with bacteria and cultures. I learn how to perform surgery. I am not studying music by any means, but because of my experiences, I will forever and always be a music student.

### **Julianne Laird**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Indiana, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was a very little girl, I sang and made up songs while playing out of doors. Later, at age 8, I heard young people playing guitar and singing, so I announced to my parents that I "had" to play guitar. It wasn't long after that that my brother, a 1st grade student, heard the elementary school principal play the violin. He came home from school and announced that he "had" to play the violin. 40 years later, my brother, sister, and I are all professional music educators and performers. My brother conducts the orchestra program in a prestigious North Carolina school, and travels around the world conducting youth symphony events. He also gigs on the weekends at local clubs and churches. My sister is principal 2nd violin in a city symphony, conducts the senior high orchestra in her school district, serves as a band mom, and performs in an Irish band on the weekends. I formerly was a professional concert soprano, but now I teach a public school senior and junior high orchestra program, and my husband (a retired music educator) and I play authentic sea music during the summers. The music educators in our home school district shaped our lives: not to be conceited "know-it-all" musicians, but to be REAL musicians who play REAL music in the REAL world. We play and sing with joy...any and every genre of music... because our teachers modeled that example for us. Our orchestra directors composed and arranged music of every genre for us to play, and they were gigging on the weekends: in dance bands, in community theater, with other music teachers. They introduced us to music educators on the collegiate level who were also performing, playing, composing, and conducting actively in the community. These wonderful teachers passed on their legacy to us, and we are carrying the torch of music education forward for students of ALL ability levels, races, genders, and economic backgrounds. Some of our mentors still stay in touch with us on a nearly daily basis: offering us advice, new arrangements, encouragement, and continuous inspiration. We are so grateful. They have shaped our divine destiny, and now we can reach out to a new generation of students who know in their hearts that they "have" to make music.

### **Bev Mastalski**

Occupation: Administrative Assistant

From: Indiana, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I grew up in rural Cambria County and was fortunate enough to be in a school district that had a band and had instruments for students to use. My family could not have afforded to purchase or rent an instrument for me, but the school was there to loan one to any student who wanted to play. So I grew up playing music, and unfortunately once I graduated high school I couldn't play again until I bought a keyboard and taught myself to play, using the skills and techniques I learned in band. It was a struggle, but music was worth it. My children now both play string instruments. Our district used to have a program in which EVERY third grader had a short class to learn to play the violin. It was brief, but it sparked an instrument in many kids to try instruments, string or otherwise. My son, who has graduated from high school, plays viola in his university orchestra, and the music is a great joy for him. It is as strenuous and disciplined as any sport, but it is also a beautiful outlet for expression. My daughter, an eighth grader, plays in her school orchestra and a small ensemble. She's been exposed to many teachers and has found much joy in playing. The music education that I have had has impacted me far beyond high school, even though I haven't picked up a saxophone in over 30 years. That exposure to music from my primary teachers through high school teachers developed a love for music, an appreciation for the discipline, and a respect for the dedication and training that musicians must have. Exposure to others through music gave me a common connection with people from differing backgrounds and helped me navigate my way. It was the music teachers who inspired and challenged me to be better, and it was the music performances that are my most vivid memories from my public school. It would be vastly different had I not had the opportunity to take part in music education.

### **Heidi Ray**

Occupation: Endodontist

From: Indiana, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education was a big part of my school experience. It opened many doors for me. I learned obviously about music, but also time management, perseverance, and teamwork. Exposing students to music education in any and all forms can only benefit the student! To lose this benefit I strongly believe will hurt the kid academically. I personally have benefitted and see my kids benefitting now.

### **Kevin See**

Occupation: Student

From: Indiana, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

High school would have been so different without chorus every day. No matter what was going on in my life, that hour of chorus every day helped me forget my troubles. Additionally, the passion of Scott Salser (of Indiana Senior High) and the students around me drove me to become a more literate and competent musician. Even though I only still play guitar today, I hold my time in high school as my most important development period as a musician.

### **Dakota Gunsallus**

Occupation: Student

From: Indiana Area HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life so much. It has made me become something more of myself and has helped me become a better person in general. I'm happy that I've advanced as far as I have so far. It tells me that I can have a chance to go for my future in music as I always wanted to. Music has made me open my eyes and open my heart to the world and has helped me to express myself in my own way. It has made my life a lot easier and a lot happier too.

### **Jennifer Han**

Occupation: Student

From: Indiana Area HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has changed the way I enjoy my life. It has been with me through thick and thin.

**Jason Herrington**

Occupation: Student

From: Indiana Area HS, Indiana County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education gives you an extra window to express yourself freely.

**Michael Kahle**

Occupation: Student

From: Indiana Area HS, Indiana County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has deeply impacted my life because I plan to become a music educator myself. Music has helped me find and foster deep friendship with those around me and has led me to have better problem solving skills than when I started. Music Education has led me to have a better understanding of the importance of striving towards a goal with a group of people. I also say that most of what I have learned about being a better human being and man came from my experiences in the music department since grade school. To put it in one statement music education and music have been the most important parts of my life and will continue to be the most important part of my life when I become a music educator in the near future.

**Joanna Li**

Occupation: Student

From: Indiana Area HS, Indiana County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music brings people together.

**Connor Quarles**

Occupation: Student

From: Indiana Area HS, Indiana County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has shown me a new way of thinking. It has allowed me as a student to think creatively and have new inspirations in my HS life. I do absolutely believe that I would not be the same person if it wasn't for music education and the opportunities it has given me.

**Kathleen Tra**

Occupation: Student

From: Indiana Area HS, Indiana County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in a way that it opens my eyes to another world. Where I can learn many new cultures from the notes and rhythms that I sing or play. Music education has made my life a lot better than a life without it.

**Lindsay Herring**

Occupation: Student

From: Marion Center HS, Indiana County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has helped me in more ways than I can count. Not only can I read and comprehend music, which will help my future education, but I have become more understanding of the people around me. I am able to express feeling well and I have created relationships with friends that will last a lifetime. Music has also helped other classes such as math and history. I have become a dedicated and hard working person thanks to music education.

### **Gabrielle Goril**

Occupation: Student

From: Penns Manor HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in several different ways, and has always held a special place in my heart. From the wonderful people I have met through music, to the beautiful things I have been able to create, I have learned to advance myself musically as well become a better person. Another example, is how music has given me the chance to express myself in a way words could not. With this expression I have been able to understand myself on a level I otherwise would have not. These are just a few of the many impacts music education has had on my life. Without music my life be "flat".

### **Aimee Kirsch**

Occupation: Student

From: Penns Manor HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life more so, I believe, than any other aspect of education. Where learning how to read and write is important, I have found that music also plays a key role in the educational system. Personally, music education has proved to be important to me. Not only has it helped develop my skills musically, but I believe that it has also positively impacted my other areas of studying. Music education has also lighted a passion within me that I will take with me when I attend post-secondary school for music. Through music education in my school, I truly believe that I have been impacted for the better and hope that music in schools will continue to be around for many generations to come.

### **Caleb Brady**

Occupation: Student

From: Purchase Line HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is probably the biggest thing in my life. I love music more than anything else in this world. Without music education, I never would have known how great music really is.

### **Sarah Buterbaugh**

Occupation: Student

From: Purchase Line HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Everyone has something that they are good at, and music is my "something".

### **Caitlyn Gardner**

Occupation: Student

From: Purchase Line HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been a part of my life since elementary school, so it has naturally impacted me hugely as a person. I have always been a bit socially awkward, and going to choir and band festivals has helped me to come out of my shell and become a more outgoing person. I have been able to make a lot of good friends and memories as a result, and I am very grateful to music educators everywhere for continuing to give music students the wonderful opportunities that I have had during my HS years.

### **Scylla Humbert**

Occupation: Student

From: Purchase Line HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It's gotten me involved in more extra-curricular activities and it's given me more direction in what I want to do with my future.

### **Kayla Mikesell**

Occupation: Student

From: Purchase Line HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. Music education gives me an outlet amongst my normal routine. It has given me the opportunity to share what I love with others who share the same passion. It has taught me discipline in ways nothing else could.

### **Ayla Reinoehl**

Occupation: Student

From: Purchase Line HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It made me a better person and it made me feel like I had a place in my life I'm good at. It taught me that I should try to get as far as I can in music and if I don't succeed, try and try again.

### **Trisha Johnson**

Occupation: College graduate

From: Saltsburg, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Growing up in a small town, I had the opportunity to participate in many activities throughout my elementary and high school experience. The one area that affected me the most was our music program. I remember being a little girl in fifth grade and struggling very much in school. I will never forget the day my music teacher looked me in the eyes and told me she believed in me and knew I could do anything I put my mind to. From that day on I felt like my schooling had a purpose. I wanted to work hard and succeed. I took extra time to practice and study. I became much more well rounded. Music became a place where I could express myself and I felt safe and important. I also began doing better in other areas in school! Music changed my life. I feel if I can do this for one student in the future, all the hard work would be worth it. This past week I just graduated from Geneva College with a degree in music education. We need to keep music in schools. We need to support the arts. Each child is important and you never know who will be the next to benefit from it all.

### **Jason Herrington**

Occupation: Student

From: Shelocta, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My life was boring. I was a home school student. Few friends didn't really know much. One day my mom took me into an elementary school and tells me I should take lessons there. I went on to spend the rest of the day trying to find an instrument. I finally found the Saxophone. At the time I thought it was the best instrument ever. I played it whenever I could. Being home schooled I had never seen something like it before. Eventually I learned about different instruments when I joined public school. It felt like a new world had opened itself, which it had. When I finally got to the Junior High I found out about stringed instruments. I went to my sisters concert and saw these Bass students playing the bass and immediately I was hooked. Four years later, present day, I have grown up with the musical education program and now I play over 10 different instruments. At the time I didn't know it, but looking back through the years I realized something amazing. Each ensemble I had joined in music education felt like home. All the students conversed with each other, we all had fun, and we all suffered through the good times and the bad. At concerts I go to I see little kids going up and playing instruments. When I see them I see not only little bits of myself, but I see the passion, the joy, the dedication. These little kids didn't care how bad they sound or if they had perfect pitch, all they cared about was playing the instrument with joy. I sit here now thinking about how in ten years they will have learned so much. Those students will have learned to play with passion and joy, while still playing correct notes and pitches. If this program is taken away, whether it is band, orchestra, or chorus, the kids of the future will not have learned how to play an instrument. One of the most joyful things in life will have been

taken away from them. So that is why I say from the deepest recesses of my heart, don't take away our music, our one way of expressing ourselves, our moment of bliss in the constantly moving hectic world.

### **Abigail Brown**

Occupation: Student

From: United Sr. HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As I have come through HS, it has become obvious to me that the students from my school who will be the leaders of tomorrow are involved heavily with the arts. Whether it is Band, Chorus, Art, or Dance, there is something about them that imparts individuality, creativity, and fearlessness to students who will go on to do great things.

### **Hillary Hoover**

Occupation: Student

From: United Sr. HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am able to fully realize my potential in all walks of life through the medium of music. One of the subjects in which I have advanced is English, namely, persuasive writing. I believe this is due to my ability to express creative and divergent thinking through the English language. My ability to do this is without a doubt owed to the creativity and individuality that music enables me to employ on a daily basis.

### **Jesse Isenberg**

Occupation: Student

From: United Sr. HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have always excelled at academic subjects beyond most of my peers. Recently however, I have been rethinking my career as an engineer in favor of music. There is something about music that provides fulfillment in my life that other fields don't seem to offer. No matter what I make my career, music will remain an integral part of my life. Without music education, this would not have been the case.

### **Robyn Leary**

Occupation: Student

From: United Sr. HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has affected me so profoundly that I have decided to make it my career. I plan to have a positive affect on the lives of hundreds if not thousands of young students by instilling in them a passion and appreciation for music.

### **Brian Stutzman**

Occupation: Student

From: United Sr. HS, Indiana County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has shaped my life and is all that I do. Music is influential in my life because I'm the secretary of Tri-M and have gained secretarial experience doing so.

## **JEFFERSON COUNTY**

### **Ruth Messenger**

Occupation: Retired

From: Brookville, Jefferson County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am in no way talented musically, but I love music. I think music programs are very important in our schools. Both my children participated in music in school. My son more so than my daughter. From a very young age

he loved singing. In elementary school he was a very good singer and in fifth grade he began playing percussion instruments. It carried over into high school. He was involved in various band programs and choral programs. His senior year he was a co-drum major for the school marching band. In college he majored in Music Education and is now a very enthusiastic and dedicated teacher of both choral and band in a small school in mid-Pennsylvania. He loves his job and his students love him. I believe music is important to the children in school. Music helps our young people to become well-rounded individuals. Music provides an outlet for stress and other issues. We must not let music education be removed from our public school system. It would be a great dis-service to the young people of our state to be denied the opportunity to showcase their musical talents!

### **Kimberly Rouse**

Occupation: Student

From: Philadelphia, NY, Jefferson County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music gave me an outlet whenever I was stressed out or upset in any way. Music has always been the one constant in my life, and through it I could find understanding. It also helped me find a way to connect to other people who love music as much as I do. I found people, who support me and understand me and appreciate music in the way I do. Music also opened doors for me to find a career path, and if it weren't for music, I have no idea where I'd be right now or what I'd be doing.

### **Sarah Johnston**

Occupation: Student

From: Punxsutawney Area HS, Jefferson County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life in so many ways. I understand that the significance to take core classes such as maths and sciences, but music and the arts allow me to express myself in ways I can't through solving a differential equation, or finding what the scientific formula is for torque. Music is the only thing in my life that demands perfection. You can never score one hundred percent. As a musician I am always working on improving and trying to reach the satisfaction of accomplishment. Whether I am playing music, or listening to it there is always a part of me that has a sense of fulfillment. Life would be dull and bland without music or art. Even individuals who have never picked up an instrument would say the same. Trying to imagine what life could be like if some of the greatest classical composers of all time would have never picked up a pencil and wrote their feelings out on staff paper is nearly impossible because music has such an impact on society as well.

### **Samantha Peace**

Occupation: Student

From: Punxsutawney Area HS, Jefferson County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life greatly. Without music in my life I don't know where I would be today. Core classes are important but music has benefited me the most. Even when you are having the worst day possible, you can come into band, pull out a piece of music, and put all your built up emotions into that piece turning it into something wonderful, extraordinary, and powerful. I am forever grateful for the opportunities that being in band has given me.

### **Mackenzie Rosenberger**

Occupation: Student

From: Punxsutawney Area HS, Jefferson County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a big part of my life. I am around music everyday. I started playing clarinet in 4th grade, but didn't fall in love with it until my 8th grade year. Ever since then, I knew that I wanted to be around music every single day. I want to learn more, appreciate more, play more, and listen more. I can never get enough. Throughout my HS career, I have had the opportunity to participate in festivals and I also went to

Europe with an audition Honor Band and Choir. These activities have brought me to meet new people. I was and am able to leave my small town in Pennsylvania and broaden my horizons. The sky is the limit when it comes to everything music can bring into my life. Without music, I would not be who I am today. Sometimes I wonder what life would be like, but then I realize I would never want to live a life without music education. In fact, I am looking forward to my college career and studying music education. I can't wait to see where I will be in a couple of years.

### **Kim Thomas**

Occupation: String Vocal Teacher

From: Sigel, Jefferson County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my life. I teach it at school, I teach privately in my home studio and I perform weekly for various audiences. My husband and children are all active musicians. Music is my profession and my hobby. I can not imagine my life or career with out it. It allows me to relax and wind up for a fun time when I perform. I have traveled to amazing places to perform and I have met the most wonderful people as a result of my ability to perform and teach. Thanks to my local school district for providing a string experience for me... I am so proud of the numerous students of mine that have gone on to perform and teach. They have achieved amazing accomplishments... that is my reward.

### **Debra D.**

Occupation: Business Ed. Teacher

From: Summerville, Jefferson County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

At an early age, music class was the fun class in elementary school. We played with different instruments, learned how to dance and of course sing. Also, during those years, my grandparents were interested in music. They played the guitar and steel guitar, with having no lessons. They sang in church and were always traveling to Nashville to the Grand Ole Opry. They purchase an organ for our family and took it upon themselves to take me to lessons in Clearfield at first and then to Indiana. My only regret is that I did not take it seriously. I am able to play some, but not accomplished as I could have been. With my own daughters, I encouraged them experience music by encouraging them to learn a band instrument and to take piano lessons. My youngest daughter was the most interested and is able to play the piano well. Both of my daughters can sing, and I would love to one day to be able to sing a song with them in church. For myself, I enjoy contemporary Christian music, which I play all the time in my home and in my car. The lyrics and the music relax and refresh me and can be inspiring at the same time. I can not imagine and world without music!

## **JUNIATA COUNTY**

### **Ashley Auker**

Occupation: Student

From: East Juniata HS, Juniata County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me a way to express myself and has helped me get through the hardest times in my life. Music is my outlet and is truly the one thing I always know I can turn to and work on to make me feel better. I can't imagine my life without music because it's the one thing I can always look forward to.

### **Rylie Cooper**

Occupation: Student

From: East Juniata HS, Juniata County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

How has music education not impacted my life? Music is practically everything I do. If it wasn't for music I'd probably have no ambition. Music pushes me to want to succeed in things. At festivals, I aim to do the best I can in my audition and when I do that I feel a sense of accomplishment. My music educator pushes me to do

the best I can because he is aware of my full potential. If it wasn't for him I'm not even sure I would know what I am capable of. After all, he was the one who handed me a french horn and told me to learn it for districts. Five months later, I was at my first PMEA festival playing an instrument I wasn't very familiar with; and now, a year later, I'm headed to regionals on an instrument I never thought I'd be able to master. This was all because of my music educator. Without him and music education in general, I would never have realized what I'm capable of.

### **Kirsten Elsasser**

Occupation: Student

From: East Juniata HS, Juniata County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life because it helps me to express my feelings. When I play my instrument, it's like I am in a different world. Music is my stress reliever.

### **Victoria Ricedorf**

Occupation: Student

From: East Juniata HS, Juniata County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life and made me a harder worker. My music instructors have inspired me to work hard and set goals for myself. Music education has also driven me to want to succeed at anything I set my mind to. Music education offers a different dimension of learning for me. I am able to connect with a music teacher much faster and easier than I can with any other type of teacher.

### **Gene Hoffmaster**

Occupation: Retired Music Educator

From: Oakland Mills, Juniata County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In addition to becoming a full-time career for me, music has saturated my life! I am continuing to offer private lessons to students who desire to improve their musicianship beyond the High School instruction-level. I am currently playing in 3 Community Bands, and 1 Brass Ensemble throughout the entire year as well as performing in Church in some capacity on a weekly basis. I also find myself constantly searching for music stations and less chat-programs while traveling in our vehicles! Also, one room in our home is designated the Music Study where we store our many Woodwind and Brass instruments (20+) that we have collected over the last 40 years of our life together. Frequently we will have a Sunday afternoon play-together just for relaxation. I sincerely hope I can keep playing and singing until my time on earth is finished! What a true, God-given joy music has been for me! And, I encourage the younger generation to find the same satisfaction and soul-filling experience that music can offer!

### **Neta Hoffmaster**

Occupation: Secretary

From: Oakland Mills, Juniata County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I honestly cannot remember a time in my life that music has not played a big part. I fell in love with the clarinet at a very early age. As an adult I have learned to play most of the woodwind instruments, thanks mostly to my husband, a retired music teacher. (I have even learned to play the cello!) Together we play in several community bands as well as in our local Church. We also enjoy singing in Christmas cantatas. Music has totally enriched my life and I am certainly glad I have had an opportunity to play instruments and sing.

### **Kevin Milliken**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Richfield, Juniata County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From an early age, music has always been a big part of my life. My grandmother proudly tells her friends about the cassette tape recordings of my singing while riding my big wheel around her patio at the age of 4. Piano lessons further began to shape my musical life when I was six. The trumpet became an obsession at the age of ten. A bassoon became my preferred instrument at the age of 13. Participation in PMEA District, Regional, and All-State festivals as well as a trip to NAFME All-Easterns filled my high school years with music. I participated in everything musical that I could throughout my high school years. Then off to college, I was recruited to Lycoming College in Williamsport, PA as a bassoonist and they also gained a talented vocalist through my enrollment. I was part of every musical ensemble at Lycoming and took overload credits every semester to have lessons on piano, bassoon, and voice. I was welcomed into the Williamsport Symphony as a college student and loved that experience. After graduation with a degree to teach music, I returned home to seek a job. Fortunately I was hired to teach in my home school district. That was 20 years ago! I cannot imagine doing anything else. The lives of students that I have been blessed to touch and influence over those 20 years are almost unmeasurable in my opinion. Several of my former students are now teachers in the field of music throughout the state. Numerous others have gone on to very successful careers outside of music. But many have remained life-long musicians and that is the real objective in my opinion. I have been fortunate to find a career that allows me to share a love of all music with others. And my wish is for those students to carry that music onward throughout the rest of their lives. Whether that be participating in a community band, singing in the church choir, or singing to their newborn child - to share that love of music is the ultimate goal. Music has been a part of all things in my life, so the impact of music in my life is everything that I do everyday. From teaching to performing, music is my everything!

### **Gretchen**

Occupation: Mom

From: Thompsontown, Juniata County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music classes helped instill my family's love of music in me. It also helped me learn discipline and the importance of practice.

### **Sherry Morgan**

Occupation: Director of Chors

From: Thompsontown, Juniata County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Growing up in the 1960's in a very dysfunctional family, it was not yet a time when that was either recognized or discussed. I was smart enough, however, to know the longer I sat and practiced for my piano lessons (which began when I was six years of age) the less conflict I would experience. Music became a safe haven for me at an early age. As I continued through my formative years, I also learned to play the flute and was very active with singing. The music teachers I had during my public school education were always very encouraging, even on the days my self-esteem (which was pretty much non-existent) was low. They saw something in me that I had yet to recognize in myself. By the time I got to my senior year, with a very uncertain future, my high school band and choral director encouraged me to find a college and continue in a musical field. When I think back on that time, I honestly don't remember how all the planets came into alignment. No one on my family had ever attended college and it was not seen as being a good path. A few members of my family actually attempted to discourage me leaving home and pursuing my dream. Although the road was not an easy one, I was able to break out of a mold of serious emotional, and sometimes physical abuse. It's not something I talk about often because most people can't quite understand unless they've experienced it themselves. I do firmly believe, however, that it's made me a better person and, most assuredly, a better teacher. The old adage "that which does not kill you makes you stronger" certainly applies to my life. As I has spent 30 plus years in high school choral education, I don't discount where I came from, the struggles I endured in a very tumultuous family, and what I have accomplished in spite of it all. My only

hope is I have been an inspiration, through my teaching, to help students see the beauty in music which saved me. When a student looks me in the eye and tells me how music is sometimes the only bright spot in their day, it reaffirms my career choice was sound. I can't imagine having chosen another path and hope students continue to be able to express themselves through music for years to come.

## **LACKAWANNA COUNTY**

### **Havisha Bache**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Since it's been a big part of my life since I was young, it has helped me to do my homework, test preparation, and to sleep.

### **Vihisha Bache**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music makes me happy and having a music education will make my life 100 times better ;)

### **Nick Beckish**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without a music education, I would have been a soulless robot that does not know how to think and feel and express myself beyond the parameters of the common core.

### **Yelena Cochrane**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music impacted my life when I started playing the violin in 4th grade. Since then I've been able to accomplish many musical adventures.

### **Shane Cummings**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me an outlet from which to express my creativity. Everyday I go down to the Orchestra room as many school periods as I can, just so I can get a little bit more playing time in.

### **Brad Eckersley**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has helped me become a more well-round student and i have become more committed to everything I do.

### **Alison Kane**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has helped me gain in confidence and has opened many more opportunities for me.

#### **Megan Kane**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to grow as a student and individual. The skills I've learned and the friends I've made through orchestra will continue to impact me for many years to come.

#### **Rachel Martin**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has introduced me to many of my friends that I have now.

#### **Nicole Olver**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The greatest way that music has impacted me is by creating so many lifelong friendships. I have met a lot of amazing and crazy talented people and formed bonds with them that I know will last forever. Without music, I know I would not have as many friends in my life. Music has also impacted me by making me a much more confident person. Before I joined my HS's music program, I was so self conscious and not confident in how I played at all. But with help from my friends and band directors, I have gained the confidence I needed to play correctly and accurately. It also helped me achieve a spot in district and regional band for the past few years. I can never thank music enough for what it has done in my life.

#### **Olivia Rainey**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From a very young age, I was always the quiet one in the classroom. I was never someone who wanted to stand out. That is, until I picked up the flute in the 7th grade. I consider myself very lucky to have chosen an instrument that I would very quickly fall in love with. As someone with little confidence and low self esteem, I was nervous at first to make any sounds out of the high pitched instrument. I was afraid of what people would say of me. One day during one of my lessons, my flute teacher of about one year paused me during my practice and asked me a question that would later change my perspective of playing. She wanted to know why I played so quietly. I didn't have an answer. Was it because I was so used to it? Was it that my shyness had always been second nature? My personality was obviously appearing in my playing, and I didn't want this to be the case. I hated being so quiet. I wanted to excel at my instrument, not fall behind. From that moment forward, I vowed to not let my quietness affect my playing. While my volume increased in practice, I found that I was becoming more and more outspoken outside of the rehearsal room. Music has helped me become more confident. It has taught me to express myself in ways I could never imagine. To this day, I will always give credit to music for shaping me to become the person I am today.

#### **Jessa Sablan**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has distracted me from all of my other less-important education.

### **Joseph Sileo**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been an essential aspect from my life, but music education has allowed me to take my passion and turn it into skill. Simply put, music education has unlocked my potential and developed my talents. My father was my first teacher, as he passed on decades of guitar experience onto me. Not only did this allow me to express myself, but it also brought me closer to my dad. In addition, the instructors that I've had the opportunity to work with (whether it be during private lessons or band classes) have continuously pushed me to play faster, cleaner, and better. Without these influences, I would not be writing this essay as a member of Region IV Band. However, more importantly, music education has shown me the value of a strong work ethic and an undying passion. Music educators care about the people they work with, and in turn those people share that love in the form of music. My life has been greatly enriched by the compassion and will of music educators, and I hope to share their lessons with the people I meet later on in life.

### **Bradley Sopinski**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It impacted my life because music means a lot to me in life.

### **Chris Suh**

Occupation: Student

From: Abington Heights HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in many positive ways. Since learning music, I have made countless close friends, and I have absolutely no regrets that I have decided to learn it.

### **Alison Yuravich**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Archbald, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has, in a literal sense, saved my life. I was the bullied high school student who was labeled the "band geek". My one solace in those teenage years was singing in chorus and playing in band. Without those organizations, I would have had nothing. I was very academic and loved my other classes as well, but nothing touched me like music. Now as a music teacher, I see students who are much like I was. Music is sometimes the one reason they come to school that day. When I see music being cut from schools, I wonder what will happen to those students? They may have great academic skills, but everyone always has an outlet. What happens when we take that away? It breaks my heart when I remember how it felt to have that place where I could express myself and truly be free. For students that lose that outlet, I can imagine life being a tragedy. I'm not trying to be dramatic, but from a teenage standpoint when this is all they have, it really is that serious. We should consider just how important these outlets are for students. Much as the athletic students find themselves on the field or courts, the music students find themselves on the stage or in the practice room. I know it's also been said a million times, but music is a great way to reinforce core curriculum classes. For these music students, it's sometimes another way to study a foreign language or learn literature through a choral piece. Most administrators and legislators have heard a lot of these reasons before, but I will never downplay the importance of music. It is not only my job, but my life. It was the driving force that helped me through those awkward and highly emotional teenage years and it is the force I see day in and day out doing the same for my students.

### **Barbara Frutchey**

Occupation: Reading specialist

From: Clark's Summit, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education was part of my life throughout -12 public education and my college career. By having the opportunity to develop skills in general music, instruments, and voice, I believe that I grew in many other areas. I am a firm believer that music education develops other areas of the brain, helping in academics. Music teaches reading, math, history, and communication skills - all of the "core" areas that have been deemed so critical. The confidence and poise that I have today as an adult can definitely be attributed in great part to the music teachers in my life. The students of today and tomorrow deserve and need to experience the vast benefits of music education in our schools.

### **Marion Eagen**

Occupation: Homemaker

From: Clarks Green, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am 70 years old and went to Catholic schools for all of my education. Believe me, we got loads of music education from the nuns! I have sung in choirs for my entire life from childhood on. Although my college major was English, I retained a deep interest in music and eventually became music coordinator for a Catholic parish, something I did for more than 20 years. I am still involved in music at that parish, singing in a small group, a choir, and doing some solo work. For fun, I try to play the piano every day. I will never be good at it, but it gives me great joy and a wonderful sense of accomplishment. Music has been one of the most satisfying elements in my life, and if I ever find myself unable to sing or play it, I will still get enormous joy out of listening to it. Perhaps gravitation toward music is innate, and I would have discovered this love without the early and long exposure to it in school, but I kind of think that early and long exposure did play a major role, and I hope children everywhere in our schools, both public and private, will never be deprived of this wonderful advantage.

### **Loriann Kerber**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Clarks Summit, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has been part of my life since I was in Kindergarten. I am now a music teacher, but before I was a teacher, I was a student. My music teachers in school were my lifeline. Music was always the thing I turned to when I was upset, scared, happy and sad. My school district only had 3 music teachers and wasn't thrilled about having even those. Through those teachers, I learned how to be a musician, how to teach others, how to write a drill for marching band, how to accompany a chorus, and how to be a good person and finally, leadership skills. Even though I was the first student to ever attend a PMEA Festival from my school district, I set a prescient so others could attend, as well over the years. I vowed to give my students the love of music that was given to me by my teachers, and to give them every musical opportunity that I could.

### **Wendy**

Occupation: EMT

From: Dalton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In life there is nothing more magical than a musical education. I learned patience, how to read music, and how to apply music to my everyday life. I am the type of person who can't concentrate on simple classes like math and English. But when I had my music classes first I found I was able to focus better in my normal classes. I found I was able to learn at a faster pace than my friends who didn't have a musical background. My musical educators were some of the best influences I had in my life. They taught me more than they know.

### **Allyssa**

Occupation: Student

From: Dickson City, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The being involved in the choir in my school was one of the best things for me. Being involved with something as freeing and expressive as music is an amazing thing. It has allowed me to come out of my shell and to become more confident.

### **Cindy Gowell**

Occupation: Retired Elementary Teacher

From: Dunmore, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Enjoyment was probably first. Movement, rhythms, sharing songs with classmates. Not realizing when I was young that music education gave me the ability to concentrate easier. Probably the most important event occurred in 4th grade when we were taken to a Philharmonic Youth Concert. That so impressed me I began to sing eventually with groups and learned to play an instrument. This excitement was and still is passed to students I taught and young children with whom I'm still acquainted. Music is truly the speech of the soul.

### **Wayne Smith**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Elmhurst Township, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was young, music was always a part of family gatherings. Either someone was playing the organ at grandma's house or we were singing songs of all types. When I was a young teenager, I became interested in playing a band instrument and participated in lessons and performances in my public school setting. Concert and Marching Band as well as Chorus became part of my routine. The PMEA festivals seemed like the most important thing I had done in my musical life. Off to college as a music major and suddenly I went from playing in a 40 piece band to a 250 piece marching band that was loved and supported by all, and opened my eyes to how music gave me tremendous opportunities beyond my imagination. I had never been so thrilled in my life. After college came a teaching job that lasted 35 years in the same district. I taught everything from Kindergarten general music to the high school band program, and everything in between....sometimes all at the same time! As I went from a young and inexperienced teacher to a confident educator, I never lost sight of the fact that my job was to allow my students to enjoy music and appreciate that their lives would not be the same without it. I loved watching the elementary students' eyes light up when they mastered a new musical skill as much as I loved the tears of joy that came from the high school musicians when they made an emotional connection with the music they were performing or achieved a goal they never thought they could reach. As a music teacher I was expected to multi-task and organize at levels that were never explained to me as a young undergraduate. It was not so unusual to have a day which included a before school high school band rehearsal, a homeroom duty, elementary general music, middle school general music, a cafeteria duty, elementary band lessons, high school band lessons, an after school elementary band rehearsal and then an evening musical rehearsal, an ongoing fundraiser to organize, topped off with late night spreadsheet work for the finances of the upcoming band trip and preparation work for the next day. For me personally, a day like this was always just part of the job and a challenge I enjoyed. I found that the work ethic I followed helped me to be a leader not just in the school setting, but outside of school also. I was active in my family's activities, found time to be a Volunteer Fire Chief, and still made time for softball games and marathon running. The difference that music made in my life was to take the discipline of learning an instrument and performing as part of a group and apply that discipline to my everyday world. I realized that with consistent practice of skills (whether it be playing an instrument or parenting skills) results would come, for the better. Music improved my life!

**Jacqueline Feduchak**

Occupation: Pharmacy Technician

From: Greenfield Twp., Lackawanna County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I went to Catholic school and we had music several times a week. We also sang in the choir at church. I never learned to play a musical instrument and I really wish I did. Music is life and expression of one's self. Taking music out of schools would be a disgrace. Kids need to express themselves in positive ways and there seem to be very few ways available for children to do that these days. I sing and listen to music every day. It calms me down when I'm having a bad day, it cheers me up when I'm sad, it's just plain good for the mind and the body.

**Ernest Mengoni**

Occupation: Radio/Television Higher Education

From: Jessup, Lackawanna County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My love for music has helped form the person that I am today. My fifth grade music teacher was a great influence in my life, and helped to instill my love for music, it is who I am. Although I don't teach music full time, it is still a major part of who I am and what I do. I teach piano, and am in charge of the music ministry at my church. My love for music has carried over to my three children. My oldest daughter just recently graduated college with a degree in Music Education and teaches full time. My second child, although an athlete, plays trombone and was always involved in high school band, and the musicals at his former high school. He is now attending college on a football scholarship. My youngest son, will be graduating high school this year and will pursue a degree in Music Education, so you can see that Music is truly a love affair for all of us. I couldn't have imagined high school without a music program. It was and is who I am. I truly believe that Music Education in our schools is just as important as any other subject. Please keep music in our schools.

**Marianne Gilmartin**

Occupation: Attorney

From: Moscow, Lackawanna County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music taught me another language. Although I participated in Athletics at the High School and college levels, Music instilled in me just as much teamwork, finesse and confidence in front of a crowd as Athletics ever did. Music afforded the chance to travel and has resulted in life-long friendships and the opportunity to participate throughout adulthood. I continue to interact and network with my instrumental music friends and conductors. Musicians continue to support cultural events like no others. In short, without Music I would not be the well-rounded, poised, intelligent, community-minded person (and, incidentally, shareholder in a large law firm) that I am today.

**Craig Beavers**

Occupation: Student

From: North Pocono HS, Lackawanna County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has taught me how one person can make a big impact when brought together as one group.

**Raymond Felins**

Occupation: Student

From: North Pocono HS, Lackawanna County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since starting HS, it has been my goal to improve as a musician. I feel like it has had a major impact on my life and I do not regret joining.

### **Adrianna Howden**

Occupation: Student

From: North Pocono HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life because it has taught me discipline, hard work, and working and communicating well with others. It has taught me to express myself in a special way.

### **Marty Ort**

Occupation: Music Education

From: Old Forge, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Because of the solid musical education I received in my schooling, I decided to become a music educator myself, and have spent the last seven years in Old Forge working with elementary aged children. There is no job more rewarding, and without the opportunities I was given throughout my educational career I have no doubt I would not be doing what I am today.

### **Joyce Covaleski**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Peckville, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Having music in my education provided with opportunities for learning and socialization that I would have otherwise gone without. I have lasting friendships from grade school because of our involvement in our school's music program. I have forged a very interesting career because of my continued involvement in my school's music program. I went to college for music and have had very rewarding experiences using music as a therapeutic tool and for educational purposes. I see music reach students in a way that no other content area does, and I see students excel because of their involvement in music. My choral and band students are consistently on honor roll and gain admission into the National Junior Honor Society. Our standardized test scores are consistently higher than the national average, and our students score higher than average in math and reading. Music education provides opportunities for teaching abstract thinking, symbol interpretation, math skills and computation, reading skills, writing skills, history, science, and, of course, music! Students engage because of the hands-on activities and music finds a way to help those with learning disabilities, emotional problems, and attention deficits. Music is a global language and a powerful tool. I know because I've experienced its power personally in my own life and I am rewarded every day that I teach by my students' responses to music in their lives.

### **Joyce Covaleski**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Peckville, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education helped me find my first love, music. When I was in 4th grade, we were given the opportunity to take instruction on instruments from four sections of an orchestra: the strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. I became hooked on the clarinet and never looked back! I took lessons, joined band in 5th grade, and later went on to join Marching Band as well. Clarinet was my first instrument, but I also played the tenor saxophone and the baritone, looking for a larger voice so that I could be heard out on the field. I loved band, and formed many friendships that I still enjoy today, over 30 years later! I engaged in leadership roles such as Band President, and then went onto college to major in Music Therapy. I later returned for my certification in Music Education and I have enjoyed every day in my occupation as a Music Teacher. I know I have touched lives through the power of music because my students show me every day how much they enjoy it and feel its influence. Music is a universal language that knows no borders and binds people in rhythm and harmony. I love being a part of it!

### **William Vargas**

Occupation: Retired Corrections Lieutenant

From: Peckville, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I attended, after attending Western Wayne High School in Varden, Pa., The Recording Workshop Audio Recording School in Chillicothe, Ohio...an extension of Capital University in Columbus, Ohio...for Recording Engineering, Audio Production, Maintenance and Troubleshooting. I am Certified in these listed schoolings. I applied my ability at the WYOU-TV stations television control room doing audio for tv as an intern, in Scranton, Pa. I have done, and still do periodically, live audio at the Cove Haven Entertainment Resorts in the Pocono's ( have dealt with doing audio for famous comedian Buddy Hackett). I have played bass guitar in multiple local bands from three-piece groups to an 11-piece horn section band whereas I was a lead vocalist in this group. In one of the bands I played bass guitar in, called Hyde Park, our band opened shows for the following professional acts: Beatlemania; Ziggy Marley and the Wailers; Mark Farner of Grand Funk Railroad and Dicky Betts of The Allman Brothers Band. We also not only opened, but backed, the do-wop professional band called The Drifters. I have been in Classic Rock, Blues, Rhythm and Blues, Country, Polka and Standard song bands in my past and at present am in a Jazz / Funk instrumental band in the Scranton, Pa. area called West Third Street. I have installed audio systems in multiple churches in northeastern Pa., have consulted in installation of home audio systems that are built-in, currently upgrading a local fraternities audio system. I am a member of Scranton's Musicians Association and The American Federation of Musicians. I have done live audio for local bands, being their sound technician and I have an in-house demo recording studio that has been in existence since 1987 called Cherry Productions Recording Studio which has put out original songs for myself and others, whereas some of my personal recordings were aired on the radio. This studio also produced radio and tv commercials which were aired in the past. Qualified to teach various audio recording aspects, Acoustics and Beginner Home Studio operation, I am well rounded in many aspects of music. A graduate of Western Wayne's High School in 1973, music has been a major factor in my life. If it were not for the brilliant instruction from the well versed music teachers in this school district I may not have had this great force in my life. Keep music in all elementary, middle and high schools. Music is one of the Seven Liberal Arts, which are the basis of all learning, and therefore should never be dismissed. And I could bet that The Great Architect of the Universe would want it kept there too. May we all continue and love music, all music, and enjoy it as musical friends to friends.

### **Sharon Ambrozia**

Occupation: Band Director

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

IN EVERY WAY.

### **Hannah Fornes**

Occupation: College Student

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am currently studying to be a music educator in college at the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Music ed has completely changed my life and has become my future.

### **Patrick Hein**

Occupation: Music Education Major

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life because it has given me opportunities that I would have not had otherwise. I have been able to work in my field while in school, which has helped to pay for school at the same time. The music education I have received since elementary school has helped shape me into the person I am today. Music has taught me that not everything I do will come easily to me, and that I have to persevere if I am to be successful in school, and in life. Having had violin instruction in school grades 4-12

has helped me with my focus in school, something that I don't know that I would have had because I had been diagnosed with ADHD since 2003. The time spent learning a skill that takes so much focus helped me get through school, and do well as a student. When I graduated high school I was in the top 15% of my class, and I had 30 college credits of AP classes towards a degree. I strongly believe that participating in music had helped me focus enough to get that far ahead of myself in school, and has ultimately helped to make it possible to pay for school. Music provides an impetus to students who might not feel connected to their schools otherwise, and, if nothing else, music should be kept in schools for that reason.

### **Gail Hummel**

Occupation: Picker/packer and On-call Teacher Aide

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I love music!... Music is part of my / our every day life ... My 3 children were very lucky to have the best music teachers & music programs in their school district and we are very grateful for that opportunity and believe music in schools is the start of something very good for all children. Between playing instruments and singing with chorus they were involved in a lot of wonderful shows. There is a lot of great talent out there and our schools music programs is where it all begins.

### **Joanna Johnson**

Occupation: College Instructor

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

For myself, I began taking music at Neil Armstrong Elementary & it gave me confidence in myself & my ability to learn new things. I started on the violin which, until then, was completely foreign to me. As I continued in school I progressed to the viola & played until the 8th grade because it was not offered as a class in high school. To this day I love all kinds of music in part because I was exposed to so many different types as a child through my music classes. My son now has music class & sings in the school chorus. For the most part he is a typical boy, athletic, active & somewhat disinterested in school. Participating in music class & chorus has changed that for him. He has found a new love, a new interest and a renewed vigor for school. As a fifth grader this year, he is beginning to transition to adolescence and needs the opportunity & encouragement to continue to express himself creatively, try new things and socialize with a variety of people. His classmates & fellow chorus members are children he wouldn't see in the course of the regular school day. They come together, work very hard and perform in elaborate shows that emphasize the outcome of their hard work, dedication & teamwork. It's not unusual to hear him singing in the shower all the way downstairs as he perfects a new number or repeats a particular favorite. He had been a little bit quiet & shy in the past but as he has continued with music & chorus I have seen this little boy literally come out of his shell & his confidence & self-esteem increase with every passing day. I am forever grateful to Kim Gnall of Neil Armstrong for her selfless commitment & unwavering support she shows our kids each & every day. Music education can make all the difference in a child's life. Howard Gardner identified multiple intelligences over twenty years ago with musical intelligence being one of them. In order to best serve all of our students, we need to continue to provide the variety of opportunities that classes like music, art and yes even physical education provides them. How are we going to identify & educate our next generation of leaders in all fields if we don't give them that opportunity now?

### **Andrea Lidle**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has greatly impacted my life. I joined the elementary band as a 4th grader and continued with it through elementary, middle, and high school. I learned commitment, teamwork, and perseverance. Although I was only a mediocre musician, I learned the importance of practice and hard work. I learned that different people can contribute their talents but all are important and make a whole. As a parent, I watch my children find the same love of music. Whether it be piano, clarinet, chorus or dance. It is calming. It is fun. It brings

peers together. And it facilitates growth as an individual. Not all students are athletes. And for so many, sports end at the end of high school years. Music impacts an individual for life.

### **Betty Ann Lucas**

Occupation: Paraprofessional

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has made my life enjoyable. It has made me and my family pay off something, either as a soloist or in a group. I believe that music helps in the development of the brain and requires the person to use both sides. I am a better person because of the introduction of music in my life at a very young age.

### **Stephanie Lynch**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was in grade school I had a hard time remembering my notes for tests. I would study for hours only to be frustrated. I started playing violin and piano and it improved my memory skills tremendously. My family could not believe the difference in my school work. My memory improved drastically. I feel that music improves the mind and I am proof of that.

### **Linda Robbins**

Occupation: Coordinator

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted me personally thru my grandson, his music class was such a wonderful experience for him. My grandson learned that he was very talented in playing the drums and he developed a love for this that will follow him throughout the rest of his life. This is due to his music teacher Miss Gnall from Neil Armstrong elementary school, our family will be forever indebted to Miss Gnall for bringing out this gift in Noah. Without the music program and his great teacher, Noah would not have experienced the joy of playing an instrument.

### **Judy Sawka**

Occupation: RN

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music the world would be boring. Music has made me learn how to express my feelings, listening to my son play the piano eases my worries, if he didn't have music in elementary school he never would have met his music teacher whom he took piano lessons from and who has become a long time family friend. My whole family loves listening to him play on holidays, if you take away music education the world will be missing out on great musicians!

### **Bridget Yerke**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is the core of who I am. It's hard to remember a time before I started playing an instrument. As a child, I was shy and reserved. It wasn't always easy to make friends. My self-esteem was lacking. I remember very vividly how excited I was when I got to 5th grade; it was time to choose an instrument! A family member was a flute player, and I idolized him. I was eager to do anything that would create something in common. When I began learning, I was not good. In fact, I was very bad. I considered quitting, but something urged me to continue. As time passed, I improved. It didn't come easily, but it brought me joy each time I reached a new landmark in my playing. By 8th grade, I was tutoring younger students. I remember the excitement it brought me when my "students" were successful. I knew then that I wanted music to be my life. In high school,

marching band helped to bring me out of my shell. Almost all of my friends were made through marching band. I still maintain those friendships today. It is difficult to explain everything I gained through music. I learned to work towards a goal and see it through. I learned how to work as a part of a team and create something wonderful. It gave me a sense of self-worth and a confidence that I hadn't known before. Practicing and performing helped me to channel my emotions and release and express them in a healthy way. Now, as a music educator, I have the opportunity to give a new generation of students these same gifts. It is amazing to hear students talk about their musical experiences and how it has helped them through rough times in life. The joy on their faces after an exceptional performance is always a wonderful experience. While my own experiences with music are dear to me, the experiences I am creating with my students is even more meaningful. In a world where people would prefer to focus on the negative, these students are choosing to do something positive. Whether music helps them get through depression or is simply the highlight of their day, I can see the impact it has.

### **Nadia**

Occupation: Future music teacher

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has impacted my life by teaching me how to be a leader. I was concertmaster of my high school orchestra. It has impacted me so greatly that I want to become a music teacher.

### **Diane Cimino**

Occupation: Billing Specialist

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My son has Asperger's Syndrome, he was diagnosed at age 3. Social situations were immensely difficult for him. In 3rd grade his music teacher let them pick an instrument so he chose saxophone. Within 2 months she recorded a Christmas tape of him playing...he was at home on the stage. He is now a junior in college and music is still a huge part of his life. He loves playing in front of crowds... plays guitar in a band and is so comfortable with who he is. None of this would be true today if he wasn't introduced to music. It helped him gain a confidence he would not otherwise have. Most kids cannot play sports, music is a beautiful alternative to give kids an outlet and something to be involved in.

### **Caleb Mandile**

Occupation: Student

From: Scranton HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a great impact on my HS career and my life as a student and musician. When I first began HS, I had previously been homeschooled, and barely knew anybody in the freshman class. The Strings orchestra at Scranton HS that I joined helped me make those necessary connections that make school more enjoyable, and also build long lasting friendships that I will hopefully have my whole life. Music Education has shown me how hard work pays off over time, and how much potential I really have. It is most definitely an amazing experience to participate in any of the PMEA festivals. To play the extremely difficult classical pieces, and to just be a part of such an incredible ensemble is a privilege that I am proud to be a part of. Now that I am a Senior and I am a more experienced player from my school, I have the ability to share my knowledge and experiences with the incoming freshman and sophomores. Hopefully this will make HS more enjoyable for them, and will allow them to experience everything about the PMEA festivals that I love.

### **Robert McGowan**

Occupation: Student

From: Scranton HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Throughout my musical career and through PMEA, I have had the opportunity to perform in several venues across the state of Pennsylvania, while simultaneously experiencing the diversity that the various regions of the state have to offer. In addition, I have had the pleasure of performing alongside some of the most talented musicians and under the direction of a variety of conductors from across the country, including the recently retired Col. Foley of the President's Own United States Marine Band. Being a musician and performing in these ensembles has better equipped me to communicate with and cooperate with my colleagues, and as a result, I feel that I am better prepared to meet the challenges that await me in my collegiate and professional careers.

### **Kimberly Gnall**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Taylor, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Because of a very special music teacher that touched my life for 7 years of my public education, I chose to spend my career doing all I can to bring Music to as many young lives as I possibly can. With 25 years or so of teaching, I have witnessed the way MUSIC changes young lives... the way it influences their future. If I could start all over...I would do the same exact thing. . But I'd be sure that NO student missed out because of POLITICS...

### **Phyllis**

Occupation: Small Business Owner

From: Taylor, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I love music. I use it to help me focus on what I am creating in my work. When my premie son was born they played all types of music in the N.I.C.U.. It helped stimulate his healing & his learning. I feel that music is just as important as the other academic courses.

### **Lisa**

Occupation: RN

From: Taylor, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education was my first formal introduction to instruments, notes and the combination of the two. I can honestly say that my very first music teacher inspired me. To this day when I hear certain songs I am immediately transported to a wonderful, musical place. Music is essential for our well being, it expresses our emotions, lets us play out our blues on a saxophone, follow the flight of a bee on the piano and sing when we want to praise. Without music education children lose the very basic foundation of our ancestors as so many songs tell a story. Music teaches us many things, math, the addition and subtraction of notes to form a piece. Shall children not know a bridge, or G Clef, a note, a score. If we take one minute to even think of the word music we realize what an important role it plays in our lives and that of our children, from the first lullaby to taps at a funeral our lives are not complete without it. I will forever be grateful for my music education, it lifts my soul, brings me peace, makes me happy and is culturally recognized by the most advanced society's as a must for proper upbringing. Every child deserves the right to be musically educated and have their lives enhanced as mine has been.

### **Miguel Mateo**

Occupation: Student

From: West Scranton HS, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is an important part of my life. It impacts me daily and it does not stop in the classroom. It has disciplined me and makes me strive for the highest. I practice daily to make sure I will achieve my goals. This also transfers to my other classes. I never settle for less with my grades. I make sure I study until I am satisfied. It also makes me confident in what I do. Music education has made me realize what my strength and weaknesses are, but knowing my strengths allows me to carry myself with confidence. Also, knowing my weaknesses allows me to work them and make them strengths.

### **Amy**

Occupation: Student

From: Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my stress relief. There is no better feeling for me than picking up my instrument and playing my heart out. But I wouldn't be here without the care and guidance of all of my instructors and directors over the years. They have opened my eyes to the world of music and taught me what playing a piece is truly supposed to feel like. I feel that I give a little piece of myself to the audience with each performance, and I hope that little bit reaches out to someone. I hope it sparks an interest and earned dedication. Getting a well-rounded musical education has helped me overcome many personal obstacles, especially self satisfaction. Because I have been trained so well, I can work through a difficult passage and play well it in front of peers. This fulfills the desire for approval, knowing that I can play something with such a passion that others can never master. I am proud to be. Student musician, and I hope to one day be at the professional level. Music has pulled me out of my comfort zone for the best, and I live to share my music with anyone who will listen.

### **Kelly Henderson**

Occupation: Para Professional

From: Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is such a huge part of life can you name one celebration or joyful time on life when music is not a part of it. When kids sing and dance it gives them confidence to be social and join in.

### **Liz Rudolfi**

Occupation: Speech and Language Therapist

From: Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education taught me a secondary way to express feelings and emotions. It's a chance for students to relate to things in ways they can't in other classrooms. In my current position, I have found so many of my autistic support students relate to and show an interest in music, in ways they can't express and don't express to anything else. So many children today don't have the privilege of being exposed to all the world has to offer. The least we could do is offer music education in our schools.

### **Amy**

Occupation: Student

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to express myself in a way words cannot describe. Being part of and putting my all into an ensemble is the definition of passion - a passion I didn't know I had prior to joining my school's music program. Without music and the experiences it has given me, I would not be the person I am today.

### **Bekkah Lucas**

Occupation: Student

From: Scranton, Lackawanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Musical education has taught me how to use music as a coping skill for my depression and with the help of my teacher and the musicians I have met I have had a family that loves me like I love them. My grammar may not be great or even perfect by any chance but my point should come across. In Scranton high school here isn't much funding it much attention to the music department and it is more important than sports or any athletic thing, good get exercise but what about exercise for your brain or for you muscles and your heart and attention. Music gives you every sort of "work out" you could ever want. It builds up your memory attention and mood and there are many physical things that go into playing or singing and learning about music. Music is in our daily lives and it is so important and not many "school directors or principals" realize that. The second we need a new giant blow up helmet we can buy it and how much did it cost? A few thousand. But the years we have been running out of instruments do to climate changes in the room, lack of space, broken instruments because of how old they are, we are not even acknowledged, music is the meaning of my life and poor or rich music has had a great impact on me as well as the teacher and students I have worked with.

## **LANCASTER COUNTY**

### **Jessica Cataldi**

Occupation: Pretzel Sampler

From: Adamstown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

People weren't always there for me at my lowest points. Music always was there for me at those dark moments.

### **Tracy Splain**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Columbia, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have to admit, I was not the strongest student growing up. My focus was on sports and socialization. Courses, such as music, art, and physical education, were what kept me interested in school. Without them, I would have been lost in education and, I believe, would not have grown up to be a teacher. Music has brought joy to my life in general. I listen to it all the time and love a variety of genres. I credit music teachers and my parents for fostering that love. As a teacher, occasionally playing music in my classroom allows our class to make connections and have something in common with someone we may not otherwise have had. The students enjoy it and tend to be more focused on their work with an added bonus of working more quietly because they want to hear the music. It's funny how a song can trigger students who typically are quiet, to share stories they associate with it which sometimes leads to an idea for writing a story or making a social connection with another student in the classroom. I'm always impressed when a student who rarely shares in class is one of the first to request a certain song be played. Another benefit to music education is watching so many students connect to school through extra curricular opportunities presented to them through music such as chorus, band, jazz band, swing singers, etc. Opportunities such as these are how people make friends and practice communication and collaborative skills. The benefits of music education are endless which is why it is so important to continue to provide these courses in our educational system.

### **Anna Clemens**

Occupation: Student

From: Conestoga Valley HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education IS my life. Both of my parents instilled a love of music in me by teaching me throughout my childhood. I always participated in community choirs that taught me skills and nuances of musicianship.

Music will continue to be a large part of my life even after I finish HS. It will be a continual source of joy and peace in my daily living.

### **Emily Ho**

Occupation: Student

From: Conestoga Valley HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Being involved in music has offered me opportunities that I never thought possible. I made lifelong friends, participated in multiple ensembles, learned leadership skills in marching band, and found my voice as the lead in our school musical. Music has become my life's focus, and I am planning to major in music education after graduating.

### **Yoomi Jung**

Occupation: Student

From: Conestoga Valley HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I met some of my best friends through music and have acquired leadership skills based on my experience in my HS orchestra. Through music I have learned how to balance my schedule, practice using self-discipline, and express myself through a different medium.

### **Todd Skelton**

Occupation: Student

From: Conestoga Valley HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted me in so many ways. It all started when I choose to play the clarinet in 4th grade. That was my starting point for my passion of music. I continued through middle school where I picked up another instrument, the bass guitar. Then when I entered HS my passion for music grew even more when I met people with similar interests. I remember during my sophomore year my band director introduced me to the Contra-Alto Clarinet and asked me if I would like to try out for District Band on it. I happened to be very successful on this instrument and managed to make it all the way to All-State Band and played in the Wind Ensemble. For junior year i began to play the Bass Clarinet and have been playing that since. I knew music was going to be my career for after college and am looking forward to learning new things related to music in the future.

### **Ashlyn Frederick**

Occupation: Student

From: Denver, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in various ways. It has helped me cope through tough times. When I have been down, music has helped to pick me back up. It has helped me make new friends. It has been an overall fun experience for me. Many people think that music education is not needed in schools. Without music, there would be no creativity in schools. People like us wouldn't be able to express themselves. I would not be where I am today without music.

### **Matthew Mitchell**

Occupation: College Student

From: Denver, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to open new doors into the world and despite the fact that I have not gone into a music-related field, I am still able to help with band at my high school and have been able to learn about leadership and general education through my various musical teachers.

### **Carrie Sensenig**

Occupation: College Student  
From: Denver, Lancaster County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As an athlete music education has made me a more well rounded person. Whenever there is a reference to dance, music, or singing I think back to all the music things I was involved in at my high school and remember what it was all about. I now appreciate music, especially theater. I participated in my high schools musicals and they were so much fun and took time and effort to perform a show. Now when I see a show I think, "this took a lot of work for that dance, song or those costumes." Overall, music education has made me a more well rounded and cultured person of society.

### **Howard Boots**

Occupation: Instrumental Music Educator  
From: East Earl, Lancaster County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since starting to sing and play clarinet in elementary school, music education is the number one place where I learned all the important life skills like working as a team, self critique, how to truly listen, discipline and how to get along with others. But music education also opened a world of emotions, ideas and opportunities to me that I cannot even fathom what living in the world would've been like these last 49 years without it. I always did well in school, but my heart was attached to learning and experience through music. It was the door that truly opened for me and as a music educator, I hope to open that door for many others.

### **Nancy Brosius**

Occupation: Food Service Manager  
From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My son has benefited many ways from music education. I know it definitely has influenced his grades in school for the better. As he started music lessons in 3rd grade, and is now a junior in high school, he still enjoys playing the trumpet! It also has given him a chance to make many friends with persons of like interest. He enjoys playing in the band and I have seen him growing into a responsible young adult. The practice needed to play in the band and other musical events teaches discipline which will carry him throughout his life. Overall music education is an important part of life and supplies enjoyment for many persons. It is an important part of the arts and the quality of life.

### **Michael Checco**

Occupation: Music Teacher  
From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

To say that music education has impacted my life greatly would be an understatement. From my childhood, I have found joy making music. Music has been for me a sojourn from the stresses of everyday life, a way to explore and express emotion, and a rigorous and challenging discipline that demands my constant growth. It has become my life's work to provide for my students an opportunity to glimpse the magic of music that so captivated me. When I think about how I got to where I am today, many of the most influential role models in my life have been music educators. Christine Jordanoff, Sam Hazo, Victor Rislow, Gaelan Deibler, Jeff Fahnestock, Cyril Stretansky, Linda Tedford, Will Schmid, Sowah Mensah. These are the names of people that have had a profound effect on my life, and they inspire me everyday to be my best, so that just maybe, I can change a life they way they changed mine.

### **Mary Checco**

Occupation: Elementary Music Teacher  
From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted every part of my life for as long as I can remember. Trying to find the words that define what it means to me is very difficult because it is just who I am. To me...Music is Family. It is something that

has followed me through my life's journey. It brings me back to my childhood and singing in chorus and learning to play the flute. It is hearing a song and finding myself in a memory from high school, college or when my children were babies. It is the sense of peace and connection I feel when I sing with others. Music has opened so many doors for me personally and professionally. It continues to bring amazing people into my life and with it a sense of daily drive and purpose as a Music Educator. My musical family grows every school year as I am continually inspired by the young musicians that I have the honor of teaching. It is the soundtrack of my life.

### **Dani Colona**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me a passion. By being a part of the classroom as a student, I now want to give back to the community as a music teacher. I don't care where, I don't care how, I want to be the same inspiration that my music teachers were to me.

### **Tamantha Drexel**

Occupation: Student of Music Therapy

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Had it not been for music education, I would not have been able to realize my passion into my future career. Had it not been for music education, I would have done poorly in school, with it not holding any interest to me whatsoever. The only reason I did well in school is so I could prove that I belonged in the music program. Sports were not my thing in school. It also allowed me to cope with emotions that I didn't otherwise know how to handle at a young age. Even now, though I know how to properly handle myself, when words cannot express my emotions, I turn to music. I use it to communicate my feelings because I lack the words to do so. When my emotions are extreme, I turn to music to calm myself. Music helped me develop emotionally and mentally, as well as intellectually and socially. I was able to make friends in the music department, and through them I was able to make friends outside of it. Before coming to E-town, I lived in Lebanon county. The school district I was in wasn't conducive environment for an introverted and gifted child to make friends in. I was constantly excluded, always labeled the trouble child because I was always bored in class. Music gave me structure and something to work at because it truly challenged me at a level that my studies could not. From there I blossomed and took responsibility for myself and was able to become a functioning member of society, albeit partially because I'm still in college. I am what my music department made, and I still aim to make my band directors proud, all three. I love my elementary, high school, and college directors, and I will not allow myself to disappoint them on purpose.

### **Nicole F**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in so many ways. Ever since I was little, I have loved music and I would sing all the time. I started piano and flute in elementary school, and I am so thankful that I did. Music is my passion and without it, my life would not be filled with the same joy that fills it today. I love music so much, that I will be pursuing a career in music education. In today's day and age though, this is an extremely risky move. However, it is what I love to do and it is the only thing I can see myself doing for the rest of my life. I hope that our state can set an example for others by investing in music education because like the saying goes, "life without music would B flat".

### **Alyssa Lancaster**

Occupation: Chemist

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music opportunities provide many social and networking activities for students in the schools. It helped us to make friends, to work as part of something bigger than ourselves, to be passionately pursuing an art form that we may continue to pursue as we go forward in life. Music helps us to grow on our own and watch ourselves improve at something. It helps us to embrace creativity in a way that schools generally do not teach. We are able to strive to be excellent in a way that isn't standardized or truly graded. Even though not all of us are pursuing careers in music, being a part of music programs in the school are vital to shaping who we have become today. I wouldn't be the same person I am today if it weren't for high school marching band.

### **Hannah Orth**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

If music is in a student's life, that is pretty much the only thing. When you become a music kid it opens so many doors for you. It's tough to say that music makes you smarter but there is proof to back up that it does help you comprehend and learn things more efficiently. Something about being able to read music, multi task, and concentrate just helps you do better in school. In my school, around 33 out of 35 ish students who took state test and placed proficient were music students. Around three quarters of those who placed advanced were also music students. Music in general- the friends, the learning, the comprehension of any things- helps the mind function smoother. In fifth grade we had mandatory chorus. Every school in the district made all fifth graders come together and put on a concert for the parents at the end of the year. I believe that this helped a lot of kids, including me, decide if music was something they wanted to do. Today they don't have this program anymore and I think it is a real bummer because now kids have to decide whether or not to do it rather than having to try it and finding out they like it. I know if I had quit music in middle school, I wouldn't be who I am today. Music brings along new opportunities, new friends. It connects with people who can bring great things to your life. Marching band brought festivals that had colleges to play with and you could talk to them and find out what college music is about. I know it's kind of a broad thing to say but I think music just makes you an overall better person. I don't think I would be in the higher level classes I am in now if I hadn't had music to stretch my thinking. I know I wouldn't have the relationships I have with people now if it hadn't been for Music. Music for me is just like a sport to someone else. It's a place to better me and meet new people. But why does a sport get more attention than band or orchestra? They do the same things for people and have similar opportunities. Music is everything to some people. I have a friend who just joined this year and told me that she can't wait for next season and wonders why she had quit in middle school. To sum it up, music brings along knowledge, new relationships, and opportunities that could take you many places. I believe music should be funded more so that more kids can feel the happiness I get from seeing your friends (or instrument) every day and being able to say that they are in the drum line or they play the violin and are fantastic.

### **Joellen Placeway**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I believe that music has been invaluable in shaping my life. Through the influence of my mother I began taking music lessons when I was four years of age. Throughout elementary, middle and high school the discipline that music developed in me clearly influenced every area of my life. The pure joy of playing music has been reflected in my positive outlook on life. The opportunities that being a musician opens up are endless, and continue on throughout younger years as well as later in life. I would be a very different person today if I had not been able to experience the many facets of music. As a music teacher I see the academic, social and emotional benefit that being involved in a music program affords young students and feel that strong school music training opens up wonderful horizons to them. How has music education impacted my

life? My life has been impacted in every conceivable way and that impact has been passed along to thousands of music students throughout a joyful career in music performance and education.

### **David Wilson**

Occupation: Geologist

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The music programs at the Elizabethtown Area School District have been very beneficial for both my daughter and my son. In general the kids who are involved in the music programs (band, orchestra, jazz band, and chorus) tend to be better students overall, and also better behaved students, due to the positive influences and discipline related to studying a musical instrument. The music programs have certainly been a positive influence on my children's education. There is more to education than just teaching to the standardized tests. We need to be doing everything we can to expand educational opportunities, and I believe that there are sufficient resources available within the State of Pennsylvania to do that, it is a matter of making our educational system a priority, instead of looking at it as a place to make cuts in the budget.

### **David**

Occupation: Cook

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has helped me develop my imagination, creativity and intelligence. Without my education in music, I wouldn't have had the encouragement in pursuing my passions in life. Also, I wouldn't have the friends that helped me throughout my life.

### **Vicky**

Occupation: Student - Music Education Major

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education gave me a way to express myself when I could not find the words. It has helped me find a place to belong to, and a group of friends I have bonded with through my music classes. Music Education is such a huge part of my past that I have decided to make it my focus for the future. I hope to become a music teacher and to educate and inspire my future students the way my past music educators have inspired me.

### **Aaron Becker**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown Area HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to easily interact with other like-minded musicians. If there wasn't music education in schools, I would have much less music and orchestra related opportunities, and I think my life would be much more 'dry'.

### **Nicole Faiola**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown Area HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life because it made me love music.

### **Karlee Grudi**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown Area HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has helped me grow as a person. Singing and playing piano helps me relax when I am overwhelmed and always brightens my mood. I am so grateful for my music education because it gives me opportunities

to connect with other students and share the beauty of music with them. It also gives me more chances to share beautiful messages and music with the world.

### **Erin Marshall**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown Area HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my pride and joy. I always tried to do sports, but I was not very good. Then, in 3rd grade, I tried the violin, and then I found my niche. Now, music is my escape and is the network that I use to excel in and build notoriety from the community. Not only has music taught me a life-long skill that I will always have, but I have met many people who I view as mentors, and I have made many connections in the music world. Now, I feel confident enough that I am majoring in music education in college thanks to the people who motivated me to get up when I fall and be the best musician that I can be.

### **Dean McBride**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown Area HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has changed my life forever.

### **Guenaelle Moerth**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown Area HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life a lot because I've been playing and singing music since I was a little child with my family and friends. I could not live without music in my life and I am thinking about majoring in music.

### **Stacie Savoca**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown Area HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Through my participation in music I have developed skills and friendships that will always remain a significant part of my life. Creating music with my friends and peers brings me happiness and gives me an outlet to express myself.

### **Ethan Schneider**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown Area HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I love to play viola. I have been playing for 7.5 years.

### **Reuben Zeiset**

Occupation: Student

From: Elizabethtown Area HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a violist for the past nine and a half years, I have experienced many great performances and met so many wonderful people, both of which have shaped me greatly. Deciding to start playing the viola in third grade has exposed me to wonderful music and has allowed me to express myself in countless ways. Practicing has developed a strong work ethic and performing has taught me how to collaborate with others. Music has helped me grow as a leader, a performer and ultimately, as a human being. Being a musician has shaped me into who I am today; a person prepared to enter the world with a well-rounded view and the ability to collaborate with others.

### **Cristin Chon**

Occupation: Student

From: Ephrata HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has made my life tiring and yet vibrant. I have missed many events and parties because of my music, but it gives me experiences that I would not have gotten without music. I first started piano when I was five years old after hearing my older sister play small melodies on the keys. I was amazed and decided to play also. Little did I know the amount of work and practice I would need to play as my teacher did. Then I started viola in third grade as most people do. Playing the viola has allowed me to teach people about the warm tone of the viola. I was so happy to be able to improve at first...then missing so many parties and play dates took their toll. I missed out on many chances to be social, but learned I could be social with kids in chamber orchestras. People often ask me why I give so much to playing. It is because I believe in giving your all in something you love to give to others. Music has allowed me to see that practice and devoting a lot I don't regret playing the piano or the viola. In fact, I believe music has shaped my life, allowing me to grow with the wonderful art of music.

### **Ethan Fasnacht**

Occupation: Student

From: Ephrata HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I believe that it has impacted my life positively. It has helped me get through HS and is a lot of fun. I believe that it is a sort of escape from the real world and allows me to go on this really fun exploration towards enhancing my musical career. It has always helped me through difficult times and it has a special spot in my heart.

### **Jonathan Lausch**

Occupation: Student

From: Ephrata HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has helped in every part of my life, whether it's school or anytime outside of school, music is probably involved in what I'm doing or what I'm thinking about. Not only is it fun, but for me, music is a way of expressing emotions that could never be explained verbally. I don't know exactly what emotions or how they could ever be described, but I know because I learned how to play an instrument, I can explain those emotions by playing an instrument.

### **Molly McDyer**

Occupation: Student

From: Ephrata HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a young child, my parents went through a devastating divorce that tore my whole family apart. In need of a creative outlet, I took up piano lessons. At my private school, I began playing at concerts and accompanying my school's plays and musicals. My music teacher told me to take up an instrument, which is how I started playing string bass. This creative outlet has helped me get through so many personal hardships. Compassionate music teachers, caring directors, encouragement from the school and from the music department, and much more has helped me grow and mature in my knowledge of music and has helped me through so much. Music education is the kind of knowledge I will cherish for the rest of my days. Preparing for auditions, practicing for concerts, and rehearsing for big events has consumed most if not all of my time, and I love every minute of it. It aids in my release of stress and anxiety and has been a huge part of my life. My music teachers have become my family and my fellow musicians have become like brothers and sisters. Seeing them at festivals and auditions is like a family reunion and it always brings a smile to my face. Because of music education, I will forever have amazing memories and cherish my time spent practicing and playing for the rest of my days.

### **Stefan Wiebe**

Occupation: Student

From: Ephrata HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I believe that music education has been one of the most important factors in my life, both in and out of school. Music builds and strengthens vital skills and attributes in everyone who commits time to their instrument or voice, and having music education in my life has made a noticeably significant impact. First of all, being dedicated to learning to master an instrument over the course of many school years and beyond is a feat and personality builder in and of itself. Such a long, focused goal teaches dedication and hard work; mastery of an instrument, unlike mastery of a section of a class for a test, is never completed, but can always be improved upon. While some people can do very well in school and not have to put much work in because they learn all of the concepts in class, it is very different in music. It's not a once and done deal. Practicing will always allow you to develop your skills; even the professionals who we all aspire to match practice every day because they pursue the unattainable: perfection. I know that I first started practicing my trombone regularly and with a purpose in eighth grade. It was my first year auditioning for district band, so after all the practice paid off, I fervently practiced the district music to get ready for the festival. The same year I was playing in my HS jazz band, and the expectation (although not met by everyone all of the time) was three hours each week. I never missed a day of practice and always had my time in, and this experience I am certain helped me immeasurably both musically and otherwise. Music also helps strengthen academic subjects, especially math and science. In addition to teaching the importance of hard work in relation to study skills, what one needs to know to be an adept musician helps them in many other subjects as well. Music theory helps math and science, acoustics also plays into physics, listening and playing as a responsive ensemble can strengthen communication skills, and music history relates to everything else happening during past times. Studies have repeatedly given undisputable evidence of the idea that students who are involved in music in schools consistently perform better on standardized tests. I can relate to this theory of music improving academic achievement as I do well in my many advanced courses, so I am absolutely behind the idea that music makes people into better learners. Music education has also helped me personally by connecting me with other like-minded people. Students involved in music are those who actually want to practice and improve rather than just getting by with the least amount of work. Having music in my life has truly made me realize the value of hard work and what it can lead to. I know, unquestionably, that music education has played a major role in shaping me into the well-rounded person who I am today.

### **Joseph Wheeler**

Occupation: Student

From: Ephrata Senior HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been a very important part of my life because it has helped lead me down a path of leadership and hard work. Being a part of several ensembles has not only helped me learn to manage my time effectively, but I also feel that music education has helped me, in a way, to be able to work with others. I have been able to use the leadership skills I acquired in marching band in other settings such as church and other school activities. Music education is unlike any other type of education in that it helps you learn how to work with others. You also have to put your attention to the teacher or director, while you also have to listen to yourself and others. Without our music program I would probably be a "nobody-knowing-nothing" to all the other people around me. I have a sense of pride and joy being a musician, and I have all my directors, family, and friends to thank for pushing me to be the person that I am today.

### **Adam Fellenbaum**

Occupation: Student

From: Garden Spot HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has taught me leadership, discipline, gave me confidence, made me friends, helped me to remain calm under pressure, and given me something to be passionate about.

### **Joshua Houck**

Occupation: Student

From: Garden Spot HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In my life, music is one of the greatest and largest parts. I listen to music everyday, am in chorus, vocal ensemble, and am in our school theatre group. Music has changed my life by being an escape from my daily struggles. If I am feeling down, I will just put headphones in, listen to some tunes, and all will be okay for that time. I sing to express my feelings and just have fun. Singing and playing music is one of the greatest joys in my daily life, and without it, I don't know what I would do. Music education helps me by provided that very outlet I need. School takes up 7 hours of my day, but at least a part of it will be doing what I love most: performing music. Music education is a needed program in all schools, because it provides a way of fun and joy in musical people. Not all people are athletic, and due to that, us music kids need an outlet, just as athletic kids need practice and games. It is a shame to see that music programs continue to be shut down and funded less and less. Without music education in my life, I have no idea how I would get through the daily grind. Music and music education is a needed time in school, and I would hate to see it get taken out.

### **Danielle Hope Abrom**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. For one, it has allowed me to appreciate and understand hard work. Music has taught me to be persistent to learn pieces, and I am able to appreciate the outcome of putting in a lot of effort. People are able to receive a 90% on a math test, and be above average. However, if an individual only played or sang 90% of the notes right, it wouldn't sound nice. Music provides inspiration to students to achieve something meaningful and also higher than 'average'. Learning music has given me an opportunity to bring the intellectual and artistic thinking to different aspects of my life. Music develops a sense of creativity in students, which was very important for me. Without music, life would be a very static environment. Music also connects different environments and schools together. With something as special as music in common with another student, there is already a stronger bond between the individuals. I have found this to be very true for myself. Music education has impacted my life so much that I wouldn't be able to live without music today.

### **Allegra Banks**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music education, I would not be the cellist/trombonist I am today. I could not have learned these instruments without the help of my school's music department. Music has taught me diligence, persistence, self discipline, and many other valuable life lessons and skills. In the darkest times of my life, music has been there for me and has helped me pull through. My music teachers have provided me with so many opportunities, such as being able to participate in PMEA festivals. I am very thankful for them, and I hope to someday become a music teacher in order to pass on this gift.

### **Madeline Bechtel**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has provided me with the tools and opportunities to strive for excellence; both in my skill set, and in my every day life. Such opportunities have connected me with a network of similar people who, had I not involved myself in these activities, I would have struggled to find by my own means. Although I am not pursuing music as a career, the experiences it has given me throughout my education has set me up for a much brighter, more successful future.

### **Madison Cramer**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a part of my life from an early age, although at that time it was more likely to take the form of a lullaby than a concerto. By elementary school I already expressed interest in music, composing simple tunes on the piano and always looking forward to music class. In sixth grade, when I began taking formal voice lessons, I realized that music was not just a passing interest, but a passion. I still love finding out more about technique and theory, which I could never do without my wonderful and talented teachers. The encouragement they give in all of my endeavors, musical or otherwise, is priceless. The knowledge they've given me has provided me with both a creative outlet and a means of creating something beautiful. In addition to the knowledge I've gained from music education, I've made numerous friends through my musical endeavors whom I never would have connected with otherwise. Most importantly, however, music education has given me the skill to understand and express human emotions in a way that uniquely affects countless lives, and for that I am grateful.

### **Christopher Lynch**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is something one should never have to live without. When I am upset or angry, it calms me down and causes me to become happy again. It is something that fills my spirits and makes me feel free. I can tell a story, and cause other people to experience different emotions. I can create a world that is entirely my own. Music is something so special and unique, that without it, the world would be a boring, monotone, melancholy place. One of which I would not want to be a part of. Because of Music Education in my school, I can be myself, and let others be themselves with me. It is a magical thing!

### **Rachel Raboin**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is a combination of different types of education morphed into a meaningful class. Music is math, music is science, and music is literature. It has meaning, it has truth, and it has mystery. Music education has impacted my life because it is an outlet for my thoughts during the school day when classes can be boring or put you in a lull. It excites, depresses, and moves people in ways that no other thing in the world can. Music education is not just an average education, it is an education that lasts a lifetime no matter what path of life I chose to take.

### **Kylee Shaffer**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

To me, music is my drug. My outlet. Its how I relieve all the stress and anxiety of the world I live in. Music education has not only helped me with my personal growth in singing and performing, but has also opened my eyes to life. It is beautiful to listen to a song that has great lyrics and a good catchy tune. It is even more beautiful to hear the emotions of the composer or singer through the music and/or lyrics. The ability to convey emotions and thoughts through the art of music is just breathtaking. I am so blessed to be a part of such a supporting community of the arts and for that I am forever grateful. Music education is so important in our society. Some individuals find their peace in doing sports. I applaud them because I do play sports but I don't reach the same satisfaction I do when I sing music. Music to me is my everything. Without it, I would not be who I am today. I would not be able to express myself the way that I need to every single day. Music has given me life and a reason to be alive.

### **Marissa Sterner**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life right from the beginning. My dad is a music teacher and my mom taught music as well. We always sang as a family through Christmas Eve services, musicals, and concerts. I don't know what I would do without music.

### **Katherine Weaver**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Of all the subjects I am taught in school, music has easily been one of the most impactful on my life, both in and outside of the classroom. While I enjoy practicing music on my own time, I am thoroughly grateful to be able to partake in it during the school day with my fellow students and under the direction of some incredible teachers. Amidst the methodical, logic-driven classes I'm enrolled in, my orchestra and chorus periods are truly a welcome respite. Additionally, music education, specifically PMEA and its subsidiary, the Lancaster-Lebanon Music Educators Association, has provided me with opportunities for outside performances I wouldn't have been able to get anywhere else. To be able to sing and play with students from other schools both near and far is an invaluable experience; even better is getting to do so under the direction of some of the most esteemed music educators on the university level. These experiences are ones which I value at every festival I attend, and I know that I'd never get to know what it is like if not for the superb institution that is music education.

### **Willem Blakely**

Occupation: Student

From: J.P. McCaskey HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has had a profoundly positive impact on my life. It makes going to school bearable. I look forward everyday to being able to partake in my passion. It has improved my discipline, character and ability to focus.

### **Martha Boben**

Occupation: Student

From: J.P. McCaskey HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has greatly inspired me and been a critical part of my HS experience.

### **Logan Santiago**

Occupation: Student

From: J.P. McCaskey HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has greatly impacted my life. Performing in ensembles in school has helped me develop many skills that I will use in everything that I do. I was lucky to have some amazing teachers at my school that have inspired me to become a music educator myself. I think that music education is extremely important because it teaches students to work together in an ensemble, becoming part of something bigger than themselves. It also teaches responsibility, accountability, and discipline. In an ensemble, every person needs to be fully committed. Being in a part of an ensemble makes a student to feel that they are needed. Music teachers do a lot more than just teach people how to play instruments. They allow students to express themselves while learning many valuable life skills and I feel that music education has just as much, if not more, value as any subject.

### **Ashley Pearson**

Occupation: Student

From: Lampeter-Strasburg HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a huge impact on my life! It's helped me to become a more rounded person. It's been wonderful being able to meet other people that share the same love for music. Getting to go through school with these friends has been a true blessing! Music is something I enjoy, and a time where I can shine. I look forward to orchestra because it's a time where I can connect with others and just enjoy playing music. Being involved in the pit orchestra for the musicals has been wonderful because I'm surrounded by other dedicated musicians. I don't know where I would be without music education. It has played a huge part in my life!

### **Laurie Astree**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Lancaster, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education is my life. Because of the wonderful experiences I had as a student in band and chorus, I decided to pursue it as a career. Because of music I've learned perseverance, teamwork, hard work and many other qualities that you hope today's young people will have. I've met people and had relationships that have lasted my whole life. As an adult I am a member of two jazz bands on saxophone, and play bassoon in several community bands and a wind quintet. I also teach general music and elementary band at my job, which is something that I love.

### **Melody Cliff**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Lancaster, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by providing an outlet for my creativity and expression. Throughout my formative years, I looked forward to my music classes and violin lessons in school because they were so different from my other classes and allowed me to engage my artistic side. Music is still a large part of my life as now I get to share this passion with students. Teaching string lessons and orchestras at the middle and high school level is both challenging and rewarding every day. I am often amazed at how certain students "come alive" when playing their instrument and find their voice. Music is essential for educating the whole student.

### **Terry C. Griggs**

Occupation: Retired

From: Lancaster, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Had it not been for music education, my father would not have made a career playing stand up Bass, and Violin in the big bands, of the 40's 50's and 60's. Where would I have been if not for his life's desire to create, would probably be in some corn field picking corn, or slopping the hogs. There is so much more to life, than Athletics, that some School Boards put so much emphasis on. After High school, maybe one or two athletes move on to a career in some form of athletics, but teach children music, to perform, to create, to think for themselves, they have the potential to do great things in life, and to develop a career that moves them forward if life's works.

### **Kevin McCandless**

Occupation: Project Manager

From: Lancaster, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Our daughter was very involved in the music programs in school, from elementary through high school. She participated in the High School marching band, concert band, orchestra, vocal ensemble, and chamber choir.

She also performed in the musicals all four years of high school and all three years of middle school. The School District of Lancaster has an amazing music program and outstanding music educators. They had a profound influence on our daughter's educational experience and it was a blessing to be able to share in her love of music as a volunteer for the music booster organization. There is such a sense of community and belonging for the music students! Our daughter is now in her second year at The University of the Arts as a voice performance major, with a minor in Musical Theater, pursuing her passion for music. There is no doubt in my mind that the success she is enjoying in college today is in no small part due to education she received participating in music in Elementary School, Middle School and High School. As parents, we are very grateful for all the dedicated educators our daughter had through the years, especially those in the music department.

### **Hollie Mendenhall**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Lancaster, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my life. It is my livelihood, my career, my art, my expression, my emotions, my sanity. It calms me down, lifts me up, refreshes me, and accompanies my life. Every day I sing, dance, and make music. I am lucky enough that I get to pass my love of music on to my students. My life without music would be dull, lifeless, monotonous. Joyless. I have a song for every subject and occasion. It motivates me; it focuses me. I recognize beauty in music. I recognize pain and suffering in music. Music is my life. Music feeds my soul. Music allows me to live fully.

### **Whitney Turnbull-Huggins**

Occupation: Cashier/ Full time college student

From: Lancaster, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was younger, I used to hate practicing and playing my clarinet. As I got older, I got better and began to love practicing and learning new songs. Eventually I joined marching band, pit, and other music groups in and out of school. Music has given me passion and meaning in life. It has also taught me how to manage my time and to be persistent when trying to learn new things. Music has given me the opportunity to meet new people and expand my horizons. Everyone needs music in their lives. "Music is the great uniter. An incredible force. Something that people who differ on everything and anything else can have in common." — Sarah Dessen

### **James**

Occupation: CAD/BIM Technician

From: Lancaster, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me an appreciation for all genres of music and it gave me a foundation of music theory to build upon throughout the years. It allowed me to now lead worship through music at our church. I am not doing music professionally, but it has given me the ability to be able to understand enough to learn different instruments which has given me an outlet for freedom of expression, stress relief and the worship and praise of our Creator.

### **Liz**

Occupation: Media

From: Lancaster, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It set me up for a future.

### **Bailey MacDowell**

Occupation: Student

From: Lancaster Country Day School, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since I was little, I have immensely enjoyed playing and listening to music. When my sister began taking piano lessons, I watched her so intently that I began taking lessons myself when I was three years old.

Throughout elementary school, music was always my favorite class and I loved that it allowed me to interact with people in different ways. In fourth grade, we had the chance to choose a band or orchestra instrument so that we could start developing our skills early on. As soon as I picked up the viola, I knew I wanted to play it; I had been listening to movie soundtracks and other orchestral scores around my house for years. When I made the move to my current school, I had the chance to interact with wonderful teachers that encouraged me to participate in different competitions and chances to perform in and out of school. I love the opportunity to participate in different orchestral groups because I enjoy being surrounded with other students that are also so serious about making music. Being in an orchestra setting allows myself and other students around me to face new challenges and push themselves on a daily basis. I am incredibly grateful to my music instructors throughout the years for always being approachable and encouraging. Music is a truly wonderful way for students to exercise a different part of their minds and work together to create something beautiful. I sincerely hope that music programs continue to be supported in all schools so that other students are able to discover their love for music as well.

### **Matthew Bomberger**

Occupation: Student

From: Lancaster Mennonite HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It is what keeps me going every day! My life would be empty without it.

### **Conner McCall**

Occupation: Student

From: Lancaster Mennonite HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has helped me through difficult time of my life and gives me something to look forward to every day.

### **Josiah Nisly**

Occupation: Student

From: Lancaster Mennonite HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is an outlet for me during stressful times. I actually like doing music theory homework. And I love being in the musicals and bringing stories to life.

### **Tani Rene Miller**

Occupation: Orchestra Director/Strings Teacher (elementary, grades 4/5)

From: Lititz, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My first clarinet teacher and elementary school band director once called me "his greatest musical success," a title I'm proud to hold! As a somewhat shy and insecure child, playing my clarinet and singing helped me to become a more confident and expressive person. I'm a fourth generation clarinetist ... and am proud to have passed on some of my clarinet knowledge to my youngest child when he chose this wonderful instrument. I've always been an academically strong student and believe that learning to read and perform music has contributed to the development of my brain. As a girl scout, I learned many folk songs from campfire sing-alongs. I always wanted to be a music teacher but was discouraged by my parents and guidance counselor because I didn't take piano lessons. After marrying a music teacher, my husband encouraged me to go back to school to obtain music education certification in addition to my early childhood certification. This support has given me a career that I love, that enriches my life every day. I have the great privilege of nurturing

hundreds of young string players each year. As a parent, I've always supported the musical development of my two sons. My husband and I sang lullabies to them when they were infants, danced and sang at 2 a.m., played singing games, percussion instruments, and watched musical shows like Sesame Street and Mr. Rodgers Neighborhood. We supported both boys when it came time for them to learn to play a musical instrument (French horn and clarinet). Our oldest son grew to have perfect pitch . . . something that both delighted and brought out a bit of jealousy in his music teacher parents. As an adult performer, my husband and I have bonded (and stressed out) over the years by developing a clarinet/marimba duo to play for several out-door family weddings; our music blended with the sounds of Pine Creek and Gamble Run. While our youngest chose to discontinue band after middle school (much to the chagrin of his parents), we've gotten to bond with him through his iTunes' discoveries. This young college student now discovers obscure songs from all kinds of genres and shares them with us, creating wonderful opportunities for discussion. He's become a really unique and creative consumer of music. Finally, I now get to start over with my two young grandchildren. We sing, play instruments, and engage in as much musical activity as is possible. In closing, there isn't a day of my life that has no music in it. Music is part of my being, helped me to become who I am today, and has nurtured myself, my husband, children, grandchildren, and my many wonderful students. Music makes me smile and laugh on a daily basis. I am a musician, through and through. Part of me is still that skinny short clarinetist who wore glasses and who outlasted all of the other clarinet students at my elementary, junior high, and high school.

### **Maria Carvell**

Occupation: Student

From: Manheim Central HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I would not be who I am today without music education. Most importantly, it has taught me how to do what I love the most: playing the trumpet. As soon as I pick up my trumpet, all the stress leaves my body. I love being able to put my feelings into playing, and telling a story through notes on a page. The sense I get from accomplishing something, whether it's making an ensemble I didn't think I could, playing a really high note, or finally playing a piece right, cannot be beaten. Playing the trumpet has taught me how to be self-motivated. I would not be the player I am today if I hadn't learned how to lock myself in my room and practice for over an hour every day and enjoy doing it. The friends I have made through playing with different ensembles are the best friends in the world. They understand music like I do, and help me through many problems. I have learned many valuable things through festivals. Each new guest conductor brings something different to the ensemble. I learn many different things and gain new perspectives by listening to what they have to say. I have grown as a player due to festivals because they expose me to a variety of music that I couldn't get elsewhere. Also, being able to play with other capable musicians is a learning experience in itself. Every musician is better than me at some aspect of music, so there are many things to learn simply by playing next to someone else. The competition with both myself and others at festivals really inspires me to do my best. It has taught me how to work hard and how to use my time wisely in order to gain the most practice time. School music programs are what inspired me to start my hopefully lifelong career of making music. They have provided me with a firm foundation and understanding of music that will serve as a basis for future learning. School ensembles are fun to play in. They give me something to look forward to every day. One of the most important things I've learned from school music programs is how to listen and stay focused. I have to constantly be using my ears to match tone, intonation, and articulation as well as to achieve the right balance. Playing in different sized ensembles and in different styles of music has made me a better-rounded musician. Through music education, I have learned different ways of thinking and better ways to approach problems.

### **Malinda Heisey**

Occupation: Student

From: Manheim Central HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Through the duration of my lifetime, music has had a tremendous impact on me as an individual and continues to mold me into the person that I am today. Beginning in third grade, my mother instructed me in

how to play the piano, learn note names, rhythms, and other simple music skills. These beginner lessons gave me a firm foundation upon which I would build later. I also auditioned and became a member of the Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster. Now as a senior in HS, I am still a member of the choir and enjoy serving as a section leader for the altos. This choir has impacted my life especially during my middle and HS years because not only did I enhance my music skills, but I was able to participate in local tours and out of state trips to Virginia, New York, and even abroad to Germany. In fourth grade I began weekly violin lessons with a private teacher. My desire to continue advancing my violin playing skills has continued through my HS career, even though I do not intend to pursue it as a career. In middle school, I prepared an audition solo and was selected to play as a member of the Lancaster County Junior Orchestra. This experience granted me the opportunity to play with other peers and learn how to play in a group of musicians, rather than by myself. Transitioning into the HS as a freshman began a completely new chapter in the way that music has impacted my life. As a freshman, I began playing violin in my HS orchestra, and enjoyed connecting and forming relationships with other students with whom I shared a similar interest in the enjoyment of creating music. As a senior, I enjoy the privilege of serving as concert mistress. This has allowed me to use my leadership skills and assist other students reach their maximum potential. I prepared a solo piece and competed with 80 other violin players in Lancaster County and was selected to participate in County Orchestra. I also made it into County Orchestra my sophomore and senior years, and Sinfonietta, an even more select ensemble my junior year. In my junior year, I auditioned and was selected to participate in District and Regional Orchestras. I also participated in Lebanon Valley College Honors Orchestra and served as a Violin II section leader during my senior year. In addition to participating in Orchestra Festivals, I also take part in String Ensemble with my HS which has given me the opportunity to provide music in venues in my community including nursing homes, café's, and a hardware store. I have also been able to use my talent to lead worship in my church through playing the piano and violin on Praise Team. Through my involvement with vocal, piano and violin performance in my lifetime, I have been impacted by the beneficial lessons that I have learned due to my time commitment and diligence.

### **Erica Heisey**

Occupation: Student

From: Manheim Central HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been an important part of my life, as well as a pleasure to share with others. My friends often chuckle at the way I spontaneously hear a familiar song and diligently work to decide where I have heard it before. Some of my friends joke that I needlessly stress myself out over auditions and music festival competitions. Of course, my best friends realize that I have a love for music that makes the stress and numerous hours that I spend practicing worthwhile. For the past six years, I have benefited from private clarinet lessons. I began my first lesson as a fourth grader, and since then I have learned various skills and techniques. Daily practice and private lessons have helped me achieve a great understanding of music and the beauty it holds. I enjoy working to perfect the challenging District and Regional Band repertoire. This past summer, I began teaching clarinet lessons to my fifth grade cousin. It has been exciting to watch her improve her skills in music theory and musicality. It is encouraging when she exuberantly describes how she whizzes through the school's lesson songs for the week or when she mentions that her band director personally comments on her advancing skills. She continues to learn the importance of faithful practice, dedication, and persistence. Children have always held a special place in my heart. I am thrilled when the children I babysit eagerly ask me to sing goofy songs with them, pound a basic beat on a plastic drum, or shake a rice-filled plastic egg to the beat of music. My heart smiles when the parents thank me for teaching their children a new song. The music department at Manheim Central HS performs a concert for the first and second graders of the district every year. I am certain that an audience cannot be more enthusiastic or participative than a group of elementary children. Undoubtedly, much of the joy in I find music involves sharing it with others. Music changes lives. Whether or not it is sung or played beautifully in tune, it has the potential to elicit emotion that cannot be expressed through words. Recently, I led worship at a homeless shelter in Philadelphia. Pounding out chords to worship songs on an old, tattered piano did not appear to be any large accomplishment as a musician. However, the genuine worship the homeless people expressed was astonishing and heartwarming. I have learned and continue to learn the true fulfillment found in sharing

the gift of music with others. What better way to be a blessing than through using the musical talents God has given me?

### **Sarah Lawrence**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Mount Joy, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education taught me a love of music from a very young age. I loved learning more about singing, and throughout my elementary years, I sang everywhere I went--including the bathroom! All the way through my junior high years, I sang in choirs and loved the opportunity to learn new songs, melodies, and techniques for harmonizing. These are skills I still use, whether singing songs softly to my young daughter, or singing in collective gatherings with others, like in my local church. I am so grateful for music education in my own life.

### **Barb**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Mount Joy, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a person with ADD, music was one of the only things I can honestly say that made me feel successful in school. I related to my music teachers and was able to be a part of special singing groups that traveled. Music was also an outlet for a very verbal and sometimes physical abusive home life. I am not sure if I would be alive today had it not been for my music success. Not only was I successful, music gave me the courage to be a teacher and I now hold a masters degree. It is so important to give artistic students an outlet to express themselves, much as we allow our athletes the outlet to play a sport.

### **Jennifer Opinaldo**

Occupation: Social Worker

From: Mountville, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I started playing an instrument in 3rd grade and I still play as an adult today. I have had many music teachers for band, chorus, show choir, musicals, marching band, county band, and many others who have influenced my love of music. Music educators teach so much more than music, they teach confidence, individuality, and a sense of self. They help students to build relationships and lasting friendships. Music for me provides a sense of relaxation and enjoyment that can change my whole perspective. I have my music teachers to thank for all of the enjoyment that I get from participating in music groups.

### **Ted Jennings**

Occupation: Sales & Marketing Director

From: New Holland, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was in choir all four years of high school. Not only did this experience broaden my knowledge of music, but it contributed to developing me socially, which has been immeasurably helpful in my adult life and career. The thought of music not being part of my early childhood is inconceivable.

### **Emily Thyrum**

Occupation: Student

From: Penn Manor HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has helped me become self-disciplined and hardworking. Music is good for using the brain in ways that no other subjects in school require. Although I do not plan on entering a career in music, it will always be a major influence in my life.

### **Makayla Cacciola**

Occupation: Student

From: Pequea Valley HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a very important part of my life. I love to sing and play instruments, and having music in school has helped me to improve in these areas. I have amazing music teachers, and they have inspired me to become a better musician and a better person. Music is something that is very special to everyone, and it has the power to connect people. By participating in music in school, I have had the opportunity to travel to many new places around the country and meet new people. These experiences mean so much to me. Having music in school has also shown me what I want to do with my life. After HS I plan on going to college for music education. I am very excited about this because I cannot wait to have the opportunity to impact students' lives, just like my teachers have impacted mine. Music is something that is life changing in so many ways.

### **Gillian Good**

Occupation: Student

From: Pequea Valley HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted me in more ways than I could have ever imagined. Not only have I been challenged at festivals I have participated and by my peers at school, but I have also developed relationships that I know will last a lifetime. Music education has given me the ability to do something I love while at school, and it has helped me become a better student overall. The attributes such as leadership, dedication, teamwork, and perseverance (just to name a few) have definitely helped me in my studies, and I am a better student because of my musicianship. Having to play in a band or sing in a choir and work as one is incredibly difficult, but once you have that experience, teamwork in other areas becomes much more natural. I know I am an overall better student and citizen because of the music education I have received. Not only has music had an impact on who I am, but it has given me incredible opportunities as well. Having music in school has given me the chance to travel to places like Disney and Pittsburgh and sing at some amazing places, opportunities I would not have had elsewhere.

### **Sasha Shapiro**

Occupation: Musician/Attorney

From: Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The highlight of my high school years was playing in the Empire State Youth Orchestras. From my first rehearsal, I knew that I would always play in an orchestra. Later, I realized that I needed to play at a professional level. I now combine a freelance musical career with a full-time legal job that uses different parts of my brain, keeping me in balance.

### **Bruce Deisinger**

Occupation: Retired

From: Smoketown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education was the greatest of impact than any other subject area. While in school it kept me from either dropping out or failure. It provided me with a career in music for over 33 years. I believe that music developed skills in other areas, specifically the science skills. I find that I have great natural computer skills which is also a trait of other people with a strong music background. A lot of my doctors have spoken of having a strong music education and believe it helped develop their skills to enter the profession. I have learned music skills that I can use for the rest of my life. Today I play in three music ensembles, do solo work in church, and arrange music for sacred ensembles. It is a part of my life that has gotten me through tough times. I'm a Vietnam veteran and music has given me an avenue of healing for my PTSD and survivor's guilt. Music is therapy, emotion, critical thinking, skill builder and the list goes on.

### **Emelyn Hatch**

Occupation: Student

From: Solanco HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is the shape of my soul. It is both my life and my escape from it—it arouses me and quiets me; it reminds me that I am human and allows me transcendence from my humanity. Perhaps music is not everything to me, but it comes as close to being so as anything this world has to offer. I invest a good deal of time and mental energy into music, which proves just how important it is to me, for time and brainpower are both highly precious commodities. I devote at least one class period every day to music, and my hours after school are filled with lessons and rehearsals and auditions and festivals. If, by chance, I have time between school and symphony to breathe, I use that breath to sing. Music is my great comfort. It soothes my temper, heals my hurts, and quiets my fears. If I am angry, my cello is patient while I tear horrendous chords from its strings. If I am weary, I can play myself a lullaby on my guitar. If I cry out, I cry out in song. A practice room is my refuge, a concert hall my sanctuary, a pair of headphones my retreat from the cacophony of everyday existence. I seldom feel more spiritual than when I listen to or play a beautiful piece of music. To me, the only thing that compares to music in that regard is nature—but then, is nature not a symphony also? Birdsong, breezes, bubbling brooks—these are the sweetest melodies I know. Perhaps the most meaningful impact music has had for me is the appreciation it has instilled in me for the beauty and complexity of life, and for the wonderful musicians I have come to know over the years. Some of my closest friendships have been forged over nothing more than a shared music stand or CD, and in my experiences with music I have discovered its power of bringing people together, not only as an ensemble but also as a wonderful, mysterious collaboration of listener and performer. Music is at once highly personal and completely universal. It is my first love and one of my greatest joys—and is no less a part of me than my own heartbeat.

### **Ken Johnson**

Occupation: Architectural Senior Project Manager

From: Strasburg, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been involved in playing music for over 40 years, from age 6, for over 40 years, starting with organ and then saxophone. Throughout high school, I have enjoyed going to county, district and state bands. I have played with several different bands since high school, The Malta Band, The Sound of Roses, The Lampeter-Strasburg Community Band and Flipside and several others. I have met a wonderful group of people, which I now consider to be friends through playing music over the years. Playing music allows me a stress release from my job and it has had an impact on my son as well as he is following in my footsteps with playing the saxophone.

### **Donald Lentz**

Occupation: Real Estate Appraiser

From: Strasburg, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I love music and the sensation of playing along with other musicians in a band setting is very rewarding. In addition, it requires team effort, reading and understanding how music is written, total communication skills and interaction with others much like is necessary in the working world.

### **Amanda Black**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has taught me how hard work truly pays off. It has given me opportunities to travel and to push myself to accomplish things I never thought possible. Music is something I love to do and having music education in our schools gives me something to look forward everyday.

**Ben Bosis**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me an appreciation for choral music, made me a better choral singer and taught me that hard work can make up for having a naturally "good singing voice".

**Kayla Brooks**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life making me the vocalist I am today. It has provided me with incredible festival experiences like these sponsored by PMEA. Through these experiences both at my home school district and in festivals, I have found that I would enjoy majoring in music education next year in college. I would like to pass on my passion for music to future students.

**Andres Cedeno**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has provided me with skills that allow me to express myself both creatively and intellectually. I am certain that I will carry music with me wherever I may go in life. My appreciation of the privileges and opportunities with which music education has provided me is extensive. Thank you very much music educators!

**Sharon Christner**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has greatly impacted my life. I have been active in music since elementary school. I have been given many wonderful opportunities through my participation in music activities. I will treasure these days always.

**Sean Guinter**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been in a school choral program since grade five. Without these experiences, I would not have become interested in vocal music. Thank you to music educators in my school district for giving me a place to belong.

**Matthew Hehnly**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My music education has made me aware of how much work goes into being a musician. It has given me an appreciation for choral music and has greatly improved my vocal technique.

**Erik Homberger**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me numerous opportunities to express and improve upon my passion for music. With the education I have been given, I have been able to use my talents to make others happy and give

them the entertainment they so deserve and need. It has greatly impacted my life in that I am now more determined to improve in not only music, but everyday life as well. I cannot thank those individuals who have helped me enough.

### **Corey Kerstetter**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Throughout my life, music has been a part of my daily activities. Music educators greatly drove my desire to better my musicianship and have taught me many important life lessons. Music education has helped me grow as a musician as well as a beneficial citizen.

### **David Krak**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been integral to my musical development and has fostered my appreciation for music and the arts. Because of the music education I have received over the years, I have decided to pursue a career in vocal performance. I always want music to be a part of my life in some way or another.

### **Ryan Miller**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a big part of my life. I am glad that I am in a school district where there is a strong music department. I have been singing in the school choir since fifth grade and I have had fun participating ever since.

### **Deanna Preziosi**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has provided me with an enriching and memorable experience that began with piano lessons in second grade. Learning to read and perform music taught me patience and provided me with many opportunities that I will always treasure. I could not be more grateful that I was able to be involved in music activities throughout my years during school.

### **Taylor Sweeney**

Occupation: Student

From: Warwick HS, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has provided me with many unique opportunities and experiences such as performing the Lancaster Jr. Orchestra and Youth Symphony, the Allegretto Chamber Orchestra, and the many LLMEA and PMEA Orchestra Festivals. I have so enjoyed working with the various conductors and meeting students from other schools. Music will always be a meaningful and essential part of my life.

### **Jesse Hoffman**

Occupation: Office/IT Supervisor

From: Washington Boro, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music kept me busy and productive during my high school years. Since I was not into sports and rather impressionable, I'm positive I would've went down a wrong path if not for music. Even though my career isn't music related, I still volunteer for a community symphony and play in high school musicals. I still have and

keep in touch with many friends I made while involved in high school music. I think music education is vital in curriculum and if I have children, I would highly encourage them to get involved in music.

### **Robert McDaniel**

Occupation: US Army Retired

From: Willow Street, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has been a means of connecting with many people, both those who also play music and those who enjoy listening. Musicians like people and enjoy adding something to the lives of others. They are dependable and generally very ready to help others. I have been playing with various groups for over 50 years, and feel that all my fellow musicians are friends. When performing as a group (town bands or trios) they recognize that their part is important and truly understand the concept of "teamwork." After a hard day at the office, I could always get rid of my tensions by playing in the band. It was never a chore to make the rehearsals. The concept of teamwork is vital to our society, and it is reinforced by working in a musical group. In summary, music connects people of all ages and is a great escape from the many tribulations of life.

### **Maya Neely**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music allowed me to find my niche in life. Being an extremely shy girl, it was very difficult to find a social group in which I could thrive. I followed in my brother's footsteps and started playing flute in 3rd grade. By doing so, I made friends, got involved in other music activities through church and the community events, and gained confidence in my own abilities. As I searched for my future path in college, I was inspired by various music teachers and decided to become a teacher of music. My experiences were diverse and international. Now, I love teaching music. I love performing in bands and orchestras. I still have the desire to continue my music education with a doctoral program. I am searching for a program with a concentration that enthralles me and a price I can afford. My most precious memories are when students come back to school and tell me how they have continued with music due to my classes. I have taught them skills that they can take with them where ever they go. They seek out more avenues as they continue with their higher education. It always amazes me how music helps me make an impact on my life as well as the people I teach.

### **Cheyenne Hopkins**

Occupation: High School

From: Denver, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me because it's helped me developed myself into a stronger individual. I can cope with things better, I can teach others with reassurance that it'll be right, and most importantly it's made me a better person. I would love to be a Choir/Band director in the Air Force one day. With music education, the school is a better place.

### **Elizabeth Martin**

Occupation: Music Education Student

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since I was in general music in kindergarten, or deciding which instrument to play music was my favorite part of the school day. Because of music I was given a chance to shine in school. It was the part of the day where I could express myself. I was so excited I came in from recess early in elementary school to help set up for choir. Music gave me the ability to speak a new language that didn't always require words. I was lucky I grew up in an area where I was granted music classes through my high school graduation. Now it's my turn to give back to my community by teaching my passion for music. Thanks to music I found a way to succeed like I never thought I could.

### **Suzanne Hetrick**

Occupation: Children's Church Director

From: Elizabethtown, Lancaster County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My daughter is currently in the band. She was very shy and quiet, didn't have a lot of friends. Band has given her confidence that she did not have before. She has so many friends. Good academic and leadership friends. The kids in the band have such an amazing time together. They do activities outside of band together. It has been a joy getting to know these kids. The band director is part of this. The kids really respect him.

## **LAWRENCE COUNTY**

### **Noah Mariani**

Occupation: Student

From: Laurel JSHS, Lawrence County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life in the way that it has taught me how to sing, play many instruments, and understand a form of art that is most beautiful.

### **Catherine Griffith**

Occupation: College Student

From: New Wilmington, Lawrence County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I started taking private piano lessons in about the third grade. My piano teacher Mrs. Chapman was the first person outside of family to tell me that I had a talent for music and that no matter what I should pursue music throughout my life. At that moment I had just thought she meant continuing lessons and joining the band in fifth grade, but in the years to come every time I came home and saw Mrs. Chapman in the community she was always so proud that I kept music in my life. This is only one instance of a music educator impacting my life. Through Mrs. Chapman's love and compassion for music she helped me cultivate a same appreciation for the art that still stays with me to this day.

### **Claire DiMuccio**

Occupation: Student

From: Wilmington Area HS, Lawrence County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My love for music really started when I would sing in church. It was what really encouraged me to go every Sunday. The second I could, I signed up for 5th and 6th grade band and choir and I've stuck with it ever since. Granted, I wasn't very good, but it was my love for music that that allowed me to grow. Personally, I don't think I would have gotten as far as I have without my choir director Jonny Priano. He has taught us all so much and we have such great talent even when we have a school as small as ours. Most people in our society would rather be listening to the new music that's coming out, but to be honest, I would much rather be listening to either Mozart or Eric Whitacre. I fully appreciate all of the specific details in Whitacre's music. I very much agree with the fact that music is something that is healthy for your mind, but it is also healthy for your soul. I either plan on becoming a music educator to spread the wisdom and health of music to children, or becoming a musical therapist to better people's lives with the art of music, and it is something we can do forever.

## LEBANON COUNTY

### **James H. Garrett, Jr.**

Occupation: Music Educator Retired

From: Cornwall, Lebanon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my main occupation and my hobby. I taught music in the public schools of PA for 38 years and directed church choirs for 50 years. I am currently the volunteer director of the Lebanon Senior singers for the past 14 years. Music is an extremely important part of life as it develops the mind, body and spirit. In a highly technical world it is absolutely necessary for the development of a complete person. Its value has been proved over and over. This art of sound, then, at first hearing so completely spontaneous, at closer examination so disciplined and mathematical, at once stingingly sensuous and austere intellectual, has more consequence on life and society than might be imagined. A refined musical sensibility might be the most civilizing of educational instruments. Music makes you human, helps you to recognize beauty, makes you sensitive, helps you to be closer to an infinite beyond this world, gives you something to cling to, gives you more love, more compassion, more gentleness, more good- in short, more LIFE! I cannot comprehend life without MUSIC.

### **Sue Dieffenbach**

Occupation: Retired

From: Lebanon, Lebanon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Learning about music, educated listening and making music alone and with others are as much a part of life as breathing. A trip to Prague and the Czech, or Bohemian, countryside had to be included in our 45th wedding anniversary celebration because we wanted to actually see the place that inspired Bedrich Smetana's "Moldau." That beautiful piece of music, loved more and more on each hearing, was introduced in a 7th grade music class so many years ago! We tell and deepen our faith with the hymns we learned and are learning. Music education includes all areas of learning, taking truths home to the heart.

### **Paige Stewart**

Occupation: Student

From: Lebanon Catholic School, Lebanon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Participating in a school music program helped me to discover something that I really enjoy. PMEA festivals have given me a chance to make new friends who also enjoy music, be challenge to take my music skills to a higher level, and realize that I want to continue participating in music in college.

### **Peter Lazorcik**

Occupation: Student

From: Lebanon HS, Lebanon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has played vital role in my development. With both of my parents being musicians, I began receiving somewhat of a musical education before I began regular schooling. From kindergarten through ninth grade I attended a very small private school with an inadequate music program. From a very young age I had the idea that I wanted to become a professional musician. Once my dad began teaching me drums at a very young age, I was hooked. Due to my informal music education at home, I excelled in music in school beginning HS band in the fifth grade and HS jazz band in seventh grade. Part way through ninth grade I began to realize the inadequacy of my school's music program that as due simply to the lack of students and funding. In the same year I decided to switch to public schooling for the sole purpose of getting a better music education. The public school district that I live in has an excellent music program that would provide me with a music education that could help me in furthering my music education in college. It was very difficult for me deciding to leave the family atmosphere that my previous school had. But, knowing that being a professional musician was what I wanted to do in life, I knew it was necessary in order for me to succeed.

After having switched schools I have realized that it was a great, and necessary, decision in my musical progression. Music education occurs even if you are self-taught; you educate yourself. Music education is vital in any musician's journey. For me, music education was part of one of the most important decisions of my life thus far and will endlessly benefit me. I hope to never discontinue my musical education. I fully believe music education never stops for a musician and is of the utmost importance.

### **Cody Kelly**

Occupation: Music Education Student

From: PA, Lebanon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has allowed me to believe in myself and to show me that anything is possible if I am willing to work for it.

### **Deanna Morder**

Occupation: Special Education Teacher

From: Palmyra, Lebanon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is therapy for students, soothing, impacting, calming, provides creativity, I could go on and on. Music is a part of life - can be enjoyed by ALL. Music is a very a important part of education and is well needed across the disciplines.

### **Morgan Hacket**

Occupation: Student

From: Palmyra Area HS, Lebanon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My dad is a HS choir teacher, and the first thing he tells his students about me is that I play the violin. I know many of my closest friends through playing the violin; I would go to a summer camp or a music festival and those people would become my family for a week. Music is my life, and I don't know who I would be or what I would do without it. Sometimes on those days when I practiced for two hours followed by a three-hour orchestra rehearsal on a school night, I would break down in tears wishing nothing more than to just quit. My parents would say, "Okay, but you're not spending that time watching TV, so find something else you're good at." Instead, I would wipe away the tears and keep going. I do wonder what my life would have been had I not started the violin at the age of four. I wonder what it is like to come home from school on a night with no homework and have nothing to do until bedtime. Suzuki Method students are expected to practice on any day that they eat, which often meant practicing instead of watching TV after dance class, practicing in the hotel room on vacation, even practicing after the family dinner on Christmas day. I regularly informed my parents that this was not normal life for anyone I knew. They did not place a very high value on normality. How different would my life be? I'd probably have more time to spend with my friends, but I'd also have very different friends. I might have become very good at a sport, or I might have become very good at Xbox. I know it is unattractive to say so, but playing the violin is one thing in the world that I'm really good at; it is the one thing in life that I can actually take pride in. There were times when I let homework slide for the violin. There were times when I didn't pull my own weight with group projects because I had to practice. Violin became the thing I am best at, and the thing that many people know about me, even if I don't know anything about them. I know that for whatever it cost me, playing the violin at this level has had a lasting impact on me. It taught me to work hard, that I am often happiest when I and my peers are held to the highest standards, and that there is nothing quite like the satisfaction of accomplishing seemingly impossible goals.

### **Julia Plato**

Occupation: Student

From: Palmyra Area HS, Lebanon County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a subject unlike no other. It has a way of teaching each and every school subject in it's own special way: math by counting the measures; English by reading about the theory of music; science by learning how music affects the mind; and history by learning about composers. Music education provides possibilities to

apply all of the typical school subjects in a manner that is more interesting than reading a text book. However, music education also teaches other, more important, life lessons that can be applied in many aspects of everyday life. Many people's lives have been impacted by music education, including mine. When I was just five years old, I told my parents that I wanted to play violin. I wanted to be just like all of the happy musicians of Andre Rieu moving to the music and smiling all the way. Little did I know that learning to handle an instrument and perform with such grace was extremely difficult. Along my path of learning I made great friends, met amazing teachers, but most of all I learned how to persevere through seemingly impossible situations. Before my first lesson I could not wait to play amazing concertos and symphonies on the violin. But once I got there I realized that the only thing I was allowed to pick up and practice was the bow. How in the world was I ever get to a virtuosic level at this rate? Trying to hold the bow and move it in the way I wanted seemed impossible so I practiced for as long as my six year old attention span could handle. At the next lesson, my hard work had paid off and I was allowed to pick up my very own violin. This proved to be even more challenging than the bow! However, I was so excited to learn my new instrument that I practiced as hard as I could and even managed to not sound like a squeaky wheel. My teacher pushed me every week with new music and techniques that I had to practice and work at or else I would not impress her at the next lesson. Working so hard at something I cared about taught me more than just violin; it taught me that discipline and hard work really do pay off. I have carried this valuable lesson through in my school work and in my cross country running. Music education has taught me that nothing in life comes easy. The best things in life only come if you work harder than anyone else to get them.

## LEHIGH COUNTY

### **Amber Sams**

Occupation: High School Librarian

From: Allentown, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always enriched my life. It was one of the "specials" to which I always looked forward in elementary and middle school. Whenever something was put to a song, it always helped me remember whatever particular fact I was to remember better than just plain memorization. My mother is a lover of music and we sang all the time: in the car, getting ready for school, cooking, etc. I have a one year old son now, and I play songs for him that incorporate games and he just loves it. I'm looking forward to what he will learn in music class when he goes to school. Without the arts, children cannot truly become well-rounded individuals and the future productive citizens into which we as educators are trying to shape them. How will they discover their passions if they do not get a taste of everything?

### **Gabrielle Haddad-Weiser**

Occupation: Chemistry Doctoral Student

From: Bethlehem, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My junior high and high school life centered around music, and my school's music program. I was very fortunate to attend a school district which boasted a very strong program, and I was actively involved in the various choirs and orchestra. Though in college I chose to pursue a science degree rather than music, I was still very involved in my undergraduate music program, as well. My music education has provided me with side jobs like performing for weddings, churches, recitals, and school musicals, but more importantly it has provided me with a common hobby with many good friends and an appreciation and love for listening to and performing all kinds of music.

### **Jessica**

Occupation: Student

From: Bethlehem, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is the reason I chose the path of a performer. I've had many great teachers and musical influences along the way, but one of the most significant influences has to be my high school voice teacher.

He always pushed me because he believed in me. He truly solidified my choice to go to college for vocal performance. If it weren't for music education, my life would not be the same. :)

### **Scott Watson**

Occupation: Music Educator and Composer

From: Coplay, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Here are some of the ways music has touched my life: When I was young my parents went through an acrimonious divorce. My participation in band was a welcome escape from the tenseness at home. Participation in band from 4th grade on provided a great social network at school, and gave me a feeling of accomplishment and self-confidence. Learning music from the performer side of things is SOOoooo different than as a listener/observer - this helped provide deeper understanding of and appreciation/love for many types of concert art music - music that has brought me such joy and reward. At West Chester University's annual Christmas Carol Program I first laid eyes on a gorgeous young lady on stage in the choir wearing a stunning white dress. On a college marching band trip the next year I first got up the courage to talk to her. Our first date was to a Canadian Brass Quintet concert. Now she's my wife of 29 years. Our two grown kids are great musicians themselves, one a middle school general/choral music teacher (and church music director) and the other a senior music education major. One of the most rewarding things as a parent has been to hear them play in our home and to make music with them, together as a family. Of course, as a music teacher, music has allowed me to provide for my family while sharing my love of music with students. Probably the most valuable thing about teaching has been to learn to love and understand others (i.e. all variety of students and co-workers) more. I've been at this long enough to be teaching many children of former students! Finally, as a Christian, music has given me a way to serve and praise God in and out of church. At times it's been me playing trumpet with organ, other times I've sung in choir or just as part of the congregation. Other times I've directed a church orchestra and still other times I've played keyboard with a praise team. I've also written music to be sung or played in praise of God. Music has meant all this, and more, to me and my family.

### **Rachel Choi**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to have a place in HS, a place where I know I'll always be accepted and have fun. Also, music education has made me appreciate music enough to write about it in my college applications if that means anything. :)

### **Brooke Cichocki**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music provides me with a place of solace and comfort. I never have a bad day because I have music in my life. So many educators have helped me along the way to develop my skills and instill in me a joy and a zest for life because of music. I aspire to be a music educator and provide kids with the opportunity to make music a part of their lives and give them the same amazing gift that my music educators have given me.

### **Kristin Erle**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music constantly impacts my happiness and the happiness of others. I don't know where I would be without it, and I plan to go into music education in the future :)

### **Andrew Ferguson**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me skills that many classes have not. By learning the strategies of choral music, I have gained confidence and control in my voice as well as myself as a whole.

### **Lucy Lin**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has taught me teamwork and perseverance and has given me boundless joy. It will always be a part of my life.

### **Nicholas Quinn**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has shaped me into the student, and person that I am today. Ever since the fifth grade, music has been a passion of mine. In elementary school, my love was founded, in middle school my love was matured, and in HS my love for music has been set in stone. Ms. Cortez has fostered such a love for music in my heart that I know it will last a lifetime. Music education has taught me to strive for my goals, and that practice leads to improvements. I once heard on a choir trip to sing at Carnegie Hall, that you don't practice until you get it right; you practice until you can't get it wrong.

### **Victoria Reichelderfer**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by making me a more cultured and educated individual. Knowing how to read music and interpret it both instrumentally and vocally is like knowing another language. Being involved in music has made me competitive and driven. These attributes are not only beneficial in music, but in life as a whole.

### **Joel Shimer**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music education, I would be no one. I always had that nach for music but never really expressed it to the best of my ability until I got to HS. Under the direction of Ms.Cortez, I have become a mature sounding choral singer and I would not have been able to do it if it would not have been for her.

### **Kevin Williams**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is important to me as it touches my life every day. It is a very distinguished and difficult skill to play and instrument or to sing, and I am very proud to say I can do both. Music is the kind of thing that can unite people to make something beautiful. For all these reasons music is special to me.

### **Tara Wu**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education makes my day. I look forward to coming to orchestra every day and it helps with concentration and focus.

#### **Daniel Yu**

Occupation: Student

From: Emmaus HS, Lehigh County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It made my life more busy, but taught me how to manage my time. However, it has definitely made life more fun, even if a little more difficult.

#### **Caitlin Worrich**

Occupation: Elementary/Middle School Band Director

From: Emmaus, PA, Lehigh County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I've known I wanted to be a music educator since I was in 7th grade. I saw the impact my middle school band director had on his students and I knew I wanted to have that same impact. Music has taken me to places I never thought I'd go, such as marching for the 65th anniversary of Pearl Harbor in Waikiki, to playing the 1812 Overture with the Canadian Ceremonial Guard on the steps of the Parliament building in Ottawa. It's allowed me to meet and work with incredible musicians like Harry Connick Jr. But most importantly, it has shown me how powerful music can be and how people's lives can be touched by the simplest things. Whether it's singing a hymn in church or playing a bombastic trombone solo with the Allentown Band, I have seen people truly moved by the power of music. I want to continue to touch people's lives through playing and teaching music, and I want to share my passion for music with my students, so they might go and share it with others.

#### **Tory Figueroa**

Occupation: Student

From: Lehigh Valley Charter HS for the Arts, Lehigh County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since I first held up a instrument, music has definitely impacted me and as the years have gone, my passion for music has increased. Definitely seeing others play, whether it's someone online or at a concert definitely can inspire someone and watching many tuba players has done that for me. It has definitely helped me become a better individual. I definitely feel that if I didn't have music, I wouldn't be who I am today. It is definitely what I want to do in my lifetime and as a career. I have made so many friends through music that will last a lifetime and I don't think I would get that anywhere else.

#### **Karisa Fulmer-Wittman**

Occupation: Student

From: Lehigh Valley Charter HS for the Arts, Lehigh County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Unlike most people, music is not simply a "past-time" or a "hobby" to me. Music has become a safe-haven, a learning experience, and a way for me to grow both as an individual as well as in my art. In college, I want to major in music education or musical theater, and I do not believe that I would have the confidence or experience to jump into a field with admittedly very few openings without the help of my teachers. Music education has furthered my knowledge of history, given me a chance to explore the life and Lieder of Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms, while also considering how the experiences of composers have shaped pieces like The Moldau and Symphonie Fantastique. It has improved my technique and musicianship. Most importantly, I feel that music has given me a freedom of expression that everyday life does not offer any opportunity to express. Music has allowed me to experience love in its purest form.

### **Samantha Jennings**

Occupation: Student

From: Lehigh Valley Charter HS for the Arts, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was in lower school, I was bullied and I didn't have very many friends, but I played piano. I took piano lessons for about 3 years, and it was the one thing that I really loved. After quite a few years of bullying, I transferred schools, and had to stop taking piano lessons, BUT only a few days after I had started at my new school, I heard that the band director was looking for someone who had experience playing piano, so I volunteered. Little did I know, that that would have been one of the best decisions that I made in my life thus far. I played mallet percussion for the rest of my 4th grade year, and made friends with people who still to this day I am very close with. I eventually grew tired of what I was playing, and wanted to try something new; so I decided to try the clarinet. I fell in love with it the moment I held it in my hands! Shortly after I began learning clarinet, in 7th grade I joined my HS's marching band, where I continued to make friends both in my school, and kids from other schools who also shared my love of music! To me, that was just so so cool. On top of that, I loved having real genuine friends that also loved what they were doing. As I began to grow older, my love for music began to grow even stronger. When I was almost done with my 8th grade year, I heard of this Performing Arts HS that was sort of near by where I lived, and I went to check it out. I remember walking out of that building in complete 'awh'. I saw so much talent in the short amount of time that I was there. It was at that moment that I knew music was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I began going to the Lehigh Valley Charter HS for the Performing Arts in 2012, and that's when I really really started to take music seriously. I knew at this point in my life, this IS what I wanted to do, it's time to kick this up a notch. While at my new school, I met some of the people that I will always consider some of the most inspirational and influential teachers that I will have ever met, and had the privilege of learning from. As I begin my college searches, I often think about my introduction to music, and all the people who helped in my musical journey thus far. Between 2 different schools, and various teachers, I don't know even how to express my thanks, and how much they have truly impacted my life. But I do my best to express that every time I perform. All of them will forever be in my heart, and will always be in my music.

### **Elizabeth King**

Occupation: Student

From: Lehigh Valley Charter HS for the Arts, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

If it wasn't for the strong music program in my school, I would not be at the level of musicality that I am today. My teachers have inspired me to pursue music education as a career since I have seen the direct benefits of their teachings. Music has positively impacted other aspects of my life such as my patience, endurance, academic skills, and discipline. A study of the arts through music education has broadened my horizons and given me a greater appreciation for the arts. My life would not be the same and I would not have discovered my calling if it weren't for the music educators in my life.

### **Eloise Salen**

Occupation: Student

From: Lehigh Valley Charter HS for the Arts, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Since beginning a serious music education, I have developed a more intense understanding and appreciation for music. My enjoyment of music has grown to include many genres since moving into music history, theory, and more intense instrumental classes. I would never have known how much I enjoyed music if I hadn't begun playing and studying music, and I would never have met many people who are important to me. I am now seriously considering a future in music after musing tirelessly over what path I would take for my future, and I have changed as a person.

**Daniel Syvret**

Occupation: Student

From: Lehigh Valley Charter HS for the Arts, Lehigh County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Finally helped me hone my abilities as a musician and a person. I found something I am truly good at and live to enhance through "hard" work, everyday.

**Saagar Asnani**

Occupation: Student

From: Parkland HS, Lehigh County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my passion. Apart from academics, music has, in many ways, taken over my life and become an integral part of who I am. To me, the sheer beauty of music is simply overwhelming! How can a simple combination of sound waves with no apparent meaning behind them hold so much weight emotionally? How can an E whole tone scale tug at my heartstrings if it is simply played a certain way? This is the mystery of music that I have never yet understood and probably never will. And yet, this is exactly what sparks my fascination for the subject to such a degree. Music is so complex that it can never reach perfection, regardless of how well it is played. Whenever I play a piece, there is always something that I can improve upon, allowing me to better my own art. The thing about music is, there is no capstone, no pinnacle of achievement. No matter how far I go, no matter how well I play, I can always take it one step further and still never attain perfection. There is something primal about music that allows it to affect every man, regardless of his knowledge, background, or education, giving it universal accessibility and beauty that cannot be equaled, and there is nothing which makes me happier than creating this musical bliss. There is no place on Earth where I am more contented than from the midst of an orchestra, from the heart of the action, telling my story to whomever cares to listen. It is through music education that I have been given the opportunity to immerse myself in this sea of harmonies. Music is so complex, so beautiful, and every time I learn more about it, I am all the more fascinated by it. Thus, I simply cannot wait for my next chance to take a step back from reality and have music carry me away on an unexpected journey.

**Jaclyn Bristel**

Occupation: Student

From: Parkland HS, Lehigh County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been a huge part of my life and I could not imagine my life without it. It has helped me to expand my knowledge for music and helped me become confident in who I am. It also helped me find my passions. I would not be involved in choir, chorale, PMEA festivals and the musicals at my school if I didn't think that music was my passion. Overall, music education helped me expand my artistic side and it will continue to expand in my future.

**Aathira Jayamohan**

Occupation: Student

From: Parkland HS, Lehigh County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has allowed me to express myself, while making me stand out against other people in my school. It has allowed me to make new friends and join in great activities including music.

**Abigail Kern**

Occupation: Student

From: Parkland HS, Lehigh County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my passion. Music classes and opportunities help enhance the beauty of music. Without music education I would not have close to the depth of understanding as I do now. Music education has improved my ability to understand, interpret and successfully perform music.

### **Bryan Sobczak**

Occupation: Student

From: Parkland HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has allowed me to express myself through my own voice. The power and emotion of the lyrics touch the heart while the voices warm the soul. Music education helps to spread knowledge of the best part of the world to more of the world.

### **Lisa Stein**

Occupation: Student

From: Parkland HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music = Life

### **Daniel Changyan Wang**

Occupation: Student

From: Parkland HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Public music education has opened me to a whole new world. Not only has participation in HS orchestra introduced me to my closest friends, but it has also shown me a side of the human experience that I would have otherwise neglected to explore. Music is deeply powerful and fascinating, but I would never have learned to love Tchaikovsky, Sibelius, and any number of composers were it not for my participation in and enjoyment of HS orchestra and events like PMEA's District and Region Orchestras. Thanks!

### **Joshua Yang**

Occupation: Student

From: Parkland HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has made me more dedicated and disciplined.

### **Carolyn Boulay**

Occupation: Student

From: Salisbury HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been interested in music ever since I was a little girl and my parents took me to see my first Broadway show. Ever since I was three years old, I have loved listening to and performing music. At age five, I started piano lessons. At age eleven, I started voice lessons. I believe this musical instruction greatly impacted me. It has caused me to be a more observant person in my daily life because of the attention I have to pay when learning music. It has also caused me to gain confidence because I have performed in many concerts where I need to swallow my pride and know that I am good enough. One of my inspirations is Broadway star Sierra Boggess. Her famous quote is, "You are enough. You are so enough. It is unbelievable how enough you are." This aspect of music alone has influenced me as a person in simply knowing that I matter and that I make a difference. Overall, music has hugely impacted me in my life and I am so happy that I have been blessed with the gift to make music.

### **Allison Janney**

Occupation: Student

From: Southern Lehigh HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been an important aspect of my life. From four years old when I first saw a harp will now, practicing for auditions. During my dad's cancer, in 7th grade, it was music and lessons that keep me sane. I would practice, or even just pick up my harp and play. In HS I began to take my music education more

seriously. I practiced harder, with more purpose. I joined more orchestras and actively sought out venues to play at. The constant performing impacted my confidence level. I was more likely to jump into new situations, or try out new places or things. Because of music I have met students from every continent in the world, traveled and played in over ten states. Music has also impacted my academics. Since music teaches focus it has enabled me to work hard and focus on the task at hand. I credit music for my 4.0 GPA and my ability to successfully take both AP and college courses. Music still impacts my life today. It makes me constantly strive for something better, something with more beauty. Music has been and will always be a part of my life. Studying it in college will only make its impact in my life all the greater.

### **Christine Lee**

Occupation: Student

From: Southern Lehigh HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to play violin even more and learn more about music outside of my lessons. It is the favorite part of my day in school because I feel relaxed since it is my favorite hobby. It is a refreshing break from during a long, academic school day.

### **Adam Leferovich**

Occupation: Student

From: Southern Lehigh HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many significant ways up to this point. Starting in 3rd grade, when I learned how to play the cello, my life was enriched with music and what comes along with playing an instrument. Throughout elementary school, middle school, and now HS, I have met many new people, interesting and creative instructors, and thoughtful conductors who have given a whole new perspective on music, and on life in general that I would never have gotten without being involved in music.

### **Luke Simons**

Occupation: Student

From: Southern Lehigh HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My name is Luke Simons. I am happy to have been selected as a clarinetist in the 2015 District 10 Orchestra as well as the 2015 Region V Band Festival. Both of my parents are professional musicians and teachers, who hold advanced degrees in music. My father has been a professional clarinetist and woodwind performer in numerous bands and orchestras throughout his career. He is on the music faculty at Muhlenberg College and the East Penn School District. My mother is currently a cellist with the Allentown Symphony and the Pennsylvania String Ensemble. She is on the music faculty at Moravian College. Music education has been part of my life since early childhood. I grew up hearing music around me at all times and attended concerts and music theatre productions from an early age. I have memories of my first grade teacher in Southern Lehigh, Mr. Hari, playing piano and singing songs with our class each morning to start the school day. My elementary general music teacher, Mrs. DeVivo, was an excellent teacher who promoted my love of music. Mrs. Yale gave me the opportunity to perform a clarinet solo with the elementary chorus when I was in fifth grade. My instrumental teachers, from Miss Marston, to Mrs. Beitler and Mr. Bolasky, have been very supportive, encouraging, and have displayed excellent educational, organizational and leadership skills. My involvement in music theatre with Mr. Wehr has been inspiring. I am fortunate to have professional quality woodwind instruments for my performances and studies, including B-flat and A clarinets, as well as an E-flat soprano clarinet. Also, excellent matching Soprano, Alto and Tenor Saxophones. Though I began piano studies in third grade on a Yamaha electronic piano, we have a grand piano in our home for my present studies. Currently a junior at Southern Lehigh, I perform with the Concert Band, Orchestra, Jazz Band, Chorus, Meistersingers, and Musical Theatre program. I have served as junior drum major on the field staff for the Marching Band, and look forward to my role as senior drum major next year. Outside of school, I have performed with the Lehigh County Band since grade 8, and have been a clarinetist in the District 10 Band, also since grade 8. I have been a clarinetist with the Pocono Youth Orchestra since grade 7, and

currently serve as principal clarinetist. I have attended summer jazz camps led by Dr. Neil Wetzel at Moravian College. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to perform with an orchestra of professional musicians in our Church Cantatas. I study piano and voice with instructors who are on the music faculty at Lehigh University. In addition, I have the invaluable experience of taking online video clarinet lessons with Ricardo Morales, who is the Principal Clarinetist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. To say that music education has impacted my life is an understatement. I plan to major in Music Performance in university or conservatory setting, hopefully continuing to develop these many facets of my music experience.

### **Emily Emick**

Occupation: Student

From: Whitehall HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to grow and develop as a person. The experiences I've had in music classes and groups are completely invaluable. I've formed some of my strongest friendships and learned more about myself. The bond I have with the other members of my school choir is something I've never experienced anywhere else. When expressing the deep emotions in a piece and working together to create art, a choir becomes one. The creativity and emotion of music has really helped me start to define who I am. I've learned to express myself in safe, healthy, beautiful ways. Music education has also allowed me to discover my passion for music. I now have something that will stay with me for the rest of my life. Without music classes and groups in my school, I'm not sure who I would be. I know I would be very different and likely not quite so happy and content as I am now. Music education has made me who I am today.

### **Daniel Lindenmuth**

Occupation: Student

From: Whitehall HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My band director is the absolute best. Band has introduced me to new people and new experiences. It has taught me a lot about music.

### **Mardochee Dade**

Occupation: Student

From: William Allen HS, Lehigh County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has brought me joy all my life. From the day I began to play the cello, I instantly fell in love with music. It has always helped me to stay motivated and inspire to do great things. Personally, I could not get through the day without looking forward to something music related. Each time I touched the cello, it instantly changed my attitude. The affect it had putting me in a different world and allowing me to feel the emotions of the composer seemed amazing to me. Even in my life overall, music had an impact on me. It taught me the meaning of time management, working hard and maturity, which helped me immensely in staying on top of my schoolwork. Another great thing about music is the people you get to meet. I've been introduced to many great people who today I still am happy to call them my friends. From playing in small ensembles to big orchestras, the people I've met were all so positive and looked at the world with a deeper meaning. Recently I was fortunate to attend Interlochen Cello Institute and the New England Music Camp, which attracted many people with different backgrounds. However the most beautiful thing was that we all shared the language of music. It too was very powerful because that created a sense of community. Some say music increases intelligence but I believe the greatest thing music can do is touch hearts!

## LUZERNE COUNTY

### Cassy Silveri

Occupation: Student

From: Coughlin HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted me in so many ways. When I was six my uncle started teaching me how to play the piano, and I've never stopped. When I was in fifth grade we rented a clarinet from my local music store and since then I've never put my clarinet down. I love my instruments so much. Music has given me a chance to express myself and be me. Every time I play I know I can just forget about everything even if it's just for an hour and enjoy what I love to do, and that's music. My band director, Ms. Rensa has influenced me greatly, also. I've known her since elementary school and she's always encourage me to push myself harder and it has been rewarding. She's always been my inspiration because she is the greatest clarinet player I know. She's taught me lessons in not only music, but in life and I'm so fortunate that we are so close. I don't think I could have made it to districts alone with out the help from her and also from my private lessons teachers, Mrs. Riley and Mr. Pryor and my Uncle Jack Mainwaring who has just always helped me with anything possible. Without the help of my music educators I would be a completely different person. I am so blessed to have all these opportunities of music that allow me to go further. Music has also bonded my mom and I together. We have always been close but since my dad is not much of a music person it always felt like our little world whenever she'd sing with me or listen to me practice. Since she played piano and clarinet when she was my age so it also feels like I am following in her footsteps when I play (which is just an amazing feeling). My parents have also been so supportive. They come to every single one of my concerts whether I'm in the front row or the very, very back. They are truly the greatest. Without music I'd be a shell. I wouldn't have a close connection to my mother or my band educators. I would of never met my best friends and I wouldn't have had all the oportunities in life. Music has educated me on how to express myself and also how to be myself. It has allowed me to escape from the stress of HS alone and just concentrate. It taught me what's important in life and it has made me loyal and hard working. You have no idea how honored I am to be able to just sit down at my piano or pick up my clarinet and just play.

### Dr. Philip G. Simon

Occupation: Assoc. Professor of Music, Wilkes University

From: Drums, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I would like to share a letter I received a few days ago from a former student from 40 years ago. It is indicative of the impact and influence we as music educators have on the lives of our students. I have received many letters like this one over my 44 years as a teacher, but I think this one says it most eloquently. Mr. Simon, I was thinking about you today as I shoveled snow in Waldorf, MD. I just wanted to say thanks for the life lessons you imparted as an enthusiastic and dedicated educator. I am sure many have told you over the years of your positive impact on their lives. I would like to add to that - you taught me to practice well and challenged me to perform beyond my capabilities. Practicing music taught me that I could get better at something, even though I was not naturally skilled in music. You also taught me to appreciate and love jazz - I still do (listening to Alan Broadbent Trio as I write). In my work life I have been a Naval Officer, a helicopter pilot (I flew the Kaman SH-2F Seasprite, designed and built by the man - Charles Kaman, who also invented the Ovation guitar), a high school teacher (Larry Martin was my principal at Westlake HS for 4 years where I taught NJROTC), and a government program manager. In every job, the skills I learned in Jazz Band - practice everyday, learn to take criticism, keep improving, and be passionate about your task, have helped build resilience and work ethic in everything I have attempted. I hope you are well and enjoying the college teaching world - much different that high school! Now, what I really want to do now is learn classical guitar. Sincerely, Dave Dickshinski (formerly Dave Dick - I changed back to the original family name, the Dickshinski's from Nanticoke, PA, not far from Wilkes-Barre)

### **Jennifer Cerasaro**

Occupation: VP of Customer Relations

From: Duryea, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music gave me the courage to stand in front of others and perform. The freedom to express myself through song with my own voice. Without those experiences I wouldn't be able to stand in front of customers and present my proposals/ ideas

### **Olivia Richards**

Occupation: Student

From: E. L. Meyers HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me an escape from everyday life, both at home, at school and beyond. Also, it has given me the incredible opportunity to make music with other people.

### **Maria Flowers**

Occupation: Student

From: Hazleton Area HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has definitely had a big impact on my life. I can't even picture my life without it anymore. It has provided goals and dreams that I never thought I could achieve. I meet new great people everywhere I go and have amazing experiences. Music has opened so many new doors in my life and has given me so many fantastic opportunities. People don't really understand how much of an impact music can have on one's life until it's all they think about, it's all they do. You really know that music is a great aspect in your life when it practically becomes a necessity.

### **Angela LaRose**

Occupation: Student

From: Hazleton Area HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in a number of ways. My choir director, along with many other mentors along the way, have helped me to better myself as a vocalist. My vocal abilities have come a long way in the last five years or so and it wouldn't have been possible without the help of those people. Being a part of a HS choir has taught me to be a leader as well as a team member. Aside from the musical aspect of music education, I have made long lasting friendships through the program. Having the ability to participate in District choir festivals has opened a new door for me. It is an honor and a privilege to be able to do what I love in the presence of a hundreds of others that share that same love for music, as well as learn from extremely talented individuals.

### **Kayla Paredes**

Occupation: Student

From: Hazleton Area HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life by GIVING me a life. It started out as something cool to do, to know HOW to do. When I joined Marching Band, it gave me a social life, since I've always been somewhat different from everyone else. But when I started progressing with my life, I started thinking of what I want to do for a living. One of my passions is teaching and learning. I love the idea of helping people understand things and them coming to me for answers. I realized another passion of mine: Music. I love all forms of it; On my phone, I have everything from Mozart to Falling in Reverse. So one day I realized I wanted to be a Music Educator. I combined my two passions to give me the ultimate career. One of my objectives on my bucket list is to learn ALL Band Instruments. I currently play the clarinet, bass guitar, vocals, trumpet, and drums. In the next year I will learn piano, saxophone (tenor), and oboe. I have played clarinet for 6 years. So therefore I thank you all for introducing me to music.

### **Tessa Perchansky**

Occupation: Student

From: Hazleton Area HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In fourth grade, I remember finally being able to pick an instrument and join the elementary school band. I didn't really know what instrument to choose, but I knew that band and music education would become an important part of my life. Without giving much thought, I choose to play clarinet, and I've kept growing ever since. Music education has changed my life. I was surrounded by music educators that saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. Seven years after starting band, and I'm thriving. Thanks to music education, I now know what I want to peruse as a career: music.

### **Rebecca Schell**

Occupation: Student

From: Hazleton Area HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life by providing me with an outlet for my emotions. Before starting instrumentation, I had difficulty trying to express myself. I began to make many more friends and was overall a happier person. I wouldn't be the person I am today without music and I couldn't imagine my life without it. I am so thankful for all of the music educators who have gave me the opportunity to become a whole different person. Music has filled me with so much more knowledge than I ever thought possible.

### **Ariana Umbriac**

Occupation: Student

From: Hazleton Area HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

An early introduction to music was something I welcomed enthusiastically, not only in elementary school, but also outside school. Many of my family being musicians, I was very much brought up amidst musical surroundings. I've always been involved with music, starting when I was an infant. In the spring of 6th grade, I started singing in the Honors Chorus. Our first practice we had worked with the choir director, Kim Sharonoff, from my HS. When I heard her sing and direct, I knew that I wanted to keep doing this for the rest of my life. The feeling was amazing the first time I heard it and the way the voices blended was beautiful. Then in my sophomore year of HS, my teacher asked me to audition for the PMEA District Choir. I placed well in Districts as well as the following festivals, Regionals and All States. After all of the festivals, I was so inspired by the conductors and the music and the atmosphere that I knew I wanted to become some sort of music educator.

### **Benjamin Nause**

Occupation: Student

From: Holy Redeemer HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life because it has inspired me to pursue a career in music education. I have always had an extreme passion for music and have worked to perfect my singing and piano skills. My dream is to teach students music and inspire the young minds of my generation. I have always wanted to pursue a performance career but just being involved in music will bring me much joy. Throughout my life, I have had many inspiring music educators who has shown me the greatness music can bring to people. Sadly, many schools today are cutting music programs to barely nothing. I hope someday that my music talent will inspire the kids of tomorrow and save the music programs for years to come.

### **Julie Yelen**

Occupation: Journalist

From: Kingston, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Nearly every one of my fondest memories from high school - and college, come to think of it - involves music. At Elk County Catholic High School in St. Marys, being part of marching, concert and jazz bands offered friends and experiences I wouldn't have had otherwise, not to mention the important lesson of what it's like to be part of a team. Once college rolled around, my involvement with the incredible Duquesne University Chamber Singers in Pittsburgh afforded me the chance to work with the most amazing musicians I will ever meet, and took us all on a 5-week tour singing through historic concert halls and churches in Europe, learning about people and cultures I would only have ever read about in text books. And it all started with an elementary school music teacher and a piano! Music education is the backbone of every other type of education that followed in my life. And to this day, nothing quite entertains, energizes or soothes me like music can. I could name you every music teacher I have ever had, they've been so influential to me over the years...and a few I keep in touch with to this day. Music might not get as much mainstream attention as sports programs in a given school setting, and I understand the reasons for that. But that makes it no less important to the development of students who show a talent, or even a simple interest, in it. Thanks in advance for your continued support of music education in our schools.

### **Corey Kinney**

Occupation: Student

From: Lake-Lehman HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Through music I have been able to meet many new friends who have similar interests as myself. It has allowed me to perform in front of thousands of people and visit and perform at venues I never may have had the opportunity to. Each new piece of music placed before presents new and unique challenges which has helped prepare me for what lays ahead.

### **Breanna Esposito**

Occupation: Student

From: McAdoo, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has changed my life. It has changed my life in so many amazing ways. I am more outgoing and confident. I am apart of a family and I have friends who look out for me and we take care of one another. If music is taken out of our schools, children will miss all of the amazing opportunities I have had through music education in school.

### **William J. Pendziwiatr**

Occupation: Retired Music Teacher

From: Nescopeck, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

A career in music has allowed me to be myself. It gave my creative side an outlet. Writing marching band shows, arranging and writing music and working with many different styles of music was challenging and a pleasure. Connecting with hundreds of young people and helping them develop a love for music was awesome. Seeing many of them go into jobs connected to music proves that we as teachers touch their lives. Having each student for an average of four years allows me to watch them grow as individuals. You not only see them become better musicians but also better more confident people.

### **Morganne Piestrak**

Occupation: Student

From: Northwest Area HS, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Becoming a part of the Northwest music program was the best decision I have made in my HS career, as I believe it has enriched my life in a way nothing else could. My active involvement in the music program has allowed me to flourish both academically and creatively due to the unique experiences I have had and the lessons I have learned. Being a serious trumpet player, incorporating a daily practice regimen has helped be with time management skills and it has taught me discipline. These are two valuable lessons that have also helped me develop academically because I also applied them to my school work. I learned how to study, and how much work is necessary for achievement. Finally, above all else my schools music program has enriched my life by giving me a passion for a career in music that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I cannot stress enough the impact music education has had on my life. I would not be the successful person I am today if i never joined the music program.

### **Angie Krieger**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Pittston, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music had always been an important part of my life. I remember days when nothing seemed to go right, listenteningto or to singing a song seemed to make me feel better. Also, I was chosen to sing a solo in elementary school chorus and it did wonders for my self esteem. I was so confident and proud. I see how positive music education is to the students in my school. It helps with creativity, expression, and timing. I'm saddened that the state allowed Pittston Area (my children's district) to cut music for Career Development in the elementary grades. There's plenty f time for careers, right now the NEED music!

### **Emily Fauntleroy**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyoming Area Secondary Center, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I would literally be the loneliest person on earth without music. Music is my life.

### **Victoria Pennington**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyoming Area Secondary Center, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly changed and enriched my life. I have been involved with performance music since I was in third grade, but I did not become serious about it until I reached HS. I remember learning the basics of music in elementary school, performing in talent shows, and attending Chorus Fest. As I got older music education helped me branch out and taught me not to be afraid to try something new. It gave me the courage to join the Drama Club, which I am now president of, Tri-M Music Honor Society, and the Performing Arts Institute at Wyoming Seminary. Music has served as a creative release for me and helped improve my general learning skills, therefore it has improved my academic standing as well.

### **Saray Sabatelli**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyoming Area Secondary Center, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music I would be nothing. My entire life is based around my musical events. Music has helped me to organize and balance my daily activities. If I did not discover my talents in music, I would never know what I am truly capable of.

### **Laura Sachaczenski**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyoming Area Secondary Center, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my entire life. It is my escape from the daily stresses of life and school. Listening and playing music helps me to relax, and even helps me when I am having a bad day. I would really love to pursue a career in music, because without it I do not know where else I would be!

### **Emily Smith**

Occupation: Student

From: Wyoming Area Secondary Center, Luzerne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been there to push me when I didn't believe in myself. Through music I have reached new goals and heights thanks to the opportunities provided to me.

## **LYCOMING COUNTY**

### **Benjamin Thomas**

Occupation: Student

From: Jersey Shore Area HS, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has become my entire life. Whenever I'm upset, angry, or even happy I automatically turn to music. Be it singing, playing piano, or writing, it is my outlet for all emotions. I feel music has turned my life into a better place due to the fact that I am capable of expressing my emotions in ways that many people can't. Music can change a person's life, just like it has mine.

### **Samuel Griffith**

Occupation: Student

From: Loyalsock Township HS, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me an opportunity to work hard at something that is very rewarding. It has given me insight into the thoughts and emotions of other composers and musicians that few other activities could achieve.

### **Brennan Hepler**

Occupation: Student

From: Loyalsock Township HS, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Throughout my life, I have been greatly impacted by the effects of music. I have involved myself with a number of music related activities, ranging from school choir to a local school of music where I have the opportunity to perform in front of thousands of people three to five times a year. It is this school that has pushed me to pursue music in higher education. Accepted to Berklee College of Music, I am excited and eager to take the knowledge that I have already obtained and grow upon it and hone in on the skill that I have been blessed with. One of the most attractive things about music educate to me is the fact that it has the power to transcend all boundaries, whether it be race, religion, or gender. Music can touch everybody. It is a strong and integral element to the idea of interconnectedness across our globe.

### **Cameron Hornberger**

Occupation: Student

From: Loyalsock Township HS, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has allowed me to go to places I have never thought I would go to.

### **Kelsey Roberts**

Occupation: Student

From: Montgomery Area HS, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Growing up in a deaf family, I was never really brought into the world of music education until 5th grade. There was some smart bald guy who at the time was terrifying, but is now one of my best friends, and my biggest role model. Music education has let me be involved in one of the biggest friend groups of all, and be a part of musical ensembles I would've never gotten the chance to be in. Its a magical and enlightening world that I have the opportunity to say I excel in. Its made me grow not only as a talented and accomplished musician, but a great friend and role model to others who see me succeed and want to learn my ways. But throughout my so many years being a part of festivals and concerts and traveling around Pennsylvania to District, Region, and State festivals I have learned one most important thing. Its not about how big your band is, or how expensive your instrument runs. Its about how hard you work, and how big the spot for Music is in you heart. If you love it....its gonna be great and you will always succeed.

### **Leatha Kieser**

Occupation: Retired Music Teacher

From: Montoursville, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to share my love of music with students for 35 years. It provided me with a wonderful career. It was inspiring to watch these students learn and grow in music from Kindergarten to seniors in High School. Music helped with the healing process of Flight 800 in our community. Music brought people of all ages together in a choir for that memorial service. The community support our high school musicals received was financial as well as attendance. I was able to accompany students for recitals, college auditions and concerts. A few of my students even became music educators continuing the legacy of my high school teacher, Miss Louise Stryker. PMEA has allowed me to meet many fine musicians of all levels. Inspiring speakers and clinicians, fine teachers, talented students, and outstanding directors. These people have encouraged me to become the best educator I could be. Sharing music helped form bonds of friendship that will remain in place forever. I firmly believe that Music is the Universal Language.

### **Karissa Rhodes**

Occupation: Full Time College Student

From: Montoursville, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education broadened my view of the world around me. The individuals I have met through music have become lifelong friends. The environment I found myself in, and still find myself in, is one with no judgement. I am currently in College at Shenandoah Conservatory for music therapy. I know that if it had not been for the introduction on music education early in my life, that I would not have started in the direction that I am going. I work with many talented individuals every day. I am so grateful for the opportunities that music has given me. I even get to go on a tour of Italy this spring with a Grammy award winning choir.

### **Kelsey Rogers**

Occupation: Student

From: Montoursville, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in several ways. I have made a family amongst like-minded people. I have found an activity that constantly exercises my mind and tests my ability to learn. It has given me an outlet to express myself in a safe way. I do not have to abuse illegal substances in order to find relief from a stressful day. Instead I can sing my way through whatever pains me. It has given me a place to go when I felt like I no longer had a reason to be. And for those things, I will forever be thankful that my school did not cut my music education program when times were tough fiscally. It means the world to me, and others like myself who find their niche in a staff full of notes and Italian terms.

### **Hunter Nolan**

Occupation: Student

From: Montoursville Area HS, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has helped me grow as a person.

### **Mike Buck**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Pennsdale, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Next to my family music is my everything. Growing up I always had an affinity towards music and the importance of its impact. Stories of my mother walking 1 mile each way to go to her piano lessons (which eventually took her to Mansfield university for a BA in Music). My mother walked because it was a way for her to succeed. She grew up poor in Sullivan county. Her music teacher said she had a gift and that she needed to nurture it. Which she did with the guidance of her music educator. Without that guidance, she would not have gotten support to get those piano lessons which would have stopped her from going to Mansfield University. This would mean no piano music in our house growing up. No piano lessons filling the house. No sound of failure and success. What impacted my life is the fact that my mother had encouragement from her music educator, without that, I am not a music teacher. Doing what I love.

### **Lexi Holtzman**

Occupation: Student

From: South Williamsport HS, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life in several different ways. Growing up and being in a home filled with music inspired me to pursue music in my HS career. Throughout my HS career I was involved in the dramatic productions with the musicals being my favorite. While on stage I felt like I was a completely different person, allowing my stage personality and the music that was being played overtake my body. Not wanting this feeling to go away I decided in my Junior Year that I wanted to attend college and major in Musical Theater. Everyday I learn more and more about music and how important it is in today's society and I wonder what my life would be like without it. I look forward to the many years to come, each passing day gaining more knowledge about the pastime I love the most. Music has taught me that no matter what is happening in one's life there is always an escape, and my escape is through music.

### **Olivia Pierce**

Occupation: Student

From: St. John Neumann, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In third grade, my music teacher encouraged me to audition for my first musical, a HS production of The Wizard of Oz. Two years later, this same music teacher convinced me to try out for a local theater group's production of Seussical!, where I was cast as JoJo the Who. This role instilled in me a love of performing, and all of my music teachers following her helped me nurture this passion. My current choral director motivates myself and my fellow choir members to reach our full potential, and without the music educators in my life I would not have developed the love of music I have today.

### **Allison Lax**

Occupation: Student

From: St. John Neumann, Lycoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life from a very early age. Because my mother is a music teacher, my early memories include plinking keys on the piano while on my mom's lap and long car rides full of singing. Although that early music wasn't of the highest quality, I had a great time doing it and wanted to learn about it

even more. From violin teachers to chorus teachers, all the mentors that I had along the way made sure that I didn't give up whenever music got tough. They reminded me why it was worthwhile to pursue music because underneath all of the practice and frustration, it really was a fun thing to do. All of the music teachers in my life so far, starting with my mom and ending with my HS choir teacher, have shown me that music is absolutely important and how truly fun it can be.

## McKEAN COUNTY

### Dr. Frederick J. Young

Occupation: Retired Professor of Magnetohydrodynamics at CMU

From: Bradford, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education taught me how to play the tuba and string bass well enough to play professionally in the Pittsburgh Symphony occasionally. More important it taught me how to investigate and solve physical problems and teamwork. Now in my ninth decade of life I still play my instruments in various groups, write textbooks and do scientific research resulting in recently published papers. I also teach tuba and string bass at University of Pittsburgh at Bradford.

### Samantha Burkhouse

Occupation: Student

From: Bradford Area HS, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Nothing has had a larger and more positive impact on my life than music. I wouldn't be who I am today without music through music educators. The first time I saw my HS band perform was when I was in elementary school, where I had just started to learn the clarinet, and immediately I knew that I wanted to be a musician. By my freshman year of HS, I knew that it was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I want to become a music educator to spread the joys of music in the ways that it helped me to others. When I am making music, everything else leaves my mind. It calms me down and I stop worrying and stressing over whatever I'm currently stressing over. I could be a nervous wreck worrying about an audition next week, but as soon as I pick up my instrument to practice, I calm down, I begin to feel more confident, and I'm happy. Performing, whether it be on a stage, on a football field, or anywhere else, gives me the best feeling I've ever felt. Nothing else, not that I've known anyways, gives me that feeling. It's a wonderful thing, and without music education, I wouldn't get to feel that. Music is so important to everyone that loves music, and it's important that everyone gets the chance to experience that love for music. I've seen so many people from so many different backgrounds affected by music and it's amazing. Even if a student doesn't want to go into music in the future, they can continue with it for the rest of their life, just as a hobby. Music is something that anyone can use for the rest of their life, and I am going to spend my life teaching others about the joys of music. I'm so very thankful that my school district has a music program with wonderful music teachers who have changed my life in wonderful ways. I can't stress enough that my life would be so different without music. I don't think I would be happy if I had never chosen that clarinet in fourth grade and joined choir, then picked up the saxophone in middle school, and the flute in HS. Music is the most important, wonderful thing in my life, and I wouldn't change a thing about that.

### Olivia Keltz

Occupation: Student

From: Bradford Area HS, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life by providing me with so many new opportunities. Through marching band, PMEA festivals, and IU9 (county band) festivals, I have met many new people, visited new places, and experienced new music. Not only have I traveled the area, but through marching band I have also traveled the state and gone to Disney World in Florida. It was so neat to go to these places with all of the people that share the same passion for music that I do. Without our schools music program, I may not have been able to go through with these amazing opportunities. While traveling to different areas, I have also

met many incredible people. Normally, I would sit in an auditorium waiting for practice to start, but the music program has brought me out of my shell and I have met many new people that are now great friends and role models. Lastly, music education has impacted my life because I have learned and played a great mass of different styles of music that I have come to love. Therefore, I am grateful for the music education program in my school, for I would be bored and passionless without it.

### **Hannah Leposa**

Occupation: Student

From: Bradford Area HS, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Imagine a child, looking for a place to belong. One day she goes to her sister's Christmas Concert. I remember sitting in the auditorium and hearing our HS's choir enter from the back of the auditorium. I was awe struck. I had never been to one of her concerts before. From the first note that choir sang I knew that I love what was happening in that auditorium. As she listened to the Choir, Show Choir, Percussion, Jazz and Wind Ensemble. I knew I had found my calling so, I begged, pleaded, and nagged my mother so much that she finally got me Piano lessons starting the summer between my Kindergarten and First grade school years. In my district, you cannot join any Ensembles until fourth grade. So I continued with my piano. Then it was finally my fourth grade year and they sent home a form for our parents to review with us. On this form you were told the requirements of participating in the music program and what each instrument is. So, my mother and I sat down to decide what I would play. You were allowed to select two instruments to test with one of the band directors. I had no desire to play flute or saxophone. I knew I wanted to try Trumpet. So I did. I loved it. It has been my life sense then. Music has impacted my life in so many ways. It teaches you to interact with people you don't know. From clinics with groups such as Empire Brass and Brass Transit to District festivals. You are thrown into the world and forced to improve your ability to interact with people that you don't know. This I have found very beneficial. It makes job and scholarship interviews so much easier. Music education has also taught me how to deal with being successful, and failing. There are many situations in music where you have the opportunity to be competitive. Testing for a chair placement, Auditioning for district Jazz, Marching Band competitions. You learn that it is okay to be successful and be proud of that success. You witness people who are successful and bask in it and are "sore winners." You see that you learn how to act when you win. Smile say thank you when people congratulate you. You also learn how to lose well. You see the people who make up excuses. Look at their instrument to see what could possibly be broken that caused the mistake. Music teaches you to think. You have to think about your notes, dynamics, balance of the section and band, fingerings, watch the conductor, and many other things. People say all the smart kids are in the band, but it's music that makes you smart. You are using the highest level of critical thinking when you make music. You also make hundreds and thousands of decisions each song you play. What dynamic? What fingering? This is how music education has impacted my life.

### **Nathaniel Perry**

Occupation: Student

From: Kane Area HS, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in many ways. When i was 10 i wanted to play guitar, but my mom said i had to play piano first. I really did not want to play it at all but i did. i didn't even start the guitar afterwards. I started playing trumpet, through my middle school band director in 6th grade. Playing trumpet always seemed exciting and fun to me. So i thought, why not. i played on a school trumpet for a year, and my moms friend saw a Yamaha trumpet at the Goodwill of all places. She bought it and thought about selling it online for \$350. She gave it to me instead, i felt very blessed. Music and music education has had an impact on not only me but other people too. When i would be at a piano recital I would play and look up afterwards and see people crying. Including family that I'm not really that close to. It has an impact on me not only because its fun and I love doing it. Also because of the reaction i get from people after I have worked hard for months on a marching band solo or in band. Crying or standing in the stands at a football game cheering. It makes people happy. Music is a great way to connect with people, in more ways than people realize. Music education has helped me become more creative, become a better, happier person, and has let me show

people my point of view. Just by playing a couple of notes on my trumpet, and that's the impact that music has had on my life.

### **Shanna Danielson**

Occupation: Elementary Music Teacher

From: Port Allegany, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I'd like to think I was a pretty average kid until I saw the flute. I did well in school, but wasn't overly social or athletic. But that day the high school band in Jim Thorpe held an assembly for the 4th graders, I knew the flute was for me. I was fortunate to have an exemplary educator teaching me how to produce sound, where my fingers went, and how to practice. My parents like to tell me that it was a magical transformation- I would practice for hours each week and became a confident, out-going kid. My passion for the flute continued, and when my family moved when I was in Jr. High, we made sure our new school had a good band. High school is a trying time for everyone as students try to find their identities. I found mine in the band room. Every free period was spend in a practice room, whether on the flute, learning a new instrument, or writing music with other all star band kids. When I was a senior, I knew my calling was to follow music and share it with others. Now I teach elementary band. I get to be the cause of those smiles when kids first discover the instrument they're meant for. I am privileged to spend my career sharing the joys of music with eager young musicians. The impact music can have on a youngster is astounding. I went to an assembly one day in fourth grade, and the course of my life was set. Music education is so much more than a class or a club. Music moves people and allows them to connect to the human experience. Music matters!

### **Jaime Digel**

Occupation: Administrative Assistant

From: Smethport, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a wonderful gift. The ability to hear music is equally as wonderful. Music has always been an important part of my family's life. When my son was about 7 years old he started to lose his hearing. He has nerve deafness in both ears. It was a genetic condition from his father's side of the family. For several years he slowly lost more and more of his hearing. Finally it regulated. He is borderline with needing hearing aides. My son, who is now 17, has made it to Regional Choir two years in a row now. He has a beautiful voice and a natural musical ability. Having music and choir in his life through school allowed him to develop his talent even with his hearing loss. Music does not set limitations on people. People set limitations on music. It is important to encourage music in everyone's lives.

### **Kody Bair**

Occupation: Student

From: Smethport Area HS, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has gotten me through most hard times in life.

### **Rachael Duffy**

Occupation: Student

From: Smethport Area HS, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have learned that anyone can make sounds with their voice or their instrument, but it takes true work and skillful techniques to actually create music. At the PMEA festivals, i have left my comfort zone of home and associated with other people that have the same interests as me. It has been a truly wonderful experience that, without the music education program, I otherwise would never have gotten into.

### **Lindsay Jack**

Occupation: Student

From: Smethport Area HS, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

All throughout my life, music has been such a huge part of the way my family bonded. All of my grandparents are musically inclined and my father even chaired fifth at states. When I got older, I started to explore my vocal capabilities and found that I loved it. Ever since, I've taken music education extremely seriously and am beyond blessed to be able to explore the program Smethport offers. Without music, life is a mistake. I believe this firmly and will always have a strong passion and love for the musical capabilities and education I have been blessed with.

### **Jared Pavlock**

Occupation: Student

From: Smethport Area HS, McKean County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Involvement in the music community has brought serenity to my life. Above all else, friendships and musical experiences have shaped my educational paths and successes to be the confident person I am.

## **MERCER COUNTY**

### **Sarah Shannon**

Occupation: Student

From: Greenville HS, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music classes have prepared me to be the kind of person that colleges and employers are looking for, young adults who are responsible, selfless, respectful, and confident. Eventually, my early music classes led to my role as drum major and these qualities have been strengthened in me because of that role. Responsibility is learned by assuming more responsibility and I have done so through my duties as drum major including conducting all performances, loading equipment, and cleaning the band room. My role also allowed me to get to know more people, selflessly serve others, and show others I care. Some students needed someone to talk to, some needed help with a certain task, and I learned to selflessly put others before myself. As an underclassman, I respected my leaders, but being drum major taught me a different form of respect and humility. I continued to learn how vital every person is to our marching band because everyone has something to contribute. My role not only strengthened these qualities, but changed who I am. I used to be a shy, quiet girl, but my role as drum major greatly increased my confidence, confidence needed beyond HS. This confidence will be beneficial to me during college and my career. My music classes have prepared me for life after HS. I have learned math and reading in the academic classroom, but music classes have strengthened qualities I will use throughout my life.

### **Dr. Stacy A. Paporone**

Occupation: Professor of Music

From: Grove City, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Anne Sullivan Macy, teacher of Helen Keller, wrote, "My heart is singing for joy...The light of understanding has shone in my little pupil's mind, and behold, all things are changed." Music education has given me the opportunity to impact the lives of students of all ages. Making music allows students to express the beauty of the human spirit regardless of their societal boundaries. When I see a student--whether age three or twenty-three--make a connection or respond vibrantly during a music lesson, I remember why I chose this profession. When a former student shares with me that they are still involved in music because of the experiences she had in my music classroom, I am humbled. The impact is immeasurable to me, as the work I have done over the years has impacted so many students, and like a ripple in the water, they impact others...it seems never ending. The light of understanding--through music--has changed so many of my students. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to be their teacher.

### **Jeffrey Tedford**

Occupation: Music Professor

From: Grove City, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I began playing the violin at the age of 4 because I was constantly surrounded by music. My mother is a choral director and my father sang in her choir. My younger brother and sister also played the violin and our home was constantly filled with playing violins and singing. After starting college as an elementary education major I realized that my passion was music and I switched to music education which has led me on an incredible journey. One stop included working with the Pittsburgh Symphony and Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh on a weekly basis while studying at Carnegie Mellon University. Another part of the journey included working in the Williamsport Area School District where my philosophy of education completely changed. Music Education should be for ALL learners and the WASD lives that on a daily basis. There are students in this district that would not have the opportunity to perform in other places and they are better students, better people, and better engaged than they would be without music in their lives. I am grateful to the students, parents, and faculty who work and support music in this district and in districts across the state of Pennsylvania.

### **Kacie Beatty**

Occupation: Student

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

No matter if I'm happy or sad, busy or bored, alone or with friends, I am always playing music. All of my best memories involved music. I have created new friendships through listening to music, and when I'm looking for a way to change my mood, my first move is to turn on the radio. When I was younger, I use to go to the skating rink a lot. They constantly would have songs playing. I remember how the funniest thing to do was to get all of your friends together and dance in the middle of the rink. That is where I met most of my closest friends. All the girls would get into a giant group and just dance. From being with each other and talking about our favorite songs and making up dances, I we all got to know each other. That happened back when I was in sixth grade and now I am a senior in high school and I still am extremely close with most of them. Whenever we are together, we even play all of the old songs that they would play every Friday night and we just talk about how much fun we had. Along with music helping me make life long friends, it always helps express my mood. There truly is a song for every situation. If I am in a good mood I will listen to something with a fast tempo. For example, if I am getting ready to hang out with friends, I will usually listen to a pop song that is about having a good time and incorporates a faster beat. When I had a rough day, I will usually listen to something more soft with a slower melody. If one of my friends or I go through a break up, we would put on usually a slower country song. It doesn't matter if I'm excited, nervous, frustrated, or even scared; I always look towards music to help express my feelings. Those are just two of the ways music has impacted my life. From creating new friendships, to just simply expressing my feelings, music is always in my life in some way, shape, or from.

### **Abigail Coupland**

Occupation: Student

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I think about music, I mostly think about how it has affected and impacted the person that I am today. Some people don't believe that music has enough power to alter someone's life, but I am a firm believer that it does. Being in both band and chorus has impacted me in a positive way by allowing me to overcome social barriers and feel a better sense of belonging and pride. Without music in my life, I would be a much different person. I have been a member of band for eight years, and a member of chorus for six years. Throughout my musical education, while learning how to better train my voice or play a trumpet with style, I have also benefited socially from being in these ensembles. While it is very hard work to prepare a piece for both band and chorus, the pay off while performing is incredible. It makes me very proud after a concert, gig, or half

time show, to know that I have the skills necessary to even be a member of the ensemble. Also, band and chorus has influenced my social life exponentially. Some of my fondest memories revolve around either band or chorus. Throughout the past summers, I spent them in anticipation of marching band season. I couldn't wait for the Friday nights, so I could spend time with my friends and make lasting memories. When I was a freshman, a senior named Alie Thompson took me under her wing during marching band season, and she made me feel so welcome and accepted. Due to her act of kindness, I tried every year to make the freshman at band feel as welcome as I did. Throughout the years, I have met some extraordinary people through band, and have made some lasting friendships. Chorus has also helped me make lasting friendships, mostly through the ensemble chamber singers. Ever since I was in middle school and I saw the chamber singers perform, it was a dream of mine to be in that ensemble. My wish finally came true, but I was a little nervous to be in it. However, the seniors at that time made me feel very welcome and soon the chamber singers became like a second family to me. The feeling of family has moved on this year as well, and I love singing with them at the early hour of seven. Going on the gigs with this group has been a memorable experience, and I still get a chuckle out of when I remember my friend Chris McCown accidentally taking the piano bench from a nursing home because he thought it was ours during a performance. Needless to say, being in both band and chorus has helped me grow as a person socially. When I graduate and move on past high school, I will think of the fun experiences I have had in both band and chorus. I will cherish the memories I have made in these two ensembles forever.

### **Shanchi Dholu**

Occupation: Student

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is something that we tend to overlook, but without music many important aspects of our lives would not be here today. Music is something that has impacted my life in ways that I had not imagined. Music was a scapegoat for me during some of the toughest times. It brought me closer to different people. Music is also something that brings back some of my greatest memories. Music is an universal language that tells a story that anyone can relate to. Here is mine. Music was something that I enjoyed listening to as a child. My taste in music changed depending on my mood and also the age I was. I never believed that I would pursue anything that dealt with music except for choir in middle school and high school. My senior year of high I decided to go outside of my comfort zone and try out for the school musical. I made it, but little did I know that the memories I made would be some of the greatest. The friendships I developed through my high school musical are some of the greatest, and I can confidently say that I would not have met these people otherwise. I am thankful for all the memories I cherish with them, and how close music has brought us. It was the glue to many amazing friendships. This experience made me much more passionate about music. I began to sing and write music instead of just listening. Writing quickly became a way for me to express my feelings in a unique way that helped me escape the world. Music gave me the poetic freedom that is nothing like a language arts class or a diary. Memories are made on accident, they are not something you plan ahead of time. The music I listened to during a specific time is also unpredictable. The feeling that comes when you listen to a song and the rush of memories and feelings that come of it is a great feeling. These memories were brought back through the life of music. Music has a strong impact on everyday life. Without music a lot of key aspects of life would be missing. Memories would be lost. Feelings could not be expressed. Friendships would not be made. Music makes the world go round, and it definitely makes my world go round.

### **Keely Kennedy**

Occupation: Student

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a huge part of my life. I have enjoyed singing since I was very young, and I have been a dancer for ten years. Without music, I would not be able to do either of those activities. Without those activities, my life would be boring. I have no idea what I would do without singing and dancing. When I am happy, I become even happier when I sing or dance. When I am sad, music comforts me. Singing, dancing,

and listening to music makes me feel calm and relaxed. When I am having a rough day, or if I am in a bad mood, I turn to something related to music to help me feel better. I generally listen to contemporary pop music and Broadway show tunes. For me, singing is a way to relieve stress and feel relaxed, even if it is only temporary. When I listen to music, I often choreograph dances in my head, and it makes me feel happy and relaxed. Even when I can't get up and start dancing, music provides a way for me to feel like I actually am dancing. I have loved singing in an ensemble since I started choir in fifth grade. Singing in a choir or ensemble provides a whole different experience as opposed to singing alone. It is a scientific fact that singing together brings people closer, and I firmly believe in that. Music has introduced me to so many people that I would have never even thought of being friends with. Since I don't participate in sports, choir and musical are my co-curricular/extracurricular activities. I was shocked at how many friends I made my freshman year from show choir, concert choir, and musical alone. Some of the people I have met through music are now my best friends. The memories I have from musical activities are some of my best ones, and I will never forget the experiences I have had because of music. The lessons I have learned about life and music through these people will stay with me forever. For me, one of the best things about music is the emotions that it can cause you to have. I love when songs are so powerful that they can bring you to tears or even make you laugh. One of my favorite feelings is when music gives you goose bumps. Music can also bring people together, whether it is because you have the same taste or because you are in the same ensembles. I love the fact that music can have that much of an impact on someone's life, including my own. Music has gotten me through so many rough times and has given me so many great memories and friends. I have no idea where I would be or what I would be doing if I didn't have music in my life. No matter where life takes me, music will always be a part of it.

### **Alyssa Nichols**

Occupation: Choir Student at Hermitage High School

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My life would be changed forever if music did not exist; it is the most powerful tool to control my emotions because music was there for me when no one else was. I'm always so amazed that the musicians that sing these songs know exactly what I'm going through. The words connect with my feelings while the tone and instrumentals of the music appeals to my soul. I grew up in a relatively normal home with my mom, dad, and sister. Though there is one thing that you could find not so normal about my family. We are intensely connected to music. I grew up hearing my grandpa sing and my dad and his two brothers harmonizing along with him. Every birthday party we attend, the birthday song must always be sung in 4 part harmony. My grandpa is in a band and he performs all over this side of Pennsylvania and Ohio. So from all this musical background I guess it was only the logical option for me to fall in love with music as well. I love every type of music in all its entirety. When you scroll through my music on my phone or my recently listened to radio stations, you are sure to find the usual pop, rap, and rock. But you will also find songs by Elvis Presley, jazz music, and show tunes from all different types of musicals. For me music isn't just about what music I should like based on where I came from or how I grew up. For me it's about how a song makes me feel. Music is the one thing in my life that I really couldn't risk losing just for the sole reason that I don't want to have to wake up every morning and have to wonder how to respond to my daily struggles because I wouldn't have music there to comfort me. When I was a freshman in high school I really struggled with who I was. I didn't know who I should identify myself with. "Was it possible that I could hang out with the 'popular kids'? or maybe I could be one of those burn-outs and just not care about school or anyone else in my life." These were the thoughts that ripped through my head as I struggled through 9th grade. But it was music that helped me through. Not only did the lyrics of so many songs guide me on the right path, but also having choir everyday really uplifted my spirits. No matter how bad of a day I was having I could always count on the fact that I would have choir. I would be able to relax and no longer have to think about the stress of all the other classes. I could sing songs as loud or as soft I wanted to. I could express any emotion that I wanted to. I could make the song mine. Music is my tool to make life mine.

## **Jenna Reda**

Occupation: Student

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is more than just notes on a page, music is more than sound, music is more than I can say. It's is a beautiful intricate art that has a way of capturing hearts and bringing peace to the soul. Everyday we hear music and it almost seems to follow your footsteps. Music is a spectacular thing and it has impacted my life because it is the one thing that is stable. Constantly our world is changing and people are coming and going. Time may change, but music lasts forever. Every piece of music has left an imprint on the Earth and its melodies are never ending. In my life it is hard to keep up with what is going on from one day to the next. My schedules always cramped and I either have to go to swim practice, musical rehearsal, orchestra practice, or a do one of a billion other things, like eat. Whenever it gets too bad and I'm over stressed and behind, music calms me down. Music acts as an anchor and grounds me. At night it is nice to be able to come home and listen to some legato music. I find it relaxing and calming. All day I am rushed and constantly just trying to keep up. However music is always there and its stability is more powerful than it knows. I sing while I swim and play viola after school, just so that I know that though the world is spinning like crazy, there is one thing that will always be there for me forever. Overall I can say that music is a worthwhile cause. It helps everyone in a different way, weather it's relieving stress, being a stable anchor, or helping out on a bad day. Music means more to me than life, and without it I would be a shell of a human being, no more than a lost echo in the wind. Music is full of endless meanings intertwined with melodies.

## **Emilio Santiago**

Occupation: Student

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It all began with the sound of every pitch I had ever crossed in my life, swarming into my mind through my ears, and suddenly making sense for the first time. This all occurred one day after school, upon my first time entering the choir room. It was a bold step going in there, with the purpose of joining Chamber Singers drawing me closer to an aging piano. And all at once, I had a feeling of acceptance and belonging, only in such a short amount of time. This had come about from a desire inside me to change. And that's what music was for me; a change. And now it is the constant. Music impacted me like a meteor kissing the earth's surface, by giving me a reason to wake up each day, and a reason to smile through the darkness. Through humble beginnings, I have turned over to exciting happenings. Each morning, I wake up with the sole purpose to sing. I simply focus on Chamber Singers, my schools highest chorale ensemble. Before I was in the company of such elite singers, I was wallowing through high school without a purpose, aimlessly wandering, with no desire to even touch the handle of the various doors of opportunity before me. And now, I have finally unlocked the door of music, which has led me to looking towards the future, every second being in the choir room, another reason I've grown to love this lifestyle. Through the vessel of Chamber Singers, I have been given purpose. Whilst carrying a burden of nothingness, I had become depressed through my entire first half of high school. I had no sunshine, thus leading to a dark atmosphere that consumed my days and nights. When I first set foot in the choir room, things were different. Everyone was happy, everyone was singing, and everyone was exciting. I wanted to stand among them, because to me, they were a missing piece of my life. A vacancy had been made in my life, that music filled almost immediately, and ever since that day, I have been a happier person, and even a better person. Through the vessel of music, I had become happy. With music, there is no end, and that's the reassuring fact about it. It is limitless, pure, and forever, and to me, a love of it has been carved into my being for the rest of my existence. I thank all those who have guided me, directed me, critiqued me, and walked beside me, for they have made this life the best I could ever have. Music has impacted me beyond belief, and for that, I am changed.

## **Faith Stevenson**

Occupation: Student

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

“I know I’m stronger in the songs than I really am. Sometimes I need to hear it myself. We all need to hear those empowering songs to remind us” (Beyonce Knowles). Music has impacted my life in many ways. Music has become a stress reliever in my eyes and ears. Music has a certain power to cheer me up and brighten up my day when I am upset, stressed or sad. Music was there for me when no one else was. Even the smallest beats, tones, or pitches can help my mood. Genres of music have helped me fix relationships with my friends and family when I could not. At a young age, I was not very close with my cousin and had no interest of even becoming friends with them because of our five year gap. But music brought us together. Even those parts of the song that were too flat or sharp for us to sing along or jam out to, we still did it. Something as simple as listening to a song had made us best friends. I will never regret listening to music with my cousin because I am thankful for our friendship. So since music has brought us together, I wanted to learn more about music. Hickory High School Choir was probably the best thing I ever joined. It lets me express myself in song to the amazing musically songs or hymns we learn and perform in the winter and spring. Every song we have learned has had some memorable, different beat to it that made it stand out. Chorus has also taught me things today I probably would have never cared to know about. Learning about the dynamics about each school has been the most fun and interesting to me. I have learned my musical part, Alto, and learned about the key signature treble. Joining choir has been able to show myself that I love singing the melody more than the harmony. Even all the keys signatures and tones of the song amaze me. “Where words fail, music speaks” (plato). Taking choir as a class, it showed me that everyone is different and listens to different genres. Music is my biggest happiness but not only mine. Music brings people together and changes their lives. Everyone’s key of life is different but in the end we are all in this together.

## **Taige Adler**

Occupation: Student

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a big part of my life. I have a musical family, so music has impacted me since I was young. My mom sang for our church for most of my childhood and although my dad has never been very musically talented, he has always had a huge love for it. I have also been a dancer and a cheerleader for as long as I can remember. I could not imagine these activities without music. Music is what adds to a cheerleading or dance routine. Without it, it would be boring. Music adds so much to the world. I cannot imagine movies, sports, doing homework, or even driving to school without it. Without music, the world would be boring. Music is also a way for me to express my feelings. Music can be comforting, happy, sad, or whatever else I need or want it to be. It has helped me through so many hard situations throughout my life and been my comfort when I really needed it. Music is perfect for happy times too. It is the background music that makes every vacation, every moment, and every adventure memorable. I love when I can listen to a certain song or artist or album and it can take me right back to some of the best moments of my life, and remind me of how it felt to live them. Most importantly, music has brought me closer to people. There are many people I know, and many of my closest friends, that I would not even know if it weren’t for music. First, I have made so many friends through chorus. I have gotten to know and become good friends with people that I probably would never have even talked to under other circumstances. Chorus has also brought me so much closer to friends I had before, but now get to spend more time with. Not only chorus class, but just music in general has brought me closer to so many people. I cannot tell you the amount of times I have made friends with or become much closer to someone due to their taste in music. I have learned that when two people have the same or similar taste in music, they become closer. Almost all of my friends have very similar tastes in music and that brings us together. From talking about it, to listening to it together, to going to concerts together, it is absolutely amazing how much closer music can bring people. It gives people something in common. I cannot imagine the world without all of the wonderful things music brings to it. Without music, life would be boring.

### **Kaitlyn Slezak**

Occupation: Student

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

“The singing, there was so much singing then, and this was my pleasure too.” – K. Lee Scott These are the beginning lyrics to my favorite piece that I have ever performed and these are the words that still ring true in my life today. I find pure happiness in performing and it has greatly impacted my life thus far. Even as a little girl music was something that I loved. My favorite movie was Fantasia, the Disney film that set cartoons to classical music like Beethoven’s 5th symphony and Rhapsody in Blue. In second grade music class our teacher would bring in instruments for us to try and play, she brought in many different items but only one really sparked my interest. There was a violin and from the first moment I held it I knew that it was something that I wanted to pursue playing and I have ever since that day. Even getting to play some of those classic pieces I have loved since I was small. It wasn’t until I was older that I discovered I could sing. It was something I had always enjoyed doing but I never pursued (or even thought I was good at) until I was in high school. There are many gifted people at my school; I never thought I could have been one of them. I have had the privilege of attending a couple of PMEA festivals and they made me realize that music was something I could not walk away from when I left school, but something I wanted to continue doing for the rest of my life. There are moments in performances where I just can’t help but feeling awestruck. I am inspired by the people that meet in these festivals and by the hard work and dedication they put in to be as good as they are. It fuels me; I want someone to think that way about me one day. There was a specific piece I listened to that brought me to tears and made me realize how important music was to me. “The Awakening” by Joseph Martins lyrics talk about the demise of music and how it is something that needs to be saved. That was the moment I realized that I felt that I needed to continue pursuing music later in life.

### **Billy Blaze**

Occupation: Student

From: Hickory HS, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a form of expression, an outlet where all your emotions can be set free and no judgement will be faced. In addition, music serves as a form of community amongst others who also share the love of music. This common bond allows enriching social interaction within a comfortable setting. Personally, the power of music has allowed me to pass through the hardest challenges and darkest moments in my life. When I thought there was no way to pick up the pieces of what my life was music reached into my soul and allowed me to carry on with a positive perspective. Within music is the power to enlighten and inspire anyone that listens. A single song has the ability to form a connection with any human being and make a positive difference in their lives. Referencing back to music as a community, people who take part in any music activity whether it be band, orchestra, or choir find themselves in a relaxed setting with people who all share the bond of music. These communities are safe places for people to show individuality with judgement. Therefore, music is not just a sound attached to some melody, it is a way of life that impacts us all.

### **Brianna Dzuricko**

Occupation: Student

From: Hickory HS, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

“Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent”. Victor Hugo, a member of the romanticism literary movement, made this statement regarding the value of music in society. He was a great supporter of the arts who favored the composers Liszt and Berlioz, often times having their compositions ring throughout his household. His biography emphasizes his value of written text and the talent it takes to become a musician. Music and writing are forms of personal expression that are important in everyday life. Practicing music is a daily occurrence for multi-instrument students involved in different school ensembles. I can practice up to 6 hours on music within just our school ensembles. However many hours it takes, it is always an enjoyable experience. Working through pieces of music teach you history of the time period written, musical terminology along with theory, and determination to finish playing and learning

the song or movement. Music is not only beneficial to the individual, but for a group. Creating music within a group of people creates a beautiful sound, a sense of belonging, and lasting friendships. Since middle school, PMEA festivals provided a chance to make friendships while making music. School programs allow many different types of people, who would not normally speak, to connect through music. Band, choir and orchestra programs, through the hard work and personal connections, have made me the person I am today.

### **Sarah Harris**

Occupation: Student

From: Hickory HS, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has the ability to completely change someone's attitude. It is able to change the lives and the hearts of those that hear it. When the simple question of what music means is presented, it is a difficult question to be able to answer. This is because of the fact that music has done so much in my life. It has opened many doors including the opportunity to meet new people and experience new things. Music continues to change my life, including every morning when I have either band or orchestra. As a musician, I play viola, French horn, trombone, and bass guitar. This year, I was given the privilege of being the drum major of our marching band. I am also in the annual HS musical. Music sets the tone and the mood of my day, with not only making my day brighter, but also awakening me with nothing except the simple notes of beautiful harmony and melody. Music has led to many new relationships and friendships. As William Shakespeare once said, "If music be the food of love, then play on."

### **Kyle Hartenstein**

Occupation: Student

From: Hickory HS, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Kyle Hartenstein Music Music is extremely important to me. For as long as I can remember, I've always been very involved in music. Whether it is in the band, choir, or just everyday life, music has made a positive impact on my life. Most of my friends today I have gained through our shared interest in music. Band, just one example of many, has allowed me to gain some of my best friends and taught me many things about music. These have made me appreciate music as well as respect it. Music is a unifying force, creating emotions, like happiness, sadness, or others, that other mediums cannot. Without music, life would be absolutely boring. After all, one cannot go minutes without encountering music of some kind, whether it is in the background of a commercial, on the radio, or in movies. Music changes ordinary situations into extraordinary ones. Music is an important part of my life that I hope will never go away.

### **Stephen Petrochko**

Occupation: Student

From: Hickory HS, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a method by which emotions, feelings, and thoughts can be savored and transmitted without the necessity of the spoken word. Author Victor Hugo notes, "Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent." Vocalization of music allows for the combined artistic approach of poetry alongside the raw emotion. In my experiences, music has been a way to allow for happiness, joy, sadness, anger, thoughtfulness, and a myriad of other emotions, to make their presence known, and perhaps, better understood. Whether pretending to conduct an orchestral recording, singing along to a known song playing in my mind, or simply sitting quietly to reflect on the occurrences of that time, music has been a way to feel. My experiences with music have been broad. I first became involved with music as a study by the young children's program, Kindermusic. This program helped to instill an appreciation for music. This primary appreciation was then kindled by lessons, at that time, in violin. I began shortly before I turned five years old. Although I did not continue with violin, as I concluded my lessons around the fifth grade, I started lessons in piano, which I retain. In seventh grade, I also began to take trumpet lessons, leading into my time with the Hickory HS Bands. Particularly in HS, the study of choral endeavors became known. This aspect of music, that which God created, and is so conveniently portable, has grown with me. In school, I'm currently a

member of the Chambers Singers. Music is a way by which sensations can be felt, and broadcast. It can bring people together for religious, or social, events. Music, to me, is a method of emoting thoughts, and sharing them with the world.

### **Marissa Works**

Occupation: Student

From: Hickory HS, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My education has enriched my life and has allowed me to mature as a person and musician. By studying, singing, and accompanying pieces from various time periods, countries, and genres, I've learned to appreciate many cultures and styles of music. My involvement in Chamber Choir has also allowed me to connect with my peers by working together to produce performances that are enlightening, challenging, and emotionally in sync. At PMEA festivals, I've had the privilege of interacting with inspiring collegiate choir directors. These experiences have profoundly influenced my decision to become a music educator and share the true beauty and power of music.

### **Doris Stanley**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Jamestown, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Being involved in the music education through elementary school and junior and senior high was my whole world at the time. My band and choir friends were my social group. Our participation in football games and weekend band competitions filled my calendar. County and District band and choir festivals put me in touch with other students who were serious about music. Music was my creative outlet and my challenge. I was interested in other subjects in school, but music was my passion. I remember playing the piano solo, Rhapsody in Blue, with the band and thinking that the experience was the high point of my life at the time. I knew I would be a teacher like my mother and grandmother before me, but did not know exactly what form that would take. When our high school choir director got an inner ear infection and was out of school for six weeks, as the student director I was in charge of those rehearsals. That situation decided my vocation. There has not been a day since that was not affected by my music classes in school. I now teach music to children from prekindergarten through twelfth grade. I direct choirs at church and in the community. I teach piano and voice lessons to folks of all ages. I see first hand how children develop self confidence through musical performances. I see them express themselves through performing the music and by creating their own original tunes and lyrics. I see their co-ordination and ability to memorize patterns improve. I see non-competitive teamwork appear before my eyes every day. I see children who believe they are incapable realize that they can succeed and even excel in music if they are diligent. I get to help recreate the thrill that I felt in music as a student every day in the students that I now teach. I can truthfully say that without music education, my life as I know it would not exist. I still use the skills I learned in math, science and English class; but I use what I learned in music class all day every day.

### **Travis J. Weller**

Occupation: Advocate, Composer, Conductor, Educator.

From: Mercer, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

There was a moment during my senior year of high school when I realized music was the only thing I knew how to do, and the only thing that I wanted to do. Pretty convenient, eh? I don't know that I was or will ever be a talented musician - I know that I am passionate about it, deeply interested in it, and willing to work hard to develop my skills. The trials and tests we experience, in music and life, produce endurance. Endurance produces character. Character produces honor. Honor produces excellence. Wanting excellence out of yourself in music and life is something that no one can ever take away from you or deny you. It is not some lofty, unattainable philosophical point or a standardized answer that can be quantified on an exam. It is a lesson that has far outlasted the time I have been active making music – and all the while, it came with a really awesome soundtrack. All the work, all the practice, all the decision made in the absence of rule to bring

about the best possible musical moment for myself and students has been worth it. It has given me great purpose as a professional to endow that love and appreciation to future generations, and to savor the richness and fullness that a life in music affords.

### **Kiernan Coburn**

Occupation: Student

From: Reynolds HS, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by giving me the right to express myself, not only through words, but through the way in which I play. Music has helped me cope with multiple struggles throughout my life and is often the only thing that seems to ease my mind and train of thoughts. As an instrumentalist and a vocalist I greatly enjoy learning from my music director Miss Morris and I strongly believe that every fund cut not only affects the amount of music, new instruments, and the quality of education we receive but also seems to imply to today's youth that music is an aspect of life that we can easily cut without a backward glance. As my school has been experiencing this through a loss of band/choir members, I believe that through more funding, not less, and more encouragement from prominent figures music programs throughout America would stand a chance in the very near future.

### **Jessica John**

Occupation: Student

From: Reynolds HS, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music education in my life I don't believe I would have ever found that I have a passion for playing music. Throughout my elementary and HS years as a musician I have grown dramatically as an individual: music education has basically developed who I am today as a person. It has given me a career path in the future and has also disciplined me to work hard with everything I do.

### **Barry Nelson**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Transfer, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in profound ways. It has enabled me to develop singing skills, and to learn to play an instrument, the trumpet. It taught me to be a member of a team (choir, band), and to learn discipline and working toward common goals. I sing in church, and it has allowed me to express my faith and my love to my Lord. Music has challenged me, and taught me to overcome challenges. It has made me think, and improved my thinking skills. Music is of profound importance to society, and especially our youth. In an era of too much testing and teaching to the test, music is an important creative outlet that we should emphasize to our children. It provides an opportunity to promote patriotism, religion, and history. Music, as well as the other arts, enables us to become well rounded citizens.

### **Geraldine Truog**

Occupation: Library Media Specialist

From: West Middlesex, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is what gets me through life on the rougher days. Music gets me through workouts in the gym and keeps me company on runs/bike rides. Music education students were some of my best friends in college (even more so than my fellow library science majors). College marching band, concert band, and jazz band helped me to get out of my dorm room freshman year and Kappa Kappa Psi broadened my horizons, experiences, and friendships. As an Honors Program student at Clarion University, my class was privileged to have a Music and Interpretive Dance course mandated for us. Many of us were dreading the class, but it turned out to be a lot of fun and every time I hear the song "Carol of the Bells" I remember Dr. Register telling us that you can count that song in three or two and recall the demonstrations that we did on the stage of counting out the beats. Music education is something that everyone needs to be exposed to because it

allows for creative expressions. Math, science, and technology are great, but they do not allow for all of the creativity that music permits. My music education enables me to play in local community bands and church bell choir. I can pick up my instruments after months of not playing and have the knowledge to create beautiful music come back to me because I had wonderful music directors. Some of the most caring teachers have been my band directors. If it wasn't for music, I can't tell you where I would be or what I would be doing; but I KNOW that I would not be as successful as I am. I would not have studied abroad, gotten a masters degree, or traveled around the world. Music education opened my mind to possibilities beyond what people told me I could accomplish and I have flourished from all of the music, music teachers, and music education friends.

### **Camille Bianco**

Occupation: Student

From: Hermitage, Mercer County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life since I was born and has always been something I can listen to, that takes any feelings away. Music doesn't just impact my life through choir, but ever since I was young, music has been the first thing I really admired. Either getting to sing and play music or just hearing a song that I like, and immediately downloading it, impacts my life as I grow up. I used to be a dancer for 6 years, and music is what pushed me to dance. I wouldn't have felt the same thing if music was not there, for me to dance to. I just love the feeling of being in the car, and my favorite songs come on, and it immediately puts me in a different mood. My moods are sometimes based off of music, and they always have been. If I am going through a hard or stressful time, I listen to a song that lets all of the stress be released. Or if I am getting ready for my tennis match, or swim meet, I put on a song that immediately gets me pumped up and ready to win. Also, when I am in choir, I always am ready and excited to sing. I don't necessarily think it's because I love to sing, but because it's the music I get to sing. The music is what causes a rush to warm up my voice and start singing soprano or alto. Another example is when I go to piano lessons, I play the piano because I love the sound it makes and the music I get to play, not because I want to be a professional piano player. My life would not be exciting if it wasn't for music and the things that I do that involve music. I go to a concert at least twice a year. I go because I love hearing the sound and music the person plays or sings, not because I am obsessed with them. So, music is one of the biggest impacts in my life, and without music, it would be a blur.

## **MIFFLIN COUNTY**

### **Steph Diehl**

Occupation: Medical Biller

From: Lewistown, Mifflin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always had a calming affect on me. I have played the piano since I was 8 and played in a band since I was in 5th grade. I was very lucky to be able to have a great music program in my school. I got to experience marching band, concert band, and jazz band. After high school, I continued to play my sax in college and even to this day, I play in a community band and a big band. I can sit down at a piano after a long, hard day and play and it relaxes me! I am forever grateful to my music teachers throughout the years. They have given me something that I will take with me forever! Music has given me a sense of accomplishment, has taught me responsibility, and I have made many friends over the years who share my love for music!

### **Freda Richard**

Occupation: Retired Music Educator

From: Lewistown, Mifflin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Besides giving me a life long career, in retirement for the last 22 years, music has gotten me through the loss of two spouses, kept me active, creative, vital, and provided an opportunity to play in various organizations

with top notch musicians and conductors. The latest was the D-Day 70th Memorial Wind Band on Omaha Beach, June 6th 2014. Through keeping alive and growing our local community band, I feel as though we have brought a worthy and needed service to our citizens and community. I am proud to be part of that process.

### **James Rosner**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Lewistown, Mifflin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

All my life I have been involved in music. My mother sang to me as a child and exposed me to different styles of music. I participated in general music classes in elementary school. In third grade I began studying piano. In fourth grade I started saxophone lessons which led to my participation in marching band in high school. In high school I participated in choir, jazz band, concert band, and in musicals and dramas. In tenth grade I decided to pursue music as career. I was not good in athletics but excelled in academics. The opportunity to participate in music gave me the opportunity to excel in group activities and a chance to succeed in something beside academics. Without music education I would not be the person that I am today.

### **Chase Booher**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has introduced me to a lot of friends that I may not have met otherwise.

### **Andrew Cassell**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me new opportunities in the world of music. Music education has also allowed me to form friendships that wouldn't be possible without.

### **Lucy Crawford**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS , Mifflin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is the language we all understand...even on my worst days, music is always there. Music has been my favorite part of HS.

### **Emily Curto**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. I have been in choir and band since elementary school and I have loved it ever since. I plan on pursuing my career in music in college, and this greatly due to the influence of my music education, and my wonderful music educators. Music education has impacted my love for music and my development as a person.

### **Maria Fowler**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me a release from the stresses of HS, taught me about different cultures, shaped me into a well-rounded young person, and given me countless hours of fun.

**Caleb Greer**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have learned so much from music. When I sing it makes me forget about the world.

**Andrew Kline**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have grown long-lasting friendships from music, and I have found talents that I might not have found without education.

**Kathryn Milliken**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Overall, music education has made me a better person. Music allows me to be more expressive and more specifically allows me to release my feelings and emotions in a way that as, as well as others, can enjoy. I think it's important for this to be a part of my life at school and not just outside of school.

**Presley Riden**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has become an essential part of my life. Choir has become the best part of my school day and every year it is the first thing I sign up for on my schedule.

**Katherine Staronka**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me a place when there was no other. As an advanced student, taking high stress classes, music gives me great freedom of expression. It also helps me with organizing my schedule. Being a member of a music group is like joining a family. Your differences do not matter when you come together to meet a common goal. When there is no where else to go, your director, and your friends are there for you.

**Gabrielle Vega**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed music to become a major part of my life. Without music education, I would not have been able to be part of Concert Choir, Cantare, District Choir or Regional Choir. The music I've performed with these groups has had an immeasurably positive impact on my life, as it has given me solace even in the most turbulent times of my life.

**Jason Weinberg**

Occupation: Student

From: Mifflin County HS, Mifflin County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has improved my self-esteem by making me take chances. With these chances it allow opportunities for greatness. With these opportunities come a learning experience and with learning

experiences comes a life lesson. And life lessons teach you about the world. It has helped me make friends. This is what music is to me.

### **Samantha Gates**

Occupation: Teacher, Music K-12 and English 7-12

From: Lewistown, Mifflin County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a part of my life. It's been a go to for celebrations and a go to when I needed an escape. I find it cathartic to write music and, without my basis in music, band chorus, and theory classes, I would not have the knowledge to express myself that way. I am and will forever be grateful to my music teachers for inspiring me to express myself and encouraging my musical development. Aside from composing, music education is my chosen career. I love music and get such a thrill out of sharing that love with the next generation. It's been such a joy to walk in to various classrooms and teach concepts in new ways, which many times leads to an aha! moment for at least one student. To see him/her succeed at something that was a struggle before, especially with something music related (because it's supposed to be fun), is such a joy and I LOVE it!

## **MONROE COUNTY**

### **Joshua Cloward**

Occupation: Student

From: East Stroudsburg HS South, Monroe County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in many ways which are all for the better. One of the ways music has impacted my life is by learning how to be a better person in general. In doing this it has helped me to become more outgoing as well as not being afraid of being put into awkward situations. Throughout my many years in band, many people have made impressions upon me that I will never forget. My teachers as well have helped to grow musically and grow more as a person. Without music in my life I do not know what I would be doing with my life. Music is my safe haven and my often sought retreat. Music helps me to express myself in ways I had never thought to or knew how. Music has also greatly impacted my life because ever since I have started playing tuba I have never wanted to stop. It just gives me joy to pick up my tuba and play it. Music is the most important thing and my life so I thank my school district for keeping music in my school and allowing music to continue to impact my life.

### **Bobby Rutherford**

Occupation: Student

From: East Stroudsburg HS South, Monroe County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has opened up many doors and has extended my understanding of the theory of music. With music education in HS, i am able to get a head start on college before i actually attend. I believe music education has helped me understand music and has given me an advantage above other students.

### **Jon Williams**

Occupation: Student

From: East Stroudsburg HS South, Monroe County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Through music education, I have learned many things that have impacted my life. Music has taught me the discipline to apply myself to something I care about. Music has also taught me how to approach life creatively. Overall, without my music education I would be a completely different person.

### **Logan Zucchini**

Occupation: Student

From: East Stroudsburg HS South, Monroe County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Throughout my middle school and HS tenure, I have participated in regular school chorus along with select groups. For about six years, I have been able to travel across the country to places like Chicago, Baltimore and Washington D.C. on tours where we performed choral music. Being involved in music has given me this opportunity to travel, while learning discipline and having the enjoyment of music. Overall, my experience in music education has most definitely changed my life for the better.

### **Dr. Nadia Worobij**

Occupation: Vocal Music Teacher

From: East Stroudsburg, Monroe County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has given me the skills, tools and applications to be well-versed in many areas of my life and to multi-task at all times. Because music education enhances the uses of both hemispheres of the brain, the rational and the symbolic, I can teach and perform music. I am a contributing member to society. As a teacher, I can impact the next generation of human beings. People study humanities to get in touch with their human side. Too much emphasis is given to computers, gadgets and machines. While they are essential, people sometimes I find are lacking in social skills. Music education helps with social skills by encouraging musicians to perform for others so that they can get into their human existence for a while and step away from technology and the fast-paced world. Music is an essential subject, not just an elective. Studies have shown that students taking music lessons score well on math and reading tests because their brain is used to being challenged in high order thinking. I earned a doctorate in music because I wanted to study the subject that I love at the highest level. Just like a psychology students earned a PhD in Psychology, I earned a DMA in Music.

### **Braeden Boyer**

Occupation: Student

From: Pocono Mountain West HS, Monroe County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is something that every person in the world is surrounded by. Through music, a person can show their feelings, ideas, problems, culture(s) or even just listen or play for fun. Through music I have found something resembling a passion. From 9th grade up until now, being my senior year, I have been though 3 different directors. Although all of the directors were good people, some excelled at making connections with their students. I am a tenor saxophone player and one of my directors was a drummer, who I had for 2 years during HS. Again, a very nice person, but I lacked the connection due to the fact that he did not have much to teach a woodwind player. My current director is a trumpet player but he was able to make a connection with me. He sat down and helped me with what I needed to know and was patient when it came to the problems I had. Seeing a teacher act like this toward me showed that I was capable of being better as a player. He pushed me to audition for districts, which placed me in 1st chair for the district 10 tenor saxophones and I even found myself on my way to the region 5 band as well. Music is very much so a passion for me as well as a way to express myself in ways I never thought possible. If one has the drive to succeed and others who will help them forward, a teacher for example, something as simple or as difficult as music can become a passion. I have many musicians in my family and an ongoing theme for us comes around very often pertaining to music. "It's not just words and sounds, there is much more to it."

### **Stephanie Fritz**

Occupation: Student

From: Stroudsburg HS, Monroe County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life in that it has given me an opportunity to pursue what I love at the HS level. Through festivals run by music educators, I am able to meet, play with, and enjoy other students across the state who enjoy music as much as I do.

### **Alexa Vaghenas**

Occupation: Student

From: Stroudsburg HS, Monroe County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has shaped the person that I am today. By immersing myself in my school's music program, I've developed determination, dedication, confidence, and made memories that will last a lifetime. By holding myself responsible for a high caliber of performance, I've learned there is always room for improvement, and that practice doesn't make perfect; it makes progress. Music is magical!

### **Kelly Moriarty**

Occupation: MSW Student

From: Kunkletown, Monroe County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to become a more well rounded student. It has helped me learn to think abstractly and transfer those thinking/learning skills to other disciplines. Music is also proven to be therapeutic. Learning to make or just appreciating music significantly reduces stress levels of students and the general population. As a dancer and marching band member I have made many positive and supportive relationships with fellow music lovers. Each elective course serves a purpose in allowing students to broaden their horizons however, music and the performing arts are dear to my heart because they have given me the tools to become a leader, team member, life long learner, and friend.

## **MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

### **B.J. Capelli**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Ardmore, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a professional musician and educator, the impact of my music education is obviously profound and essential to nearly my entire existence - personally and professionally. But, the even bigger impact music education has had on my life is as a teacher, guide, and role model. I entered the education field because I was motivated to be an advocate and support system for young adults, since I felt that I had lacked such in my young life. Music is the vehicle through which I am able to reach the students - an immediate common ground that we share. It isn't a matter of "bait-and-switch;" my passion for music, for learning, and for excellence is genuine and obvious to my students, but that passion and quest for excellence is transferable to every other aspect of life, and I make sure my students understand that. It's true that those lessons could be taught in other venues, but music has allowed me to reach even the most difficult and troubled students by both capitalizing on their interests and leaning on the inherent bond that musicians and music lovers share with each other. This doesn't happen in other subject areas with the majority of students. Almost every young person has a favorite instrument, song, band, or style of music; most of them don't have a favorite mathematician or theorem. That is why music education is both unique and essential to the development of young students. Music is universally loved, and it provides a doorway to learning, achievement, and social development - all necessary paths for successful students and citizens. Music education has impacted my life, most, because it has allowed me to shape the next generation, and continue a legacy that has molded, and will continue to mold, the very makeup of our society and world. I can't think of how a greater impact could be made by anything.

### **Noah Clouse**

Occupation: Student

From: Cheltenham HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has taught me many lessons in life. It has availed me the opportunities and chances to meet people and do things I could have never done on my own. I am proud to be a musician and feel that all students should involve themselves in the arts. Arts are activities that bring people of different backgrounds together to create something purely amazing. Music also teaches lessons like: working as a team, getting along with others, becoming comfortable with others or in front of others, and many more valuable lessons that are important to the growth and development of teenagers. In my four years of HS I have done many things, but the musical activities I have been a part of have led me to my greatest friends and memories.

### **William Saurman**

Occupation: Student

From: Cheltenham HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It's helped me find my passion and place in this society. Through the PMEA program I get to continue doing what I love doing.

### **Susan Basalik**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Collegeville, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I cannot imagine my life without music education! My school music experiences provided many opportunities that I would not have otherwise been able to enjoy. My music teachers encouraged me to set and reach goals, to persevere, to develop creativity, to appreciate the beauty of a wonderful art form, and to work together with others to create outstanding performances. The passion and commitment of my school music teachers inspired me to become a music educator. As a student who attended a large high school in Philadelphia, there were times when I felt that I was not equal to my peers, and at times, believed that I did not belong at that school. However, once I stepped into the music suite, I knew that I was in a place that was a perfect fit for me. As a musician, it didn't matter that I was from the "other side of the boulevard" or didn't have the latest and greatest in terms of clothing and jewelry. What mattered was that I enjoyed making music and that I enjoyed sharing music with others. School music programs allow students to see each other as real people, with a great love and respect for an art form and for other people. Had I not been in my school music program, I highly doubt if I would have enjoyed school as much as I did. As I work with my students at school, I hope to share my love of music and of education with my students. I would certainly hope that participation in my school district's music program will make a positive impact on my students. School music programs are valuable and needed now more than ever. Yes, music does teach 21st century skills, but music teaches so many more life skills that have transcended generations. Life skills such as responsibility, respect, tolerance for others, creativity, leadership, teamwork, and most importantly, appreciation for an art form that everyone carries inside of them are taught every day in music classes and programs across our state. No child should be denied the opportunity to acquire these life skills and what better place is there to teach these skills than in music programs. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that quality music education programs are made available to every student in our state, regardless of where a child attends school. It is time for every child in Pennsylvania to receive the positive impact of a quality music education. To deny our children this opportunity is to deny our children a means of fully reaching their potential. I truly believe that giving our children a chance to experience a quality music education program will allow our children to acquire the skills that they will need to succeed in life.

### **Molly Doman**

Occupation: Student

From: Germantown Academy, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has helped to build my self confidence. It has taught me discipline and focus.

### **Lyz Ruggiero**

Occupation: High School Student

From: Glenmoore, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is the only thing that's always been there for me. No matter what mood you're in, it will always have something to offer that you want to hear. Its helped me meet and bond with some really cool people. Nothing is more cool than meeting someone and finding out you like the same music. Music education helped me to discover making collaborative music rather than playing in my room alone. I have learned to harmonize and work hard while still having fun. In music class, I get to do what I love, play my flute and piano, and sing my heart out. It has taught me to read many different types of music by so many different people. Music is a part of my life, whether I am playing it or listening to it. Music calms me and helps me to get through hard spots in my life. My music teachers are amazing and I know that I can always go to them for help. My music understands me and this education with it has only made me grow closer. I love my music and couldn't bear to part with it. I love to play my instruments and sing for my family and friends. Music will forever be a part of my life. I love going into the chorus room or the band room in my school and just sitting down and talking to the teacher. It is fun to just chill in one of the rooms before class. Sometimes I even get to practice my instruments or work on a part of a song we are singing that I might be having trouble with. I have learned so many things about music from music education that I am extremely grateful for. I am so glad that I got into playing music because I do not know what I would do without it. I have met so many amazing friends. Sometimes there is no way to express how you feel, or what you want to say. Music speaks when words can not. Music makes me forget about everything bad about the world. Sometimes music brings back memories, good and bad. Music shows just how beautiful everything can really be. It's brought so many people together but can tear people apart. It's that powerful. Music education has brought me so close to so many different people but has also ruined many of my relationships with people. There is a difference between someone casually listening popular radio stations and someone with listening to music with passion. Someone listening to the music with passion can not only hear it, but can feel it and let it consume them. There are some songs that actually make me feel paralyzed and stop time. Music can change your life if you find what you really love. I truly could never part with my music and I am so grateful for my education with it.

### **Caitlin Aloia**

Occupation: Student

From: Gwynedd Mercy Academy HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From an early age, I have been surrounded by music mentors and teachers that have changed my life completely. Elementary school music teachers, piano instructors, voice teachers and coaches, and finally, HS music professors have fostered my passion and love of the arts. Being educated by such individuals has inspired me to continue pursuing my dream: vocal performance. On a more personal level, my sister has spent the last four years of college teaching piano lessons to promising young students who look up to her as a mentor as well as a trusted friend. I look up to my sister as a role model, and I try to emulate her qualities of patience, understanding, wisdom, and perseverance as a music educator. It took me years and years to appreciate how all music educators must acquire and exhibit these charisms in order to be effective and make an impact on the lives of their pupils. Music education has shaped my very nature and has made me the musician that I am proud to be today. I would attribute my current success to the educators I have had the fortune of learning from. Cultivated by said teachers, my affection for and dedication to music has grown immensely in the years prior to HS. I only hope that I can impact the lives of students in the same way I was impacted by my music mentors.

### **John Runyen**

Occupation: College Student, part time Computer Technician

From: Lafayette Hill, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I spent the majority of my high school career participating in activities like concert band, marching band, indoor drumline, jazz band, orchestra, etc., and I strongly believe that they taught me some of the most valuable lessons I learned in high school. In my opinion, the most prevalent concept taught by all music activities is the importance of hard work. Whether it was through practicing the music in concert band or through physical exertion while participating in the marching arts, music education has a very high standard in terms of work ethic. In addition, music education teaches teamwork, dedication, responsibility, time management, and social skills. This short list barely scratches the surface of what I've learned through music education, but it gives a quick overview to what I consider to be the most important lessons I learned. Thanks to music education, I am able to succeed on a very high level in all that I attempt. Working hard at the things I am passionate about has become second nature, I am able to handle a high level of responsibility, and I have very good time management skills. Music education has also given me what I consider to be my most important trait as a freshman computer science major: social skills. Thanks to my above average social skills I can communicate with others with more eloquence, and express my thoughts and ideas with ease. This ultimately has led to a very good first semester, and a job on campus fixing and maintaining faculty computers. Although I am not involved directly with music at my college, I firmly believe that music education is directly related to all my successes as a young adult. I have no doubt in my mind that the things I learned through music will also continue to impact my life positively in the future.

### **Hanna Flood**

Occupation: Student

From: Limerick, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has taught me many life lessons including those of time management, persistence, and leadership. Music education has turned me into a hardworking individual with more responsibility and a better work ethic than I would maintain without it. As a member of six musical ensembles I have found a sense of confidence and comfort in any environment of the art. Leadership is a quality that music has strengthened in me, in which pushes me to be the best that I am able to in hopes of encouraging those around me. Music education has impacted my life by putting me into an environment that I'm sorry not every individual gets to experience. It has brought out life in me that needs to be brought out in everybody. Without music education, my life would be empty and I would not know who I truly am or what I was meant to do. I have found my self a motivation and passion in music that I would not be able to experience anywhere else.

### **John Della Franco**

Occupation: Student

From: Lower Merion HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I like music because it gives me a medium to express myself creatively and emotionally.

### **Justin Guo**

Occupation: Student

From: Lower Merion HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I love cello. :)

### **Kyle Michie**

Occupation: Student

From: Lower Merion HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I get to go to places around the world that I would not have the opportunity to go without the violin.

### **Grant Wei**

Occupation: Student

From: Lower Merion HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I wasn't always the outgoing goal-driven person I am today. I was shy, timid, pathetic— something that I could never forget. I was a seven year old that could barely speak English after living several years in China, the child that sat in the corner because he could not communicate, the desolate who you averted your eyes to because he was so sad. This was the seven year old that was me. If I were to say that I chose violin, that when I visited some violin shop something spoke to me, then I would be lying. My parents started me on violin because they wanted me to achieve something out of it. So day after day, I would practice, for the sake of achievement: it was an tasteless act. Around the time I entered the school orchestra, however, my perception towards the whole idea of music changed. I discovered what music truly is. I learned that music wasn't some goal that I needed to achieve, but a process of discovery and change. Music reveals to us who we are. But what violin has done for me the most, is take me out of the shell that I was, and be more open. No more was I the sad child that everyone pitied; I was an ideal.

### **Kevin Liu**

Occupation: Student

From: Methacton HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has provided me a different way to view the world.

### **Matthew Zhang**

Occupation: Student

From: Methacton HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has provided me a form of entertainment and a new way to look at art and the world.

### **Eunteak An**

Occupation: Student

From: North Penn HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education always gave me such inspiration and dedication to play all kinds of music and respect the composers.

### **Nikayla Kim**

Occupation: Student

From: North Penn HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education became a part of my life and it gave me a definite goal that I can always reach for.

### **Nabil Muquit**

Occupation: Student

From: North Penn HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It is something that's been in my life since the beginning. Nothing beats the sounds of a full orchestra making beautiful harmony, or a hip hop beat you could dance to, or even the soothing sounds of jazz. Music has opened my eyes to the opportunities in the world, and I don't know where I'd be today without it.

### **Evan Peters**

Occupation: Student

From: North Penn HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Throughout my life, music has always played a large part. I have been involved in many ensembles during my musical career, including jazz band, concert bands, wind ensembles, church music groups, and district 11 band. Music education in particular I found to be particularly important. Having been in the ensembles that I've been, I've had many directors throughout my time in music. I've observed many styles of teaching, and I believe all of them have their purposes. The teachers' drives to further the musicality of their students is consistently shown by their positive attitudes, amazing commitment to music, and overall enthusiasm about music and all of its pursuits. These factors combined have provided an overall very positive and enjoyable experience for my since my elementary school days, an experience that I continue to live. Music education has involved more than 700 students in its entire music program, including the chorus, band, orchestra, and all other ensembles, which is roughly 25% of our students. These students have gained valuable life experiences and memories that will last a lifetime such as playing in exciting venues such as Hershey Park, the Kimmel Center, and many other exciting places. Through the tireless work of the directors under which these students have played, the students gain invaluable experiences and make lasting friendships that last a lifetime. In addition, musical educators have been the driving force behind the high quality of music produced at all of the schools I have attended, therefore making every experience I have had more than worthwhile. --Evan Peters North Penn HS Band Student

### **Ally Rothman**

Occupation: Student

From: North Penn HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music, I wouldn't be who I am. I have met my best friends through music, and they are people who support me in everything that I do. I feel that music is the only constant in my life, and it motivates me to fight through hard times. I have never felt the adrenaline rush and the true excitement that I feel when I play my instrument doing anything else. There is no other feeling like the way you feel playing so well in a group with other people. Everyone contributes a different part, but somehow, it all comes together to create something that words can't describe. Music has shaped me to be who I am, and I'm incredibly grateful that it is a part of my life.

### **Katie Solomon**

Occupation: Student

From: North Penn HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has given me the opportunity to meet people I would have never met, to travel places I would have never gone and to make memories that will last a lifetime. I am so thankful for the experiences I've had.

### **Sharon Shipe**

Occupation: Database Manager

From: Pennsburg, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I began music education as a 4th grade student and it opened up a world of experiences that I never would have had otherwise. Aside from the educational component of learning to play multiple instruments, read music and gain an informed appreciation of music, there were valuable interactions with staff and students, many of whom have become lifelong friends. The performances and competitions allowed me to travel to wonderful places that I otherwise would not have had the opportunity to visit. However, I believe one of the biggest benefits was to be a part of something so much bigger than myself--an organization of student musicians and committed staff who worked hard to perfect their talents and were committed to making the

group better. Together, this created a strong foundation for success later in life, while also fostering a lifelong love of music.

### **Jeffrey Cooper**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Plymouth Meeting, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I became a music teacher!! All through school, it was the school music program that kept me engaged in learning. It is where I met my best friends, and we developed mental skills, organizational skills, and leadership skills through marching band, jazz band, chorus, and orchestra. After playing the leading roles in several of our high school musicals, I decided that I would either become a performer and educator.

### **Adam Brock**

Occupation: Student

From: Plymouth Whitemarsh HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been involved in music since I was young, and I am proud to say that it has become a major part of my life. I listen to music everyday, enjoying getting together with my friends to jam, and know that music will always be a part of my life. Music education has allowed me to grow as a musician and enjoy the art that is music. Without it, I would certainly not be as involved with music as I currently am.

### **Eunice Nam**

Occupation: Student

From: Plymouth Whitemarsh HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is an important part of one's life, whether one is a musician or not. Not only is music an emotional outlet, but it's an opportunity for learning and growth.

### **Eunice Nam**

Occupation: Student

From: Plymouth Whitemarsh HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life. From a young age, I grew an interest in music and learned my fundamental musical skills from taking piano lesson for seven years. Gradually, I became interested in playing the flute, which I feel has really helped me grow and thrive to become the person I am today.

### **Mallory B.**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has made me who I am. Music education has furthered my knowledge on music thus furthering the discovery of myself. Music has let me break free of my shell and express who I am. The shy and unconfident girl I once use to be disappeared when I found music. I was able to continue this advantageous passion through music education at my school. Music education has taught me skills that have developed who I am. Sight singing is a concept that is widely taught in my music education class. It is the basic of singing and without all the daily practice I would not be the singer I am today. I am able to read and pick up on music quickly. This skill allowed me to discover a new part of myself. I gained confidence. Every year I gradually see an improvement in my sight singing skills and with that, my confidence increases. Freshmen year I would stand in front of the class and shake terribly when I attempted to sing a solo. Senior year I can stand in front of the class and stand confidently and sing my heart out. Music and the techniques I have learned have allowed me to express myself and through this I have developed confidence that has helped my stage presence. Music education has broadened my knowledge of different music genres. I would have never thought to enjoy classical music until it was introduced in my music education class. Classical music is

now my forte. I am able to do competitions that focus directly on classical music and perform well in them. I also use classical music to cope. When a bad day rolls around, I listen and sing to classical music and feel unstressed and rejuvenated. The expanse of music genres in music education has allowed me to discover my safe heaven that will always be there. Music has allowed me to discover myself. Music education has allowed me thrive and become who I am from the variety of skills, techniques and music provided in the class.

### **Carter Niness**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music plays an integral role in my life on a daily basis. It is what helps guide me through life's twists and turns. Music allows me to express myself, and not worry about being judged. Music makes me feel free. Music helps me relax and not stress over current issues at school. Furthermore, music education has helped me get roles in musicals and plays. Music is a huge part of my life and I know that music will always be something I will seek out for comfort. When I was in elementary school, my mother encouraged me to take chorus, as many of the other boy's mothers did. It was then I found that I liked chorus and music, so I decided to try-out for the 5th grade musical. It was my first production and I loved it. The following year I decided to do chorus in 6th grade and try-out for district chorus. I made it into district chorus and I loved every second of both musical education groups. I have now participated in school choir for five years, along with being in Varsity singers. Additionally, I am currently participating in my tenth overall theatre/musical production, which happens to be here at the high school! Also, music helps me to relax throughout the school day. I can go to choir without being worried whether I completed my homework correctly or being stressed about a big test. Choir is the only place during the school day, other than lunch, that I can just relax. Often times, I might be tired, having been up late doing homework the night before, or just having a bad day, yet when I get to choir, I will cheer up, and forget about all of what has happened. I always know that by sixth period, my day will get better. Many of my friends are also in choir. It is important to socialize during the school day. Without socialization, people can develop poor cognitive and physical health habits. Studies have also shown that, "Healthy social relationships and psychological well-being" leads to a longer life. It feels good to know I am improving my emotional health just by socializing. Choir is one of the few times I can socialize with people who view certain current events and issues similar to how I do. Music education helped introduce me to the world of entertainment. It has provided me the skills and the confidence to participate in both school productions and local/regional theatre and musicals. These experiences have helped me feel more confident with public speaking and communicating when in unfamiliar settings. Furthermore, I am now considering participating in musicals when I get to college, allowing me to continue to pursue something I truly love to do.

### **Stephen Dietrich**

Occupation: Student

From: Souderton Area HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have grown substantially as a person through music education and playing my instrument. I have met many people that I will continue to communicate with for the rest of my life, and I have learned many lessons about hard work and perseverance throughout my journey in the world of music. I have learned that in order to accomplish a challenging goal, you have to go after it with 100% of your effort. You have to devote much of your time and hard work in order to accomplish your goals, or else you will be dissatisfied. Music education has taught me that there is no solitary straight line to your goal. Life is like a maze. There is no one direct route. It is guaranteed that you will hit walls and obstacles throughout your life, but its about how hard you can get hit and be challenged, but still being able to get back on your feet and keep going. The most valuable lesson that I have learned through music education is that you have to work incredibly hard to achieve your goals, and as long as you have the right mindset and work ethic, you will reach your goal.

### **Rebecca Emery**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since I was young I knew that I wanted to sing. Music has taken over my life. I didn't have a very good musical background though. Both of my parents are not musically inclined so I was left to find ways to help myself become a better singer. My school had a terrible music program. I found a chorus out of school and I learned structure. I found a piano teacher to establish notes on both piano and on music sheets. I started taking voice lessons to help with sight singing. I realized that it wasn't enough so I decided to switch schools. My old school had the unfortunate loss of not having a strong music program; it was all about sports or new technology. I spent 7 years in that school not being able to show what I can do and not being able to share my talent, like the athletic kids. I am so blessed to go to a school with a strong arts program. I want to major in the arts when I go to college. I have had some incredible teachers in the arts program for the past three years since I have switched and I could not be happier. I have gained so much instructional development and a stronger knowledge about what I love the most, to sing. Music is getting cut left and right from schools all over the world and I have been so blessed to be part of an incredible music foundation to help me acknowledge who I want to be and where I would like to go.

### **Sydney Morrison**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring City, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I started playing the violin in third grade, and then I began the flute in fifth, and the piano in eighth. I wanted to start learning these instruments because music fascinated me. I love how some people can turn the terrible and sad in their lives, and make something beautiful out of it. For example, Eminem takes all of the pain and hardships in his life and creates incredible songs. I also love how anyone can be involved with music; you don't have to come from a specific background to learn how to sing or play an instrument. Each person living on earth has some musical knowledge; we all have a heartbeat, which is a rhythm, and that relates back to music. Another way music education has impacted my life is through my friends. I was introduced to almost every single one of my friends in either chorus or band. If I had not been in band throughout middle school, I probably would not have met the people who I care the most about today. The music education program at Owen J. Roberts is not just about learning how to play an instrument or how to sing, it's about getting involved in something, learning from your mistakes, and building friendships. I love feeling like I am a part of something. Every single student in band and chorus is needed to compose a piece. Without the soprano section in choir, the balance would be off, and the singing would not sound as magnificent, and likewise for all of the other parts. Being in both band and chorus has been an amazing experience because it helps me grow in my music career and everyone involved just has so much fun. Those two classes are the ones I look forward to going to everyday because it relieves my stress and singing, along with playing my flute, is something that I love to do. Because of music education, I gradually get more confidence. In the beginning of my seventh grade year, I barely knew anyone and was scared to sing and play in front of strangers. When I started making friends and getting to know everyone, it became easier to do the things I was afraid of. Everyone is there for the same reason and so they won't judge you if you mess up because we are all here to learn and improve. Overall, Music is probably the most important thing in my life because I love being able to create something spectacular while feeling accomplished, and most of all, I love being a part of something beautiful.

### **Nina Cheng**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Dublin HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I love my musical experiences--it is really fun!! I like the students whom I encounter, and I like meeting new musicians. I love the sound of the oboe, and the orchestral solos--and it was an obvious choice for me to

study oboe. My music teachers have helped me tremendously in how to interpret music and improve my technique. I cannot imagine not being an oboist and part of the orchestra and band!!

### **Liz Bauman**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Merion Area HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Being a part of my school's choir has helped me gain not only a great new group of friends, but more confidence in my own ability. I believe that singing has helped me learn to project more, which will help during speeches and presentations outside of choir. Learning more about singing has also made me appreciate music and other artists in general.

### **Kuran Gadziala**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Merion Area HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has helped mold me into the person I am today. Singing has been huge part of my life since I was very young. From performing in elementary school assemblies, to middle school talent shows and Solos in HS, singing has always been my favorite past time and I cherish every moment I get to make sharing my voice. My teachers have always helped me express myself and brought me to so many new opportunities that I don't believe I would have had without them. I am more than happy to say that I am apart of this fine choir and I intend to continue to on with my love of singing! I greatly encourage anyone who is interested in music in any way to go for it!

### **Ethan Hinson**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Merion Area HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been an important aspect of my life for many years. I have always found enjoyment in playing music, and it has given me many opportunities that I am very thankful of.

### **Kaitlyn Lutz**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Merion Area HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been a main focus all of my life, and thinking about it now, if I didn't have music education where would I be? There are a lot of kids out there that don't have something to anchor their feelings or develop a wide interest in... some people don't know what they want to do when they grow up, but I do! Without music education I am not so sure that I would. I have met many amazing, caring, and studious professors, conductors and directors within music education many of which have had an impact on my life. I am so thankful for all of these educators I have had that have or continue to inspire me every day.

### **Matthew Quarles**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Merion Area HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has provided a focus for me I've never been able to find everywhere else. Whatever else is happening, I can always turn back to music.

### **Thomas Ryan**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Merion Area HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made my life so much easier and enjoyable. Whenever I am having trouble with school I find myself relaxed to the playing of the violin. Its beauty and complexity leave me with little else to think about. That's what I love about music. Music creates a new environment, a safe zone that I can relax in. Therefore, if I have a test coming up in one of my classes, I pull out my violin and start easing my mind to the tunes of Mendelssohn and Beethoven before I start. I believe this makes test taking easier for me. Furthermore, music education requires a lot of perseverance and practice, but the end result equals the amount of work put in. Sometimes the results are satisfying and other times they aren't. One concept that music education has taught me and has impacted me the most is that I'm the only person that is keeping myself away from success. But, if I remove that barrier, then the skies the limit for what I can achieve. Since I view music as complex and sophisticated, I have set a high standard for the goals I want to achieve in this field. These standards also carry over to my other subjects that I take as well. Music has taught me that if I try my hardest that I can achieve. There is no reason that I shouldn't get an A in every class. If my grades are suffering, it's my fault. I won't let that happen. I will do well. Music has taught me that peace can be found in anything if searched for. By trying to understand why my teachers are passionate about their subjects, I hope to share their passions and grow to like their subjects. Music has taught me that this is the best way to learn and produce desirable results. Looking over my experiences so far, I believe that I have become more responsible and mature. I know what I need to achieve and I know how to get there, so I must take charge and get it done. Music has opened many doors to many experiences in my life that I will always cherish. Through my experiences at districts, I have met new friends, met sophisticated and funny conductors, and shared fun experiences with my friends at school. I will never forget these moments. They hold an eternal place in my heart and memories. Thanks Districts, thanks Conductors and hosts, and thank you Mrs. Helmetag (My HS orchestra director at Upper Merion)! Without all of you, these experiences and memories would never have had a lasting impact on my life and goals. Because you try, I want to. Again, thanks!

### **Esther Moon**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Moreland HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in a positive way-from my journey as a violinist to a violist. Making the switch to the viola has been supported from my private teacher to my school orchestra teacher and I appreciate it all. Playing the viola, especially in PMEA festivals has definitely changed my life-I learned much about myself as a musician, met amazing new life-long friends, and now have many musical mentors who I know I can reach out to any time for professional or even un-professional help. As cliché as it sounds, music changed my life, and I do not think I could have done it without the support of my amazing teachers! Thank you all!

### **Nolan Wenik**

Occupation: Student

From: Upper Moreland HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to explore many aspects of music like theory and performance. It has also afforded me the opportunity to explore new instruments, including the one I am playing in this festival. My directors have guided me towards new challenges I have taken place in, and inspired the passion I currently have in music. Without the people who have taught me music from the origins, I definitely could not be in the position I am in today, and will owe much of my future successes to the people who have created a strong foundation in my career.

### **Andrew Ge**

Occupation: Student

From: Wissahickon HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In the ten years that I have been playing the cello, music has allowed me to meet so many people that I never would have crossed paths with otherwise. It has also taught me the value of diligence, dedication, and practice.

### **Hanna Kim**

Occupation: Student

From: Wissahickon HS, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me a chance to bond with my classmates and make music with them, strengthening friendship and enriching school experience.

### **Kate Sellers**

Occupation: Student

From: Lafayette Hill, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My entire life has been changed by music education. I am currently a music education major at Penn State University, and most of the reason that I am pursuing this career path is because of the exemplary music teachers that I have come in contact with. Not only did my teachers inspire me to be a great music teacher, but also they inspired me to reach for excellence, be a responsible citizen and a team player, and to use problem solving skills. Through music education, students are taught more than just how to read notes; they are taught how to approach a problem (a piece of music), interpret it creatively (you won't hear a piece of music done the same way twice) and work hard towards solving (performing) it in the best way possible. They are taught responsibility, for students cannot forget their music or instrument, and how to be a team player, because their responsibilities have greater effects on the larger ensemble. I have had many fond memories of the music program at Plymouth Whitmarsh High School. I was a part of the marching band, jazz band, orchestra, chorus and concert band, and I studied piano and flute privately. I was given the opportunity to perform with Montco Band, PMEA District 11 Concert Band and Tri-County Chorus. Now, I am a part of the Penn State Marching Blue Band, Concert Band and Flute Choir. My experiences in my high school music program pushed me towards my passion. Through having so many opportunities to explore different types of music and ensembles in high school, I discovered my true love of music in all its forms. Without the wide and numerous variety of opportunities, I might have never discovered the career path that I am now pursuing. Awesome educators have helped me to realize my potential. Not only did my high school band, chorus and orchestra directors help me immensely, but I also had the opportunity to intern with the general music teacher at Plymouth Elementary School, the band director at Colonial Elementary and the band director at Colonial Middle School. Through observing these superb educators, I was able to learn about my strengths as a teacher, in addition to my strengths as a musician I was developing in the high school classroom. Not only do I feel prepared for music school, but to continue the tradition of strong music educators that I have been taught by over the years. Without music education, my life, and the lives of all students involved with music to any degree, would not be the same. Music education not only develops students as musicians, but as people as well.

### **Ian Eggert**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottstown, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

For me, music education is like the lifeboats on the titanic; they are there just in time to help you for a while until you reach your land. I say that because since the fourth grade my parents were divorced and my dad went to prison; however, that was also the year you can sign up for a band. At the time I already played the cello, as did my older brother. He also played the saxophone, with no father, he was my role model. I choose

sax and I really thought that it was fun. I got to sixth grade and had Mrs. Williams, known by me as the greatest band teacher ever. This year, as an eighth grader, I had the chance to do Marching Band with the high school. In the very beginning I was asked the challenge of moving to trumpet, from sax, my first year of marching band. That taught me that I can accomplish any goals with patience, and perseverance

### **Joyce Magann**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Royersford, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Make Our Garden Grow! In September 1971, I began violin lessons in public school in Sharon Hill, Delaware County, PA. I expanded my studies to include private summer lessons with my teacher, along with continued participation at school. In 6th grade our family moved from Sharon Hill to rural Bradford County, PA. Fortunately, there was a new orchestra program at Wyalusing High School, with a teacher who guided my musicianship until graduation. Throughout high school I participated in a variety of school opportunities, plus PMEA sponsored events, including County, District, East-State, All-State and All-Eastern Orchestras. I graduated high school, and then enrolled at Temple University for Music Education, concentration in violin. I graduated from Temple University and found my first teaching position teaching students to play stringed instruments in Atlantic City, NJ. Later, I returned to PA to teach Band, Strings, Orchestra, Guitar and Special Education Music in the Methacton School District. In my career, I have introduced more than 4100 students to music and guided them to acquire skills and expertise in music. I have performed in weddings, funerals, musicals, celebrations and ceremonies, plus hundreds of school and community concerts. I have been blessed to see no fewer than 11 music teachers begin their own careers. This magnificent garden blooms from a single seed planted and nurtured in a Pennsylvania Public School in 1971.

### **Chelsea**

Occupation: Customer Service Rep

From: Pottstown, Montgomery County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in more ways than one. Before music I didn't have friends or really a life at all. In middle school that all changed. I decided to stick it out and be in the band. Best decision ever. I made some of the closest friends/brothers/sisters that I never have had before that time. It went right into high school and I got to see some incredible places such as Canada, California and Florida. All places I would have never been able to afford to go growing up. Music is more than just sounds to me... it's raw emotion. My mother passed away when I was 11. Music was the one thing I had to escape from reality and get lost in the notes. I can truly say if I didn't step up and decide to be in band in 7th grade I would not know where I would be. Music has taught me valuable life lessons as well. Teamwork, dedication and an amazing work ethic just to name a few. You could say I owe my life to music. I found out what it was like to be apart of an award winning music department at my high school everything from marching band to wind ensemble to jazz band and all the choirs. I loved high school because of music.

## **MONTOUR COUNTY**

### **Will Anderson**

Occupation: Student

From: Danville Area HS, Montour County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed for me to become a greater musician and meet friends at PMEA festivals that I never would have otherwise.

### **Christina Perez**

Occupation: Student

From: Danville Area HS, Montour County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life more than words can explain because when there aren't words there is music. Music has given me friends and has taught me that it's fine to make mistakes, even if your instrument breaks during a concert, you laugh into your instrument during a solo or you fall down during a field show, because with music there is always more to learn. I've made some of the best friends through band. At the end of the day I still have a place to go and friends to have through music. Music has given me opportunities that I wouldn't have had if I wasn't in a band or a choir. I can't find a person who doesn't love music and music education has impacted me because I now know I have the confidence to make music, I'm able to express myself beyond all the words in the world and that is all thanks to the people who have taken the time to teach me those things.

## **NORTHAMPTON COUNTY**

### **Rose Tillson**

Occupation: Student

From: Bangor Area HS, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me a place where I belong in school. My closest groups of friends are with me in the band, and I cannot imagine what my school life will be without band.

### **Andy Bauer**

Occupation: Instrumental Music Teacher

From: Bethlehem, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a part of my life. Since childhood I can remember singing at church, with family and friends, and at school. In 5th grade I began studying my instrument, the euphonium. Of course I didn't originally pick the euphonium, you can say it sort of "picked me". I kept at it all the way through high school, PMEA festivals, and private lessons, and eventually decided that I wanted to pursue music more seriously. Fast forward through college, graduate school and a 3-year enlistment in the US Army Band, roughly 24 years later, I still find myself teaching and making music every day. It gives me and my students joy, laughter, challenges, and rewards. I am very proud of the musical accomplishments I've attained in my career and I know they wouldn't have been possible without the help and guidance of my music teachers along the way.

### **Chase Fong**

Occupation: Student

From: Bethlehem, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I can hear more intricate background music and tunes in music on the radio while also letting me know the difficulty of creating music and the work behind it.

### **Hannah Pandey**

Occupation: Student

From: Bethlehem, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life a lot. It has educated me in another form of art and I have learned that I love listening to and creating music. I play two instruments, the oboe and piano. I have played the piano since I was four years old and I started the oboe in fourth grade. I wasn't sure if I liked music and playing instruments at first, but now, I love it. Music makes me feel calm and happy. It has greatly impacted my life

and I want to continue to play my instruments and create music with others. I want to thank my band director at school, Carol Free, for teaching me everything I know about music. I love creating magic with music and I wish to continue it throughout my life.

### **Judy Squires**

Occupation: Student Saxophonist

From: Bethlehem, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I gives me confidence in myself when I do well.

### **Lorraine F. Torrella**

Occupation: Paraprofessional-Special Ed

From: Bethlehem, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education gives meaning to life. It helps us understand how to use multiple skill sets. I work with children who have severe disabilities and these students, through music education, may experience emotional fulfillment that otherwise may not have been gained in other arenas.

### **Joshua Charlton**

Occupation: Student

From: Easton Area HS, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been an integral part of my life since the third grade when I began playing violin. I realized my true musical passion however in the ninth grade when I began playing tuba. I began this instrument as a modest way of contributing to my HS's music program since it needed more tuba players, but I ended up loving to play it. My musical education consists of knowledge gained through participation in HS ensembles and youth orchestras, private instrumental instruction, and HS courses in music theory and history. I strive to reciprocate this knowledge to my peers and share what I have learned to help inspire and educate them to the extent that I have been inspired and educated. Therefore, music education has not only been education that I have received but also something that I enjoy and will continue to enjoy giving.

### **Ryan Bailis**

Occupation: Student

From: Freedom HS, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have met many wonderful people throughout my musical life. I enjoy playing music with many of my friends and growing my ability everyday.

### **Chris Poczak**

Occupation: Student

From: Freedom HS, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was just in elementary school it sort of felt like I had nothing to look forward to in the day and my life sort of went on. In third grade I picked up the trumpet which is the instrument my father played and still does to this day. I did not really understand the trumpet, or even enjoy it at first but that all changed during middle school. I started to practice hard every night and made sure that I could bring out my full potential. Now in HS I realize that I absolutely could not live without having music in my life. It is a part of my daily routine everyday and it gives me something to look forward to all day. Not only has it taught me important qualities all good musicians should have like work ethic and determination, but it also lets me meet new people and experience new things in different bands and areas. Music in general is one of the only things that I enjoy doing during the day and I truly do not know what I could possibly do without it. For the rest of my life I will be sure to keep music with me because it never stops challenging me and making me the best person I can be. It is not simply something I want to do, it feels like something I need to do, in a good way.

**Jordana Schaeffer**

Occupation: Student

From: Freedom HS, Northampton County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has influenced my life in a multitude of ways, and there is no other course of study I can envision myself pursuing other than Music Education. When I visualize myself being happy after HS and college, and for the rest of my life, I see myself being a music director, sharing my knowledge about music, and guiding my students to be the best people they can be, inside and outside of the music room. I have loved music even before I began playing the flute in fourth grade, but I realized how truly incredible and life-changing music is when I was playing on stage with the PMEA District 10 Band last year. This sparked the sudden realization that I was sitting there, with other musicians my age, not speaking, but making beautiful music together. Music connects people without words, without prior personal connections, and I believe that it is the most powerful force in the world. Music is something I am incredibly passionate about, and I am thrilled that I will be able to share my enthusiasm and knowledge as a music educator. After I attend a four-year university, I plan on obtaining a master's degree and/or a doctoral degree in Music Education. I am constantly pushing myself to the next level academically and musically, and receiving my advanced degree(s) in Music Education is an example of how I will do so. Plato once said, "Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything," and I strongly agree. I am ecstatic to share my passion about music in the field of Music Education. Both my incredible HS band director and my private music teacher always say that they feel as though they, "never have to work a day in their life," and I will feel the same way as a music educator.

**Peter Young II**

Occupation: Student

From: Freedom HS, Northampton County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education introduced me to my instrument. It taught me how to convey the complex human spirit in no words at all. It has moved me and inspired me to practice my instrument hard.

**Tracie Raven-Maric**

Occupation: Accounts Payable

From: Hellertown, Northampton County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Ed. has brought & brings what every human needs; emotion. It wakes up our senses and can change the way we think, act and behave. I "need" music in my life everyday! From waking up to it in the a.m. vs. the blaring of an alarm. To getting ready for work & dancing around the house. I listen to music throughout my workday. It sets the mood for movies as well. It puts the scare in scary & the spark in romance movies, brings out the act in action in action films. The list goes on & on. Without Music Ed. our world would live in silence. Think about that for a moment.....

**Brielle Sklodowski**

Occupation: Student

From: Hellertown, Northampton County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has effected me in many different ways. For instance throughout the years I have learned to play 3 different instruments and read two different types of music. I have been in my school band since 4th grade and I just started jazz band. Hopefully band will always be apart of my life along with music.

### **Janice Weber**

Occupation: School Cafeteria

From: Hellertown, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Im not a big writer. i believe greatly that music in our schools should stay. music is apart of all peoples history, its been around since the beginning of time. it is worth learning and studying.

### **Jordan Greenawalt**

Occupation: Student, clarinetest

From: Hellertown, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life by being able to play and practice everyday, and because I have an amazing music teacher that always makes us better each day, I can always count on her to make better at playing music.

### **Julia Costacurta**

Occupation: Student

From: Moravian Academy, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to create amazing memories I never would have experienced otherwise. The PMEA festivals have been highlights of my year since eighth grade. At festivals I know I can make great music with both old and new friends. Everyone I've met at the festivals, both conductors and students, are some of the kindest people out there. Their commitment and dedication to music are inspiring to me, and at the end of each festival I never want to leave. Music education has done so much for me. I've learned the value of hard work, practice, and persistence. In addition to introducing me to amazing private teachers and school music faculty, learning an instrument has taught me discipline and the importance of being confident, yet always humble. I don't know what I would do if music wasn't in my life.

### **Kimberly Barr**

Occupation: Student

From: Nazareth Area HS, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

While many people see me as just a scholar, my grade point average is not what makes me who I am. Although I concede that grades are important, I deplore how much they define me. The vital aspect to my being is not written in a report card, but rather drawn across a five-lined staff. I began playing clarinet in fifth grade and I was anything but proficient. I was two years behind most of the other players, and I had no natural inclination towards anything musical. I stuck with the clarinet anyway, and today it is as important to my being as the blood rushing through my veins. Several different aspects of music define me. First is how it challenges me. I have worked incredibly hard at this challenge and as a result have risen from someone who could barely read music, to a musician in our area's District Band, an honor difficult to accomplished. Second is the guidance I found in music. My mentor is a very close friend to whom I owe everything. His wisdom, humor, and compassion has shaped who I am today. I found my salvation in music. Third, is the way music has shaped my individuality. It has given me a form of expression and a sense of meaning. Music is a part of me that will never waver in significance. Even though I may not play my clarinet throughout my life, the lessons I learned from being a musician are carved into my bones and many of my values and convictions became stronger because of music. When looking back at HS twenty years from now, I will of course recall that I was a scholar, an athlete, a girlfriend, a sister, a daughter, and a friend, but the role that will stick with my until the day I die will be a musician.

### **Jack Doyle**

Occupation: Student

From: Nazareth Area HS, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Although music has been a major part of my life for as long as I can remember, music education has given me the means to refine and practice the activities I love. Being able to learn from musicians more experienced than I am has given me a wealth of information that I could not receive in any other way. The music education program has changed my life and given me the resources I need to reach my goals and achieve my dreams.

### **Mikaela Esposito**

Occupation: Student

From: Nazareth Area HS, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is, in my opinion, one of the most wonderful subjects that can be taught to any individual, and I am constantly reminded how blessed I am for having attended a school district with such avid support for this subject. Essentially, receiving musical education from early years of my schooling introduced me to my greatest passion, in turn, opening the doors of opportunity for me in terms of picking a career path, a college major, and a college that suits these ideas. To elaborate, when I was in third grade, my chorus teacher suggested me to the HS theatre director who was looking for young children for his production of Annie. After landing a role in this musical, I decided that from that moment on I wanted to be on stage for the rest of my life, a decision I never would have made at that age without the help of my music educator. Additionally, music education has allowed me to work with so many incredibly talented, brilliant, and creative people both student and staff. In my own district I have had the privilege of learning from the same woman from 6th to 12th grade, who has taught me everything that I know about music theoretically, vocally, and everything in between. I do not receive private instruction outside of my school setting and never have, but I have been fortunate enough to have achieved an abundance of musical success throughout my life, all because of my music educator in my own school district. Without my director and her stellar program, there is absolutely no way I would have as much experience from things such as district, region, and state choirs along with all the other amazing experiences I've enjoyed because of her. On the same idea, I never would have met all of the dear friends I currently have from these music festivals and classes had it not been for the opportunities music education granted to me. Not only have I learned so many things musically that will definitely benefit me in the future, but I have also discovered things about myself I never would have on my own, including the qualities I hope to have as a young adult in the future, qualities I learned from my music directors. There are so many people who never find their passion, themselves, or their life-long friends and because of music education, I can proudly say I've found all three of these necessities and so many more. So, to conclude, the teaching of music in schools is not only beneficial, inspiring, and life-changing, but absolutely necessary for the lives of current students and all the students to come.

### **Zachary Durnack**

Occupation: Student

From: Saucon Valley HS, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me a creative outlet. With all of the stresses of school, coming into a rehearsal for choir or the musical, I feel instantly at home. I've always felt connected with music, especially since I have been graced with incredible directors, and I hope to do the same as well with other students of my own in the possible future. In essence, music education is vital for any school system to properly function.

### **Jamie O'Brien**

Occupation: Student

From: Saucon Valley HS, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Being given the opportunity to learn and perform music has given me the ability to express myself without words. Learning the intricacies of music has given me an entirely new outlook on life. I think that music education is extremely important because music has been a vital part of culture and society throughout history, and I believe that it is important to understand the art form.

### **Allyson Starr**

Occupation: Student

From: Saucon Valley HS, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been involved music since the 3rd grade. Over the past eight years, I have had the privilege studying with some amazing music educators. All of my teachers have instilled in me a great passion for music that I will carry with me throughout my life. They have taught me that with hard work, commitment and lots and lots practice, I can achieve my dreams.

### **Martina Fedorowocz**

Occupation: Student

From: Bethlehem, Northampton County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music gives me a reason to wake up in the morning, because I honestly wouldn't want to if I didn't have band or choir in my life. My life revolves around when I have my lessons and practices, but I am completely okay with that. Music has always been my escape, when I am sad -trumpet, when I am happy - trumpet, it doesn't really matter the mood. We add music to things, to make them better, things like movies, plays, commercials, etc., so why would anyone think that taking music away from schools make school better. People at my school don't want to be in band, because it's,"For losers, nerds, geeks,etc.". I find that very sad that they are so worried about what the media tells them to do and like, that they won't do what their minds tell them to anymore. We live in a world, where many people don't express themselves, or want to, because they want to be cool. I am so glad that music has always been a part of my life, because it has taught me to do what I love even though it isn't cool. That is how music has impacted my life.

## **NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY**

### **Britney Bidding**

Occupation: Student

From: Line Mountain HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I play trombone and that is a big part of who I am. It's given me opportunities that I wouldn't have otherwise experienced in my life. Some of those have been meeting new people, traveling to different places, I've been given leadership roles and it has increased my self-confidence.

### **Rebecca Masser**

Occupation: Student

From: Line Mountain HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made my life so much happier. Learning about something I love makes school so much more enjoyable. Without music education, I would feel like I am good for nothing but helping others with schoolwork. All the music classes I have had in the course of my education have been reprieves from the stress all my other classes have brought me. Music education has enabled me to become a better singer and flute player. Without it I certainly would not be going to any festivals. I have made some friends through music education. Music education has had nothing but a positive impact on my life.

### **Briana Shervinskie**

Occupation: Student

From: Line Mountain HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been my motivation in many different aspects of my life. It has affected everything around me. It has been a big contribution to my after school activities. It has also pushed me to do better on my school work so I have more time to practice my music. It also completely opened me up to a new crowd of people and I have made many new friends because of it. Music also helped me decide on a few new classes I wanted to take this year, including voice class and music theory. It has also motivated me to pursue music in the future.

### **Tyler Marvin**

Occupation: Student

From: Milton Area HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I joined the musical in 10th grade and my life has been infinitely benefited ever since.

### **Tara Wands**

Occupation: Student

From: Milton Area HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Discovering music and learning more about it has changed my life for the better. I've been involved in music since I was little. My father would sit me at the piano with him and give me little lessons until I was old enough to start private piano lessons. I've been involved in choir since fifth grade and have always looked forward to my music classes. In seventh grade I was officially diagnosed with clinical depression and a generalized anxiety disorder. My outlet for all of my emotions was always music. Singing has this amazing way of expression that is incomparable to anything else I've ever tried. It feels like this pressure inside you is being released with every word you really mean in a song. I've dedicated most of my time in my school career to music and learning the theory and history with it. To be able to spend so much time learning about something I am so passionate about is something I am immensely grateful for. My music experience through school has influenced me to become the confident young woman I am today who has learned to manage her situations much more effectively. My music teachers throughout the years have had huge impacts on my life; namely my HS choir director Mr. Wynn. He is a big role model to me and I feel very blessed to have had him as a director for the past four years. This being my last year in HS is a bittersweet thing. I feel confident that I will be able to pursue a career in music with a great foundation of knowledge to grow from. I like to think that thanks to music and being able to access music throughout school my life was saved. I pray that music continues to be available to students as they go through the tough transitions school presents to them so they can develop the confidence and critical thinking skills that will benefit them all throughout life while doing something they are so unbelievably passionate about.

### **Carl Darrup**

Occupation: Student

From: Mount Carmel Area HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a great impact on my life. I began taking lessons in fourth grade. My first band director was very energetic, and she helped me go from a student who was only somewhat interested in band to a musician with a love for music. Being in band and playing solos and going on band trips has made me the person I am today. It has given me confidence, taught me responsibility, taught me how to be a leader, and given me friends that I know I will have for a lifetime. I have been to many places where I would not have been without music education. I have even played music under the direction of the original composer, which was an unbelievable experience. These and so many other experiences are ones I would not have had if I wouldn't have made the choice to join the fourth grade band as a tiny ten year old, and I am so happy that I made that decision.

### **Cameron Getty**

Occupation: Student

From: Mount Carmel Area HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. Learning how to play my instrument along with many difficult pieces was a pleasure in how far I have gotten involved in music festivals, PMEA included. From 7th grade to now, music education has been a very important priority to me. I wanted to succeed and have as many pins/medals as possible. Thanks to my band director, I have become one of the top musicians from my school.

### **Joanna Rompalo**

Occupation: Student

From: Mount Carmel Area HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I am a liturgical musician at my church. Throughout the last few years, in addition to playing in church and every Sunday, I have played at the funeral masses of several of my fallen ancestors. It gives me great closure to honor my relatives with my music on their final days with their beloved families.

### **Sofia Pearson**

Occupation: Student

From: Shamokin Area HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is mainly one of my more relaxing hobbies that I tend to escape to during the week. It helps me empty my mind as well as fill it with notes and different tunes rather than the other stressing decisions and problem. Music speaks the truth, as it reminds me how well I am doing in my lethargic progression towards success.

### **Sarah Fedder**

Occupation: Student

From: Shikellamy HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has opened up doors to opportunities that I never thought I would have experienced. Being involved in my school's music and theater programs have taught me a sense of community and responsibility.

### **Ryan Neidig**

Occupation: Student

From: Shikellamy HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a great friend to me. Music is truly a concept that enriches the lives of everyone around to hear it. I am truly grateful for the chances I have been given to learn and replicate great music. For music is more than notes on paper and noises to be heard; it is a gift. For both the performer and the audience. I thank my teachers for giving me this gracious gift. I hope that someday I may step into their shoes and pass music on to others, as they have done so for me.

### **Heidi Ross**

Occupation: Student

From: Shikellamy HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has taught me responsibility and independence. It has taught me how to be a leader and be a good team player. Music has shown me how to communicate to others what words cannot describe.

### **Melodie Jones**

Occupation: Student

From: Warrior Run HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in several ways. It has given me a family I can always rely on being there for me. Not only have I met a variety of people from other schools from marching band or festivals, but I have close friends at school in band that I know will always be there for me. It has also expanded my knowledge of music theory, and many other subjects. Band has given me an opportunity to let out stress, playing clears my mind.

### **Matthew Potts**

Occupation: Student

From: Warrior Run HS, Northumberland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in ways that are very personal to me. My grandmother was organist for my church and I've been playing the piano for fourteen years now. Also, my father, mother, aunt, and grandfather were involved in their respective school marching bands. Specifically, my aunt and my grandfather were in the Pennsylvania State University Marching Blue Band. I hope to audition for the Blue Band when I complete my HS career. In addition to my mother's half, my father's half is also musically sound. My father and his brother play guitar. Also, my uncle is a drummer, and his oldest son plays guitar. My father's sister has two daughters that played in their HS band. They played the trombone and the alto saxophone. Outside of my immediate family, I have had cousins involved in Milton HS's marching band, one of them is in Gettysburg College's Marching Band. In conclusion, music is a big factor in my family, and I am very thankful to have such a wonderful family that has musical abilities.

## **PERRY COUNTY**

### **Nancy Kile**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: New Bloomfield, Perry County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I had a rough start in music: After a few months of piano lessons as a five year old, I still needed a book to play the C scale. It was suggested that I stop and come back to it later, which I did in 3rd grade. The maturity paid off and I continued to learn piano and percussion starting in fourth grade. I was never a great musician, but I loved being involved in making music both in choir and band. My HS choir teacher encouraged me into the PMEA districts festivals which were very memorable. He also introduced me to music theory and the beginning of computer sounds and also taught handbells. To this day, handbell playing is my favorite class to teach. Everyone can learn some aspect of playing and fitting into the group and eventually reading the music for himself. Marching band is where I found my group of friends and my passion to stay involved. I was also an athlete, but friendships were bonded around the music room. I went onto college to study music therapy and music education. My college percussion instructor gave me so much encouragement to do my best. I didn't need to be the best, but I could learn from the best and give the same encouragement back. After a few years as a music therapist and then staying home with my young children, I took on the position as the music teacher at a small Christian school where my children attended. I was only going to stay until they found someone, but 15 years later I'm still there. My husband, who I met on the marching band field in college is an excellent teacher of music. He pushes for excellence and I focus on involvement at every level. Together, we have raised 4 children to love music and strive for excellence. Because we both had teachers that encouraged our involvement in PMEA festivals, we in turn have invested time and money to have our children and students involved as well. There are many excellent musicians in our area, so our children have had great teachers to help them interpret music for themselves. As a music teacher myself, every student is involved in the school program and encouraged to take the next step in musicianship or at least encouraged to stay involved into their adult years whether it is as a professional musician or a member of a church choir

or orchestra. I love to hear that my students have continued to enjoy music. My most rewarding time is when my children gather around the piano and sing or play their instruments and minister together as a family.

### **Tim Kile**

Occupation: Military

From: New Bloomfield, Perry County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music teaches discipline. While in school I am enrolled in the ROTC building and participate on the ranger challenge team. We start physical training every morning at 6:00AM. Anyone that has gone through college understands that waking up early is tough because you NEVER go to bed early as a college student, especially with a full load of 18 credits. I am a Music Ed major and musicians know that there is no room for error. In my other classes I can score a "B" and be okay. For my trumpet platforms and recitals I have to play with precision and musicality. I cannot afford mistakes. That also applies when working in groups. I am in band, orchestra, choir, and a brass quintet. Those groups depend on every member to do their part and work hard outside of rehearsal and to be on time for rehearsals. Music has been the greatest asset to both my academic career as a student and my physical career as an Army officer.

### **Robert Kile**

Occupation: High School Student and National Guard participant

From: New Bloomfield, Perry County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is all around me. I enjoy playing music, listening to music, and making music with others. Music has given me many opportunities to not only get out of school for a day, but it has allowed me to perform in some unique places (PA State Capitol Rotunda). Music has provided me with many friends that I have met at festivals that otherwise I would not have met. These friendships are fun and enjoyable because we share an enjoyment for good music. Music is also a great teaching tool. I have learned nine different languages through music. Through music my understanding of mathematics, physics, science, grammar, foreign languages, and history have all increased in some way, shape, or form.

### **Otto Wallenmeyer**

Occupation: Full-Time College Student

From: Shermans Dale, Perry County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education undoubtedly helped mold me into the person I am today. Through the rigors of constant practice, I learned the value of hard work and the fruits of such aforementioned labors. Through my experiences in various ensembles, I gained knowledge of how to successfully work with a team and be a contributor to a greater goal. The brain skills required to read music have crossed over into my field of study and have helped me in other subjects. The knowledge of my instrument in all aspects crossed over into my work as well; knowing your particular instrument and all the working parts of it and how to successfully make music is similar to having a full concentrated knowledge of your particular area of study or your job, and thus due to this attention to detail, you are able to successfully create, to successfully do, to successfully be. That same work ethic and determination that were born of music are each transferable outside of music as well.

## **PHILADELPHIA COUNTY**

### **William Klotsas**

Occupation: Student

From: CAPA Philadelphia, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has influenced me in so many ways. Ever since I was young I thought music was the coolest thing. In grade school I was in the vocal program and we would go in trips to the Kimmel Center and I loved to see the Philadelphia Orchestra. I started going to HS at The Creative and Performing Arts HS of Philadelphia for

instrumental music. I play my instruments for hours a day now and love it. It makes me a better person and makes me happy.

### **Vilme Joselin**

Occupation: Student

From: CAPA Philadelphia, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life greatly ever since I started the violin in 7th grade. Not being exposed to a lot of music in school didn't help me very much but after being accepted into the Creative and Performing Arts HS of Philadelphia, I was able to experience life as a musician in a daily life style. Having music education has lead me from playing in the All City orchestra to various camps in the country, also to reaching a certain playing level where the Associate Concertmaster of the Philadelphia Orchestra has accepted to take me as his student. All of my musical achievements have got me to where I wanted to be just because it all started in the field of music education.

### **Maryanne Cosgrove**

Occupation: Student

From: J.R. Masterman HS, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education brings joy to an otherwise mediocre day of school. I always know that at the end of a long day, I can walk into the music room and be welcomed by my director and all of my music friends. I'm so grateful that I have this safe space to be crazy and sing as loud as I want to.

### **Cordelia Ilton**

Occupation: Student

From: J.R. Masterman HS, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been playing the violin for the past thirteen years: since I was five. By playing I mean participating in an assortment of youth assembles and orchestras, and having private violin lessons once a week. Music seems to be easier to read than words. I have ADHD, and apparently reading at the level I do is surprising, in a good way. I fully believe that music has helped me not fall behind in my academics and has helped keep me focused and disciplined.

### **Fred Eyrich Jr.**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Philadelphia, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has shaped and guided my life since the 5th grade. I am a product of a good public school education with strong music programs. I was exposed to wonderful performance opportunities with excellent teachers, which inspired me to become a musician and music teacher. I began playing professionally at the age of 16 and went to college as a music education major. Upon graduating from college, I was hired as a public school music teacher and that has been my career for the last 27 years. I also have performed as a musician for over 35 years. During my career I have been fortunate to teach thousands of students from grades K-12 in the areas of instrumental, vocal, music technology, and music appreciation. I have also been fortunate enough to have inspired many young people to enjoy, appreciate, and pursue music as a passion, and even a career over the last 27 years. I cannot imagine my life without music, and without the musical experiences I have had both performing and teaching music.

### **Ryan Griffin**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Philadelphia, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has given me a career. A career where I get to play and teach music ALL DAY LONG. I get to spread the joy of music to all of my students and get immediate gratification. I've had amazing music teachers throughout my life who were just happy people. Probably because they're engulfed with this gift of music. Seeing people who love their jobs, teaching you, teaches others to love what they do and to do it with passion. Oh yes, passion - maybe even most of all, music has taught me to live with passion. And what a great way to live.

### **Avalon Nemec**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Philadelphia, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My music teachers were always the most impactful during my entire school career. My high school band director felt like a mentor, and was always willing to give advice. I looked up to him as a role model and his guidance, and wisdom, led me to choose a similar career path. He encouraged me to join Bravo Brass, audition for All-State, and pursue a career in music. I always knew I wanted to be a teacher, but it was his influence (as a music teacher, yes) but more importantly a mentor, that prompted me to pursue a career in music EDUCATION. I am so glad that I have. I want only to make a difference in a student's life, as he did for me.

### **Charlotte**

Occupation: Student

From: Philadelphia, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have always loved to sing. It's an outlet, and I did not recognize it's importance to me until I lived the dorm life with two roommates and a public shower, which limited my ability to really let loose. I have been in music groups all my life. Of course there were times that I did not enjoy as much, like when my parents forced me to sit through the Philadelphia Orchestra with them as a young and energetic child, but I find that, looking back, my musical experiences have shaped me in subtle but important ways. My most memorable experiences in my first year of college usually involve my a cappella group. It may not necessarily be the musical skills I learn in class or challenge of sight reading that affects me (although I also find these experiences useful and fulfilling in their challenge), but rather the companionships formed in the process. There's an inexplicable bond formed when singing with a group. You have to hold your own part while listening and responding to everyone else's voices, and when everyone is in sync, it feels as though you are one. You can feel the music in your bones, like you're one with the world and a part of something bigger.

### **Alena Feldman**

Occupation: Student at Owen J Roberts High School

From: Philadelphia, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted me in many ways, I started music when I was in 2nd grade. That's when I first learned how to play a guitar, I learned all about chords, and how to hold the guitar. I learned how to play "The Climb" by Miley Cyrus too, that June I played it on stage for the first time; I was so nervous. However, I never knew that would be a start to something very great for me. Music has affected me through the wonderful sound that comes out of my violin, and the powerful singing voice I've grown to love; to the electric base that has given me many opportunities. The second instrument I learned to play was the violin in 3rd grade. We finally got to see what the instruments are like. The teacher demonstrated to us what the bass, cello, viola, and violin sound like. I fell in love with the delicate sound of the violin. I was a fast learner. Although, my teacher believed I wasn't practicing enough, so she never made me first violin. I went to middle school and met a whole new director named Mr. Prescod, he was a little strict at first but soon became my new violin teacher, and I am now a first violin as a freshman in high school. After, I learned the violin I found a new love in song. I was a late bloomer as some would say, I started singing in 5th grade but have gone very far from there. Sadly, in 4th grade I harshly cut my foot by accident. For a while I couldn't do anything but study and practice my violin. That Christmas, I woke up to an unusual gift, my mom had bought me singing lessons! That

Saturday we scheduled my first lesson with my first singing teacher Miss. Elizabeth. She told me during that lesson that I really do have a voice and she would love to help me develop it. Now I am no longer taking lessons from her, but I have a new amazing teacher in the Philly Pops named Miss. Maggie and she has taken me under her wing and I am very happy and privileged for that. I also played the electric bass in Jazz Band and Marching Band in middle school. I hope to get into the Jazz Band again this year as a freshman in high school. Music has impacted my life in all of these ways and I am still in love with it. You now know how I learned the guitar in 2nd grade how much the wonderful sound of the violin and my voice has impacted my musical ability, and finally how the electric bass is a huge impact to my understanding in music and reading music. Thank you for listening to my story, and I hope to hear yours one day too.

### **Isabella Dickstein**

Occupation: Student

From: Springside Chestnut Hill Academy, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me an outlet for emotions and to help me deal with my bi-polar disorder. I would not have had any of the same experiences or be the same person that I am without my musical opportunities. It has been, and will continue to be, an important part of my life.

### **Kristina Marchuk**

Occupation: Registered Nurse

From: Philadelphia, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life so immensely that I consider it one of my all-time greatest achievements. I still play saxophone and clarinet today at the age of thirty and appreciate the education that I was able to utilize during my middle school and high school education. Even though I may not be a professional musician, I consider music one of the most important subjects that one can learn in school. Music is the universal language and provides a greater meaning to life. Each time I perform a concert or participate in a parade I thank my high school music teacher. I love music and am so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn while I was in school. It is most definitely a life long talent that I will continue indefinitely!

### **Courtney Noah**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Philadelphia, Philadelphia County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music had impacted my life in so many ways. I was a very angry child with problems but I was introduced to the French Horn in 6th grade. Suddenly I was thinking about college scholarships and was getting positive attention for being talented at the french horn. I went to continue playing through high school playing in all city, region and state bands. My french horn playing paid for my first two years at community college then made the jump to move from Kansas to Boston for Berklee College of Music for education. If I did not have music in my life I could have ended up addicted or in jail. Music is the positive force in my life that has made me the best music educator I can be! We MUST keep music in our schools. We must allow students from low income families to have a way to get out of poverty. Please! Music saves lives and gives worth to those who need it most!

## PIKE COUNTY

### Hillary Beal

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Bushkill, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a huge impact on my life. I was a teenager that was troubled, and I was getting into trouble at school and not focusing on my reading and writing skills. When I got into my middle school I had a music teacher that really impacted me and made me realize that I needed to do music. If I didn't do music for the rest of my life I would feel like I was lost. I found that singing helped me get through my reading assignments and I was able to connect to songs finally because I would sing or write out the words to the songs are really understand what they were about. I think my students understand me better through their music production and I am so excited that every day I get to give students the same opportunities if more than I had in my past.

### Sydney Famularo

Occupation: Student

From: Delaware Valley HS, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has shaped my course through school since the very beginning of my public education in kindergarten. Through elementary school music was a controlled way for me to express myself. But as I aged my music education matured into a form of discipline and artistic inspiration. Music in HS has provided me with a sense of purpose and motivation. Though I strive to pursue music myself, I believe that the discipline necessary to contribute to a musical ensemble, and the challenges faced when striving for musical success, provide students with skills that can be implemented in their lives elsewhere.

### William Mullen

Occupation: Student

From: Delaware Valley HS, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has had a great impact on my life. As an inspiring musician, I find it be very important to have dedicated instructors to help me obtain my goals. My band director has pushed me along for the past four years, and has made my study of the jazz idiom a daily routine. He has directed me to private instructors, informed me of events such as all state jazz to audition for, and has helped me to reach these events. I would not be writing this prompt without the music education system my school provides. We play top-notch literature, as well as well known repertoire that has made me acquainted with the standards of both jazz and classical music. As a graduating senior, I can not thank my directors and school district enough for all the opportunities they have given me. The music education I have received has prepared me for the next level , the collegiate study, and hopefully a career as a professor musician.

### Joshua Shepard

Occupation: Student

From: Delaware Valley HS, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education impact my decisions, and the choices that I make everyday. Because of music, I found my voice, and my passion. When I was younger, there were many negative influences and environments in my neighborhood, but because of my love for music, I would practice my violin, or sing in my church choir rather than do drugs, or anything else that could harm my future. Learning the fundamentals of music and the way everything works really helps enhance my craft, specifically knowing the different types of chord structures. I believe my love for jazz came from not only the greats like Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Miles Davis, Louis Armstrong or Frank Sinatra, but also from the chord progressions. Music education taught me to appreciate music as a way of life. I see it as more than just a culture but as way to breathe, if I am not listening to music everyday, I honestly cannot function, and because of music education I like to expand my horizon to more

than just contemporary selections. Music will always have a place in my heart and hopefully when I grow up I can be an influence or a role model to someone else discovering their love for music.

### **Lance Williams**

Occupation: Student

From: Delaware Valley HS, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a part of my life. I started taking drum lessons when I was four years old. I have had several different instructors over the course of my musical career, and all have had a large influence on me. My love of jazz originated from my middle school band director. I played in the middle school jazz band for both seventh and eighth grade. My director also recommended me for COTA Camp jazz and the COTA Cats Honors Jazz Band. I had the opportunity to work with world renowned musicians including Phil Woods, Dave Liebman, and Bob Dorough. They helped me develop my individual playing style. After my first year at Camp Jazz, I knew that I wanted to focus my efforts on jazz drumming. I was accepted into the COTA Cats Honors Jazz Band and have been a member for five consecutive years. Without the support and encouragement of my band directors, I would not have been given this incredible experience.

### **Dylan Arrabito**

Occupation: Computer Science

From: Dingmans Ferry, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has shaped my future career and help me improve in certain subjects such as math and science. I have expanded my playing abilities by picking up New and various instruments from strings to woodwinds.

### **Anna Speer**

Occupation: Student

From: Milford, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My senior year of high school I propelled myself through district orchestra, to region orchestra, and finally made state orchestra. It gave me a level of confidence I had never before experienced, and I definitely believe I had an easier time transitioning into college thanks to my musical experiences from high school. I am now a Music Therapy major at my top choice college. I gig as a bassist in a jazz combo, which is something I truly love. There is so much to be learned from music. Pit orchestras teach you to be accountable, as well as versatile and prepared. Larger ensembles teach you how to work as a part of a group. Smaller ensembles teach vital lessons in communication. And the connections and friendships gained from music are irreplaceable. I cannot imagine how my life would have been if music education had not been part of it. All of the wonderful people I've met and skills I've gained... I just can't imagine my life without them. In high school, the music rooms were always my safe zones. I distinctly remember one day being in the band room, crying out of anxiety, and asking my band director for a pass to class because I was late. And he said "I don't think you're ready to go back right now, just sit down. Do you want to talk about what's wrong?" I said no, but he let me just sit there and regain myself. Anxiety has always been a struggle for me, and music has always been a relief. Practicing can take help out of an anxiety attack. I am so grateful that music has been a part of my life, and I hope that so many others can find their peace and strength through music. And to Mr. Swinehart and Mr. Rauh, if you read this- Thank you so much. You have done more for me than you know, and I am eternally grateful.

### **Tina Krawczyk**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Newfoundland, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

At a time in my young life was in turmoil, I was able to turn to music to keep me safe and calm. Being involved in music activities at school kept me away from an abusive home and helped me keep my sanity. Pursuing music education as a career has led me to become an accomplished teacher and touch the lives of

many others. Being involved in a variety of ensembles has also introduced me to some very interesting people and life-long friends.

### **Laura Bibbs**

Occupation: Student

From: Wallenpaupack Area HS, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has made me the person I am today. I have learned not only how to become a better musician but how to interact with others and become a leader.

### **Bryan Cowan**

Occupation: Student

From: Wallenpaupack Area HS, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Like many others music has had a huge impact on my life and the many people who have come into my life to teach me music have also had huge impacts. For many, including myself, music and the arts have been a safe haven with its teachers almost as guardians, I have seen music change lives and even save them. This is because music is unlike anything else, it is the only activity I can think of where a few hundred people from completely different backgrounds, completely different stories, can get together and create something of absolute beauty. Music is a power for peace and tolerance that penetrates social-economic barriers and it is for that reason that music education is important and must stay in schools. I don't think anyone has ever summed it up as well as Plato, "Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything."

### **Jessica Nistad**

Occupation: Student

From: Wallenpaupack Area HS, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by giving me something to look forward to in my day of academics. Music is a big part of someone's life, as it is all around us no matter where we are, and being able to learn about it in a learning setting is something really grateful to me and to a lot of people I know. Because of music education, I have learned to better interpret others' feelings and has helped me grow as a dancer, performer, and a student. Music involves a certain focus and concentration that involves listening and responding to criticism and suggestions. Without music, I wouldn't be able to take a person's judgment and use it to my advantage.

### **Savannah Norton**

Occupation: Student

From: Wallenpaupack Area HS, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed to discover my true talents and gifts that I have to offer this world.

### **Sean Salkoskas**

Occupation: Student

From: Wallenpaupack Area HS, Pike County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by making me more confident. I have social anxiety problems and before I really started to get into choir I could barely talk to people without freaking out and having panic attacks. Through choir and music education I have learned that I can be confident if I just try. I went from being the awkward kid who could not talk to people or even order food at a restaurant to the confident kid who has become a leader in the theater and music programs at my school. So all in all music has helped my life in ways that some people will never realize and changed my life for the better.

# POTTER COUNTY

## **Kim Watson**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Austin, Potter County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

"One time on a band trip" is how most of my stories seem to start. As a member of marching bands in high school and college, some of the most memorable times I ever had were in marching band. From band camp to football games competitions hoagie sales and once in a lifetime trips. I went to school to become a music teacher. I have taught music to many children from preschool to high school for the last 24 years in some capacity. I was laid off from public school teaching in 2005 when the school district I was in downsized. Seems that has been happening in our rural areas too often. I have a daughter that is very talented in the arts. She dances, draws, sings in her school chorus and show choir and plays the drums. Next year when she goes to 7th grade she will have the opportunity to be in the marching band. I hope one day she can say "one time on a band trip." PLEASE SUPPORT MUSIC IN OUR SCHOOLS! IT'S PART OF EVERYONE'S LIFE!

## **Gabe Trimbur**

Occupation: Student

From: Coudersport HS, Potter County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education hasn't impacted me as much as those teachers who dedicated a minimum of four years to learning about the subject so that they could teach others about the beauty of music. If I had to describe how the subject as a whole has impacted me, I would say that it has opened my mind to a world with it's own vast history and future, and has increased my appreciation for the talents and artistry of musicians, past and present.

## **Rosemary Wargo**

Occupation: Student

From: Coudersport HS, Potter County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly affected my life. I have grown so much due to music education. It has helped me develop my talent and become a well rounded person. It has taught be responsibility, how to collaborate with others, and given me communication skills. without music education I would not be where I am today.

## **Elizabeth Adams**

Occupation: Student

From: Northern Potter JSHS, Potter County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been my entire life pretty much. I use it everyday and will continue to use it for my entire life. It has taught be focus and how to apply myself in a way no other class has.

## **Sarah Snyder**

Occupation: Student

From: Northern Potter JSHS, Potter County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made a huge impact on my life. It has made me decide that in college I would like to be a part of band and maybe minor in music

## SCHUYKILL COUNTY

### **Kelsey Hurst**

Occupation: College Student

From: Barnesville, Schuylkill County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made me the person that I am today. I have met some of my best friends and learned some of life's greatest lessons through the musical experiences I have had. Music has made such an influence on me that I am now studying music education with the hope that I can spread my love of music with as many people as I can. Music should be an important part of everyone's life and it should be offered to every student during their time in school. There is a way for every student to be involved with music and it may not necessarily be through ensembles or performances. Music stimulates the brain more than most activities and it can improve the way students perform in the classroom. Music shouldn't just be an extracurricular activity, it should be part of all school systems as something that all students take part in. Aside from the benefits that music offers such as discipline, responsibility, group skills, it gives the individual a chance to express the inexpressible.

### **William Lennox**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Frackville, Schuylkill County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is my life. I remember in third grade being so excited about playing the recorder and getting to learn a 'real' instrument. I always loved learning to play new instruments. In fourth grade when I had the opportunity to play trumpet, I could not wait to get home to practice. Middle school and high school brought new instruments in my life. I started putting bands together with other musicians and performing in front of others. Music gave me a self confidence. My teachers in elementary school always commented to my parents how shy I was and by high school I hosted a variety show. I love sharing my passion for music with all my students and anyone who is willing to listen. Music creates lifelong learners. Each day my students see me get excited over cool parts and fun music in band. They love to get together and create music with other people regardless of age or background. I see them form bonds they will carry for the rest of their lives. I was very fortunate to have passionate teachers who encouraged me to perform and enjoy every moment of making music. It is my goal as a music educator to pass that along to my students. Music is the last subject left where students learn how to convey their emotions without being tested on it. Each person can have a unique idea and sound. Everyone should have the same opportunities my students and I share everyday.

### **Mary Anne Stump**

Occupation: Public School Music Teacher

From: Gordon, Schuylkill County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was in eighth grade, I knew I wanted to make a career of teaching music. My school music programs were, in my mind, the greatest place I could possibly be. In high school, music education allowed me to meet people and travel to places I never would have seen otherwise - music camps, competitions, and festivals. My love of marching band determined my college, which proved to be among the best years of my life. I have spent most of the past ten years teaching public school music, and consider myself blessed to be able to do so. Even after being furloughed due to budget cuts in my district, there is nothing else I wanted to do. I was grateful for recall, not just for employment to help sustain my family, but I felt a loss in my life not being able to interact with students and share my love of music making. It's sad that, for as wonderful as music education has been in my life, it has also been a downfall. Since it's not a "major" or "required" stand-alone subject, it cost me my job briefly. I have colleagues who are still on furlough due to financial circumstances faced by our public schools. It is my greatest hope that the day will very soon come that our students are no longer deprived of the great musical opportunities that were afforded to me as a student.

### **John F. Potlunas**

Occupation: HS Music Teacher

From: Pottsville, Schuylkill County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have had the opportunity to make my living, pay my state and federal taxes, buy a house, marry, raise a daughter and send her to college, retire, work a part time retirement job in the music industry, played in and assistant-conducted a community symphony orchestra, school musical pit orchestras, community and church choirs as member and as a soloist, played in community bands and conducted one for the past 32 years and serve as Music Director for a local Youth Symphony and served for over 40 years as a active member of PMEA, serving as a Guest Conductor, Sec./Treas.. First Vice-President (twice), President of District 10 (twice), Immediate Past President (twice) and District 10 Instrumental Audition Chair for over 20 years, all because Music Education was part of my life in school and throughout my adult life as well. So it is my belief that Music Education had a 'slight' impact on my life and the people that I have ALWAYS and STILL DO have the pleasure and honor to work with and beside.

### **Cody Gemmell**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottsville Area HS, Schuylkill County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is the reason I am still involved in music. Without all of the directors, private teachers, and the overwhelming support of the community and school district, music would not be our school today. The lessons that I have learned from all of my educators will stay with me. Music has a positive impact in all aspects of my life.

### **Jacob Shoener**

Occupation: Student

From: Pottsville Area HS, Schuylkill County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The most significant activity amongst the many that I have listed above is being a member of the Pottsville Area HS Band. Being in the band requires many hours of dedication and hard work, including sacrificing the last month of summer vacation to music rehearsal and marching band camp. I am extremely proud to be a member of the best organization at Pottsville Area HS, and it gives me great distinction and pleasure to serve as President of the Band. Without the band, I would not have gained the many lifelong friendships and memories that I can now say that I have attained. Our band is not just a group of musicians that plays together, we are a close-knit community and family that comes together as one cooperative, cohesive unit to make the most beautiful sounds and intricacies into a beautiful art form, which is music. My father Craig is my band director and a music educator at Pottsville Area HS, and he can say also that he is a proud alumnus of the band. Working alongside my father everyday has been a real treat and it is a part of our relationship that I will cherish forever. The band has taught me leadership, as I have been a section leader and squad leader (for marching band) for the past two years, as well as being the student adviser of the Pep Band, a splinter group of musicians that performs at various athletic and community events. Anybody who knows me can honestly say that music is in my heart and soul, and can agree wholeheartedly with me that I love the band and all the things we do together. I can answer this question very easily by saying that joining the band and becoming a trumpet player was by far the best decision that I have ever made in my entire life. That is the significance and importance of music education to me and how it moves me so deeply.

### **Rachael Reiner**

Occupation: Student

From: Williams Valley HS, Schuylkill County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Throughout my entire life, music has always been my go to remedy for any situation. No matter what my mood, I find a complete thrill from playing my instrument or even singing. However, I would not have this emotional expression if it were not for the many educators whose paths have crossed mine. I have had the

privilege to work under many conductors at my school, county, and district levels. I can say that without their guidance and assistance, I would not be the person I am today. I believe that music is a truly magical piece to human existence. Without the guidance and push of my musical directors, I know for a fact that the life I lead would not be as fulfilling. My directors have pushed me to be the best musician I can be. Through their motivational words, I found myself practicing to become better and attend various festivals. While at these festivals, I have met many friends who have changed my life for the better. Music has allowed me countless opportunities to travel and meet new people. I would not be able to experience said opportunities if no one had taught or encouraged me to pick up that flute, read rhythms, and learn notes. It is the power of music that can lift a person from the deepest sadness. Music has impacted my life so much that I have decided to attend college as a music therapy major with a long term goal of becoming a pediatrician and applying music to my practice.

## **SNYDER COUNTY**

### **Nicholas Schmoyer**

Occupation: Student

From: Midd-West HS, Snyder County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has impacted my life because it has kept me busy, so that I haven't been just laying around doing nothing after sports were over. I have been actively involved in music since the second semester of my Freshmen year of HS, and it has been one of the best decisions I've ever made. I have made many memorable friends and memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

### **Patricia Williamson**

Occupation: School Librarian

From: Middleburg, Snyder County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me an area in which to have a degree of success among the creative arts. As I am not gifted in the visual arts or athletically I do perform music to a level above the majority of people. This success has given me a creative outlook enhancing my self-esteem. It is through music that I met my husband, serve my church, and am involved in my community.

### **Raechel Council**

Occupation: Student

From: Selinsgrove Area HS, Snyder County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me many opportunities. As the child of musicians, I have literally spent my entire life around music – having it sung or played to me, being taken to concerts and shows, and being exposed to a variety of musical styles. My school music education has complemented these experiences, but also allowed me to do something I really love, perform. There is something very special about working on a musical product with my friends and having it come together as something beautiful in front of an audience. There is great pride in this accomplishment.

### **Jessica Eyster**

Occupation: Student

From: Selinsgrove Area HS, Snyder County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music; it rests within the heart of every human being. From the moment we are born to our final breaths, music is a means of strength, joy, comfort, and relief. I have seen how music is a reflection of our very souls. A mother lulls her newborn baby with sweet melodies. A family softly whimpers familiar tunes as their loved one passes on. Through hardship we turn to music for relief. In times of joy we relish in cheerful songs. Whatever stage of life we find ourselves in, music is right there with us. Music has played a leading role in my life. Even before I was born my mother sang to me. I was raised hearing her voice and her piano playing.

As I grew up, my two older brothers' began to delve deeply into music. My oldest brother shook our house with his passionate drumming while my other brother serenaded us with his voice and guitar. With music as such an apparent element of my family, I was bound to develop my own passion for it. My mother says that I hummed myself to sleep before I was even old enough to talk. Perhaps music was my first language. In school I had always been a fairly shy and reserved student. Music gave me a voice. I began letting music speak for me. I started chorus in intermediate school where I quickly discovered that music was my niche. By middle school I was receiving various solos and was even in a select group called Millennium Millage. I really broke out of my shell in HS when I received the leading female role in our musical as a sophomore and again as a junior. I have also been blessed by being chosen junior and senior year for district and regional chorus. Being accomplished in music gave me a greater sense of success that I am sure has spilled into other subject areas. In addition to being an influence in my school life, music has also played a massive part in my personal life. Since middle school I have been writing my own music. These songs began as simply an outlet for my feelings. The piano chords were not complex; the melodies nothing extraordinary, the words not exceptionally creative, but they were my own. Through the years I have filled many notebooks with passionate scrawls. I think of these notebooks as my journal. The songs I write are a description of my feelings, a photograph of my life in that moment. Some people journal; some paint; some release their energy on the field. I release my emotions through music. There is something about music that captures every heart. Music is more than notes on a page. We feel it... whether we are creating it, singing it, or meditating in its splendor. Music is a sense. We all have a little of its spark inside of us.

### **Emma Lewis**

Occupation: Student

From: Selinsgrove Area HS, Snyder County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

For me, music has shaped my educational career. Musical education in my school has helped me to become who I am today. When I first came to the HS, I didn't think music was going to be as big of a part of my school career as it has become. Music was just a hobby throughout middle school, but Ms. Kathy Bartol helped me to become a better performer, to push myself. Music has helped me to come out of my shell, and expand my friend circle. The Selinsgrove Area HS's music program opened up more opportunities than I could ever imagine without it. So far, I've been able to get a lead in last year's musical, gotten solos in chorus concerts, and this spring, I've gotten the chance to perform in Carnegie Hall to sing in the world premiere of John Rutter's new piece. I'm so thankful for this music program and all the amazing opportunities it has offered.

### **Kyle Mertz**

Occupation: Student

From: Selinsgrove Area HS, Snyder County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

There are many ways that music has impacted my life. It ridiculous to even consider cutting music programs from schools. For some kids, music is the only thing they have. Music boosts your intelligence and for some people, is an escape from reality of the harsh world around them. Music has been a huge impact in my life all the way back to when I was three months old. Without music I don't know what I would do. According to the article, "Music from the Inside Out" on [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org), taking music lessons or simply listening to music can enhance intelligence, or the ability to perceive the visual world accurately, form mental images of physical objects and recognize variations of objects. Spatial reasoning is crucial for higher brain functions such as music, complex mathematics, science and chess. Many researchers believe that music has the power to strengthen the mind, heal the body and unlock creativity. Listening to music lowers stress. Being a lifelong musician is also linked with better sound processing. Listening to music can also help the heart. So, as you can see, these are just some of the reasons why music programs should not be cut from schools. To some kids, music is their world and without it, they'd be lost. Music also boosts your immune system and makes you a healthier person. So let's be real here...is cutting music really a good idea?

### **Rowan Miller**

Occupation: Student

From: Selinsgrove Area HS, Snyder County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since I was six years old and my grandfather handed me my first ukulele, music education has been a major part of my life. My grandfather would teach me short songs, and I would learn chords and strumming. Later, when I was in fifth grade, I tried the French horn. I liked it and played it for a couple of months, but eventually I did not keep it up. In sixth grade, however, I started the tuba. I turned out to be quite good and quickly finished our practice book. The band music was fairly challenging for my level and I got an enormous amount out of it. I've participated in four of the annual Susquehanna Valley Band concerts. I continued to play and enjoy playing the tuba in HS. I started looking into ukulele again with increasing vigor. I did a few independent studies before seeking private instruction for the ukulele, and I was able to find ukulele lessons available at Susquehanna University. Through these I was introduced to more strumming patterns and variations on notes. I have continued with ukulele and I am currently thinking about offering lessons of my own. I have also always been quite interested in choir. When I was in eighth grade, I was determined to increase my singing and performing abilities and joined the annual Eighth Grade Musical at our school. I had two solos in the show, and it greatly helped to pull me out of my shell and to increase my singing abilities. That year, I was also selected to be one out of four boys in my choir to perform in the annual Chorus Fest, which gave me my first taste of singing competitively. In ninth grade, I was noticed for being a strong singer, and was selected for the honors choir. I sang and played a ukulele solo in the annual cabaret that year. In tenth grade so far, I have found out that our honors choir is going to Carnegie Hall in the spring. We will be studying with Maestro John Rutter and performing in the premiere of his latest work. We are assured by our excellent director Ms. Kathy Bartol that this is an opportunity that will continue to "open doorways" for us throughout our lives. We have just received the music from Maestro Rutter, freshly written, about a week ago, and have been preparing excitedly ever since. I had the chance earlier this year to make it into District Chorus. This was a very enriching experience for me, as I was able to sing with other, more mature people who were at a high musical level like me. Our conductor was very able to bring out the best in the choir and helped us to produce a great concert. Now that I am in Regional Chorus, I am excited for more of the same and hope to continue to grow into a successful musician.

### **Michael PolICASTRO**

Occupation: Student

From: Selinsgrove Area HS, Snyder County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is amazing. Without it I would go mentally insane and honestly I don't think I would be able to find something else in the world that has impacted my life the way music has.

### **Jonah Roth**

Occupation: Student

From: Selinsgrove Area HS, Snyder County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by working with me as I have grown up. Ever since elementary school various music teachers have taught me. Beginning with the infamous recorder lesson and as much as we joked about the joke of an instrument it was, I was always intrigued by it at a young age. It was unbelievable to me that by pressing down on these small holes I could change the frequency that was coming out of this instrument. This spurred my musical interest as I wondered what else could perform this magic. I began to take up the saxophone and play in the middle school band during 5th grade. I enjoyed it more than anything else I was doing in school. Before 5th grade I couldn't wait to start playing an instrument because I had a cousin 2 years above me and he played the saxophone. To me he was as impressive at playing the saxophone as well as a 6th grader could, but nonetheless I was in awe. During my 5th grade year I fully appreciated the group lessons with my instrument group. I would come to every lesson I could remember I had. Going to a private lesson during school wasn't about getting out of class, it was about getting out of class and getting to do something I loved doing. When I got older things started changing in my school. The

music program started to fade and we were introduced to these standardized tests. My lessons were spread apart and our music started getting easier. So I decided to take up another instrument, the trumpet. My trumpet playing days were short as I was very disorganized in keeping track of both instruments' music and lesson times, and with double the private lessons I had to cut some on both instruments to make room for my schoolwork. In HS music started to become more serious than it was. Recently I had just taken up singing and during middle school I had studied with a jazz pianist. So when I arrived at the HS rather than having these private lessons, though there were some, the music was significantly harder. I was determined to learn it though because I wanted to become better and I knew that all of music can't be as easy as what I was playing in middle school. The notes in chorus pushed my range and the rhythms in band strained my fingers, but my teachers taught me how to play and how to sing. I became better than I was and next year I hope to become better than I am. Music has grown up with me and will continue to grow as I do. So I will hope to make as much of an impact with music as it has impacted me.

### **Liza Smith**

Occupation: Student

From: Selinsgrove Area HS, Snyder County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life tremendously. It has made me become a much more well-rounded individual and has helped me become responsible and learn how to manage my time. I would not be the person I am today with having Music Education in my life.

## **SOMERSET COUNTY**

### **Ashley Kelly**

Occupation: Student

From: Acosta, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is very enjoyable for me. I made friends through music that have lasted a long time. Music has actually brought me closer to some of my family members and I have made memories that will last a lifetime.

### **Casey Ray**

Occupation: Student

From: Acosta, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Band impacted my life in so many ways that I can't even count. The band member are my family, they have been there for me. It has helped me be more confident about my personality and my goals. The music program makes me feel like I can do anything I want with out feeling insecure. If you take it away from us we will lose our creative side. I will do anything to keep our music program at every school in Pennsylvania.

### **Phillip Walter**

Occupation: Student

From: Berlin Brothersvalley HS, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From the time I was small, music education has played a huge role on my life. Since kindergarten, I have been in pretty much every music related ensemble that my school has had to offer, from Marching Band to Musical. I've always particularly enjoyed singing and the bass drum. I can remember the first time I was formally taught to keep time during a song. I was in kindergarten or first grade, and our elementary music teacher was playing a song and telling all of us to keep time on the desks. Everyone figured it out on the first time except me. I asked "How do I do it?" and the teacher came up to my desk and started tapping quarter notes on the desk. I still didn't understand, so she said, " Just tap on the desk." Then, she played the song again. I just started tapping randomly until something finally clicked in my head, and I fully understood the complex action that was keeping the beat of a song with quarter notes. Impressive right? Let's skip ahead to 5th grade band. Up to this point, I only had really mastered rudimentary skills like singing songs already sung

to me, or tapping sixteenth notes, so, when I was handed snare drum music with notes on the offbeat and harder rhythms, I was utterly bewildered. My band teacher was there to teach me. He helped me through the songs, and I'm a better musician because of it. Before district pre-auditions last year, I really only had small ensemble roles in the musical, and didn't sing out in choir. My chorus teacher saw that I had potential, and helped me learn my pre-aud piece. I still didn't take it seriously, and only practiced a few times. I didn't make the cut. This year, my chorus teacher told me to practice more, and I practiced with her more, and I made it into District Chorus. I wouldn't be here without the music, band, and chorus teachers I've had along the way.

### **Draven Beener**

Occupation: Student

From: Boswell, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has had a huge impact on my life. Music is a way for me to express myself, a way for me to be surrounded by great people, a way for me to be inspired by many different types of music. I come from a town where there are drug deals. With the local music programs, it's nice to see students and adults alike in a friendly environment. Music has also been a way for me to escape from all of my troubles. It helps me relieve stress. Whenever I get upset, I start playing music, and soon I forget about everything. Without music education, I think that my life would be extremely different than it is today.

### **Christopher Burley**

Occupation: Student

From: Boswell, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has relaxed me through hard times. The hard times include such things as family problems, animal problems, and housing problems. Music is important to me because it makes everything bad turn into good. Therefore, if there is an animal hurting in my family or an animal died, I listen to music to help ease the pain.

### **Jak Dupre**

Occupation: Student

From: Boswell, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Marching band and band has given me a lot of friends and opportunities that I would not have gotten without the music program.

### **Sierra Mafield**

Occupation: Student

From: Boswell, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

After seven years of playing music, it's impacted me in ways I never thought it could. It allows me to express my feelings and gives me an escape from any hardships I may be going through. When I play, I enter a whole different world. I think that anyone who has seen me play my instrument could see my passion. I work to reach my goals and the more experience I get, the more I want to be involved with other music programs. Playing my instrument and music has truly given me what and who I am today. So much of my life is surrounded by it that if it was taken away from me, I'd be lost. I have made my friendships through music. A lot of the relationships I have have been made through music entirely. It's given me more opportunities than anything else in my life. Without music, I would not be who I am today at all, I know that. Music means everything to me, and I cannot live without it.

### **Lorie Mafield**

Occupation: Psychometrist

From: Boswell, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music, (French horn, trumpet, flute) along with a wonderful art program kept me in school. I was lucky to have teachers willing to push me, in all subjects, as I was generally bored. I can't imagine what may have gone sour in my life. But music gave me quiet time, creative thinking, boisterous-controlled chaos with friends, to share ideas that no one else understood. Competition and camaraderie. It wasn't until I became older that I learned of the cognitive requirements and therefore, the benefits of music. Playing, listening. Both sides of the brain. Hand-eye coordination. Timing. In marching band- walking, playing, counting, balance, awareness of your surroundings, (not knocking over your neighbor or tripping on the divots on the field or the horse poo in the parade), endurance-physical and mental. I have, recently, learned of a non-profit program, Music and Memory, that is showing promising-though, to me, not surprising- benefits to older &/or memory impaired, or bored-bed-ridden patients. Music holds our memories. Like the smell of new crayons takes me back to kindergarten, Bette Midlers' "The Rose" takes me back to singing with 3 of my dearest friends that I haven't seen in years. It is a wonderful, life-long memory. House-cleaning is much better with Herb Alpert! In working with a psychologist that does testing for OVR, I have noticed a disproportionate lack of any instrumental music students referred. Only once! Test anxiety! It has been my experience that musicians, (the 'arts'-in general- writers, painting, drawing, etc) are unwilling -sometimes afraid, to fail. Or even to accept "good enough". Music, especially instrumental, creates broader thought processing across all of life. One type may relax someone. Another may break through a wall of social isolation or misunderstanding. I may not understand the Greek language but I would love to learn the folk dances! Or Russian. Or...any! Music has allowed myself and my children to travel-to see people, places and things we might not have even known existed. I, personally, don't care for 'scream-o', and other ...angry?...music, (and I am, admittedly, hard pressed to call it that)but I would rather someone be able to vent frustration that way than, perhaps, in some criminal act. Concussions seem rare, as well. What would happen to ballet? Broadway? Radio? Those long drives, elevator rides, waiting on the phone...? Why does it feel, again- to me, that 'we' are actually trying to dummy-down our entire country? Manners, consideration, social interaction, (texting to your date-across the table?). Taking away music lessons, availability of instruments, art programs, even cursive writing is already detrimental to our educational system. Which becomes a breeding ground of bored, uneducated, unemployable, UNMOTIVATED(why bother-there is no joy) citizens. Music, still, brings me joy. Even if my current physical issues are severe, listening to my son play his guitar for me, or my other son play his trumpet, or my daughter glow with pride after playing her French horn. And, I can still pick up a horn and play. My football career is over.

### **Olivia Yoder**

Occupation: Student

From: Boswell, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life completely! Its a special and different way to express your feelings and emotions. It gives opportunities that only come through music. It requires patience and time to progress, but its worth it. Music takes time and effort, but when a group of musicians come together its amazing.

### **Brianna Richey**

Occupation: Student

From: Davidsville, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I've had a lot of trouble over the years finding who I was and what it was that made me happy. I was always struggling with this lack of interest in anything. Yet every marching band season, I found myself thriving. When it was over, I depended on concert band to be what got me through my day. As my own personal issues grew worse, I found myself clinging to music as that last hope. When I got to 10th grade, and I experienced my first PMEA festival, that's when I knew exactly who I was. I was a musician. Spending every moment slaving over this music would've seemed irritating to most of my friends, but I enjoyed every second.

Music was the one thing that was always there, with open arms, to keep me going. Music taught me to work hard and you'll accomplish what you need. It taught me to feel more emotions than I thought existed. It taught me to bond with others that appreciated the same ideas as myself. Music is often what I use to keep myself trying. Though the connection may not be clear to some, I do know that music is the reason I am where I am in school now. Of everything I've done in school, music has given me the most, and I've benefited from it in ways that I couldn't even dream of doing with any other part of my education. Music is the reason I am who I am, and it's the reason I will keep being who I am. I can't imagine my high school career without this sanctuary that music has provided me.

### **Elizabeth Pile**

Occupation: Violinist/Teacher

From: Friedens, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has had a huge impact on my life. I feel strongly that because I was involved with music as a child, I became a confident, independent, academically successful adult. As a musician and teacher I see the same affects in kids. They have pride and a sense of belonging when they join a school music group. The development of perseverance and striving to attain goals is clear. I am also involved in teaching in a program for inner city at risk youth. The children involved in this program are happy when they are making music. And, studies have shown that the study of music can give students a purpose, make them better citizens and keep them out of trouble.

### **Alisha Moore**

Occupation: Student

From: Hooversville, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since the fifth grade, I have been involved in the music program in the North Star School District. The music program has helped me in many ways to create a better life for myself through the help of friends and self expression. Without band, I would not have had all of my great friends that I have met through the program. I also would not have had a reason to continue working on keeping my grades up. I feel that band has encouraged me to do my best in all that I do and without this program I would not have a creative outlet to turn to in school. Without band, I would dread waking up each morning to go to school.

### **Matthew Darr**

Occupation: Student

From: North Star HS, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many fashions. Before I began getting into music, I didn't have as much fun in school as I did once I got involved in fourth grade. I really, really enjoy all the opportunities that were made available to me through PMEA, and I am very grateful for all the wonderful things they have done for this district. Music education in this area has also potentially gave me the option to start a career myself in music education. I really don't think that if we didn't have such a strong music board, I wouldn't feel the same. I am very grateful for the lifetime hobby that music education has opened up for me.

### **Lucas Deist**

Occupation: Student

From: North Star HS, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a very strong impact on my life. For example, joining my schools marching band program surrounded me with people that had similar interests. I made many friends in the band. Music education has also shown me several job opportunities. My life would not be the same without music or music education.

### **Evan Gerney**

Occupation: Student

From: North Star HS, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music education, who would I be? The truth is that I do not know. Music has slowly but surely become the most important aspect of my life, and it has shaped me to become the person that I am today. Every day I notice how music is all around me, all the time, shaping and changing me into a more self-aware and satisfied person. Who would I be without music? I do not know, and I do not want to.

### **Chris Wagler**

Occupation: Student

From: Shanksville-Stonycreek HS, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has provided a way of relaxation and enjoyment in a time of need.

### **Tyler Wagler**

Occupation: Student

From: Shanksville-Stonycreek HS, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is life. Without this outlet for me, I would be lost and have lack of expression. With this opportunity of learning music I learned character and how to express my feelings in more than just music in general, but also in everyday life experiences. Music education gave me many opportunities to perform in community and even large scale events and I am grateful to share the time and experience with other musicians and create amazing music. I'm so glad music is a great part of my life.

### **Madison Walker**

Occupation: Student

From: Shanksville-Stonycreek HS, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Learning about music definitely impacted my life and amazing ways. It has brought me to be involved in great opportunities, such as region chorus, that I never thought I could reach such a level through singing. My family helped me from a young age to develop a love for music. They did so through exposing me to singing in various places such as in church, or just for fun. That helped me to become comfortable in front of people and with the experience helped me develop loving the stage and even considering trying out for districts. Those activities, after continuing performing, eventually gave me more confidence in myself just through singing. Music is important to my life for various reasons. It has helped me to go out of my comfort zone and get to accomplish goals for my life, and surely to accomplish more goals in the future.

### **Scott Logsdon**

Occupation: Actor/Director/Writer/Singer

From: Somerset, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music and those who taught me I would have never been on Broadway, sung at the White House, traveled the world or worked with some of the greatest artists (famous and not) alive. On top of that, music taught me discipline, how to work with others, how to communicate, how to resolve issues and has brought me indescribable joy. Funding music and arts education is imperative. Musicians have the power to heal, to move, to uplift, to inspire and entertain. The lessons learned from music are lifelong and can be applied to other areas of life.

### **Alex Ludy**

Occupation: Student

From: Somerset Area HS, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has greatly enriched my HS experience. Musical and chorus have encouraged me to do my best and excel in everything I do.

### **Luke McGowan**

Occupation: Student

From: Somerset Area HS, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music a simple word, but a whole lot of meaning. With music education it helped keep drugs and alcohol out of my life. Without music I don't know what I would do.

### **Jennifer Coutrue**

Occupation: Student

From: Stoystown, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Whenever I was younger, I used to always get picked on for being lonely or not wanting to get along with others or make friends with people. I didn't understand why that was a reason to pick on someone, I guess being anti-social humors some people. I started hearing about band class whenever I was in 4th grade. The first thing i thought was, this dumb class wont be for me. Come around the end of the year in 4th grade i decided to try it out and see where it goes. First i tested the flute. I played this instrument for half a year and decided that it definitely was not for me and wanted so bad to quit. The teacher that i had at that time talked me out of quitting and told me that there were so many things that will come good out of this class. She offered me the option to play the clarinet. She let me try the scale on it and I realized that I might actually make it with the clarinet. After two years I was in 7th grade. I finally found out that there were so many notes on the clarinet that i could not play. My new music teacher Mrs. C told me that my school needed more trumpet players and decided that maybe I should join. At this time I didn't have the money to rent an instrument so I borrowed the schools trumpet. There are a few notes that I have yet to learn how to play, but to this day I am still playing the trumpet. I really want to play the saxophone, but I will have to wait until my next year of school so that I don't mess up our band class. This class taught me that no matter how much you keep to yourself, you can make a friend just by playing the same instrument or in the same class. I have many friends now and they are just like me and they don't even judge me if I play a wrong note or cant play a certain note. I love band. I also play the guitar out side of class. My dad helps me sometimes playing the guitar, we also get along better now. Before we didn't talk to much. In my opinion, music can bring many enemies close and make them friends.

### **Kylie Kelly**

Occupation: Student

From: Stoystown, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life by giving me a release and a way to express myself. When I am frustrated or upset i can play music to calm my nerves. Without band class and marching band I would not only lose many friends, but i would lose a piece of myself. Music class always seems to cheer me up after a bad morning. It's fun and you can make several friends from several different grades. Think about after school activities such as football games and other sports. There would be no half time show to entertain the crowd when the game is going bad and would most likely be full of disappointment. Music is in everyone's life and taking that away would be a real slap in the face. Some people may resort to bad things such as drugs and alcohol to fill their extra time. That would not be any help to the society. That is how music education has impacted my life.

### **Shannon Spory**

Occupation: Student/McDonalds

From: Stoystown, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Concert band and Marching band has provided with great friends and a wonderful family.

### **Tabitha Weaver**

Occupation: Student

From: Windber HS, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without music, my entire life would be different. 90% of my friends have been made from music, it forms a family. Music is the one thing I can rely on during a bad day.

### **Kamilla Chuvashayeva**

Occupation: Student

From: Hollsopple, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has always been a strong support in hard times for me. In difficult periods of my life I found strength in David Bowie, Queen and the XX, I found a similar soul in Cat Power, I found the same dark feelings in Beethoven's music, which helped me to feel much better. Right now a loss of a fellow exchange student from Kazakhstan has affected me a lot, and music one of my only friends who know what I feel. But playing music is a lot more than that. When all my friends who I thought were my closest, left me, I found relieve in playing the guitar. The ability to express my own emotions made it easier for me to know how I feel myself about an issue, find some sense in everyday life. Music has me following into depth of the world, getting me known magnificent wonders of the science. It has introduced me to tens of sincere, true and great people from all over the world. Now, thinking about what would be if they take music education from school, I understand it's more than knowing what age did Mozart write his first piece or how many weeks have the Beatles' songs been on the top of a music chart. It's about getting to know the world and, most importantly, getting to know about yourself: understanding your true value and beliefs. Without music we would be suffering silent football matches, quiet pep rallies, evenings without the magic of trumpets and flutes. We would lose one of the valuable sources of life and self-conscience. No more music in school = no more singing in the shower.

### **Nathan Rininger**

Occupation: Student

From: Stoystown, Somerset County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In certain ways music has impacted my life, such as having the opportunity to be able to play music with an instrument, and along side others. Also to be able to read and understand the music I play. I feel that music does have an importance in school, such as it give students a chance to express themselves.

## **SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY**

### **Lexi Button**

Occupation: Student

From: Blue Ridge HS, Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have enjoyed music my entire life. Once I entered middle school and chorus became more serious, I realized how complex music was and how it only looks easy. Becoming educated in music was a little more difficult than I expected, but I don't regret becoming educated. Music is a beautiful thing, and I feel lucky that I have knowledge of it and the opportunity to continue learning. I know things now, many valuable thing, that I hadn't known before, and also now have a greater respect for musicians and a greater knowledge of music. Music has made my life better overall; I'm happiest when I'm around music, and classes that involve music at school are the ones I look forward to the most. Music education has shown me that, while music isn't as easy

as it is usually perceived, learning it is an accomplishment and something that everyone should learn. Music education has made my world a better place, and I hope that it makes other's worlds better as well.

### **Sierra Marriott**

Occupation: Student

From: Blue Ridge HS, Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life because I have found my favorite pass time, hobby, class in HS, after school activity and soon to be career for college. I plan to major in Music Therapy. It has become so important to me because music speaks to me on an in-explainable higher level. It helps me to cope with stresses, and its altogether so much fun. Music has helped me to become a more disciplined person because I have been working so hard to learn songs, and I am a beginner on the piano and guitar. Music has helped me to become a more social person because I've gotten to meet so many unique people who also love music. Music has helped me to become braver because now I can perform on the spot without getting nervous. It is a dream come true to be able to do something I love because it gives purpose to my life. I think everyone has a talent, everyone is good at something. I am good at singing, and I think it is important for me to use my talent whether it is to better myself, or better others with entertainment, encouragement and inspiration. Music has been around forever and is a part of all cultures. Musicians and artists from the past are praised for their creativity. I believe music education can impact not only my life, but the kids today will be the ancient musicians setting an example for the kids in the future.

### **Allen Weed**

Occupation: Student

From: Blue Ridge HS, Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has made it much more fun.

### **Dean R. Houck**

Occupation: Retired Music Educator

From: Great Bend, Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education provided me with an excellent profession opportunity for 35 years in the Pennsylvania public school environment. The people that I associated with as well as the thousands of students that were influenced in some way by me will always be a part of my life. Music Education also provided me with many performance opportunities as a professional musician.

### **Madison**

Occupation: Student Music Therapist

From: Hallstead, Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My middle/high school choir/theater director has a certain passion for bringing out the best in kids and showing them that they are capable of more than they think they are. She demonstrates this in the repertoire she selects for concerts, the shows she chooses, and the kids who she places in different parts and solos. She encouraged us to work hard at our music and and was clear when she felt kids weren't trying hard enough. She sees the talent and potential in all kids, even if no one else sees it. All of this encourages me in my studies, because I know she believes in me. She encourages me to see the potential that others have, to know that there is so much more to a person than their attitude, and to know that pushing people can lead to good things, all of which is important in my field and in life.

### **Gail Batzel**

Occupation: Solder Technician

From: Kingsley, Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education in school impacted my life by giving me an appreciation for every genre of music from classical, to modern day rock, hip hop, etc. I also am fortunate to have the knowledge to be able to read music and play a variety of musical instruments, as well as being able to sing for different occasions such as church choir, and at weddings. Without having had the education that started as a child in grammar school and continued through high school these things would not have been possible for me.

### **Ashley Distad**

Occupation: Student

From: Montrose Area HS, Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has further developed my musical skills and stretched me as a musician. It has pushed me to work harder and provided for lots of musical experiences. As a whole, it has helped direct me towards my future plans of studying music in college.

### **Kyra Ricci**

Occupation: Student

From: Montrose Area HS, Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It has taught me skills for life and for cooperating with others.

### **Luke Lisowski**

Occupation: Student

From: Mt. Lebanon HS, Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The great philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once said, "Without music, life would be a mistake." As I sit here in my room and I think about his statement, a plethora of thoughts rushes to my mind about how music impacts the lives of people in the world. Studies have shown that music education can raise standardized test scores but test scores are just a measurable statistic. Because of learning music and the responsibility that comes with it, students are given the opportunity to build character. Music has taught me more than just notes on a page but it has taught me how to have a good character. From the first day of elementary music, I have learned to be responsible by bringing all of my music, honest about if I actually practiced, and I became motivated to becoming an exceptional player. Because of music education I am able to utilize these traits that will make me successful in the working world regardless if I go into music or not. Overall these traits have made me a very successful person in school and a happier person, because I am able to enjoy music which is just a part of the human experience.

### **Hayley Maloney**

Occupation: Student

From: Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has changed my life for the better. It has given me a purpose in life, and I plan to pursue it after HS. If it wasn't for the music educators in my life, I don't know if I would have found my purpose. A lot of my friends don't know what they are passionate about, and end up drifting through HS without a plan. As for my friends in music, they have a purpose. Even a student who doesn't want to pursue music as a career can find camaraderie, meaning, and a new outlook on life through music. Our choral and band directors give us something to work toward that is both fun and educational. It creates a bond between fellow students through festivals like the ones PMEA holds. Music education has given me something to do in school, a higher goal to achieve. It has taught me how to work hard, and look at things in different ways. I believe it is just as

important as all other academic classes, and it has taught me more about the human experience than any academic class has.

### **Jesika Ransom**

Occupation: Homemaker

From: Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a child my parents divorced and music was my go to activity. I was an oboe player and went to college for music education. I personally feel that if I did not have music in high school and grade school I would have chosen other dangerous activities and never would have went to college. Now as a mother I can share my love for music.

### **Clayton Hansen**

Occupation: Student

From: Susquehanna Community JSHS, Susquehanna County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in a huge way. For most of my life I had not thought very highly of myself, even though I had gotten good grades and a wonderful family. What really helped me see my worth was through music education. Once I recognized my talents as a musician set me apart from others, I began to pursue music more and more. I had been playing the piano for the majority of my life and I loved to sing. My music teachers helped me develop those talents including even learning to play the tube, and I have loved every second of it. In short, music education has not only impacted my life, it has changed my entire perspective of the worth of my life.

## **TIOGA COUNTY**

### **Anya Nance**

Occupation: Student

From: North Penn-Mansfield HS, Tioga County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in the best way possible. I grew up listening to all different kinds of music. Even in the most stressful times I find myself humming, maybe to relax, or sometimes without even realizing it. Music enhances our senses, tugs on our emotions, and even helps create memories. So much emotion is thrown out into the open when making a song that it takes a great deal of courage to do. Music has impacted my life in the most positive way possible and nothing can ever replace it.

### **Audrey Becker**

Occupation: Student

From: Wellsboro Area HS, Tioga County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Musical education has impacted me deeply in more ways than words can describe. It all began when I started taking lessons on the violin at a young age. I was immediately hooked. Since then I've enjoyed playing 4 different types of instruments and have developed an interest in vocal performance. I adore how music is such a raw way of expressing emotion and is a fun pastime as well. I started taking dance classes at the age of three, and that taught me how to count as well as to appreciate the complexities of song. I admit that singing has always been my favorite out of all of the ways to practice music. It is much simpler for the fact that it doesn't require any type of item besides your own voice, yet it requires patience and discipline. Music has taught me how to appreciate everyday activities and always provides a way to pick myself back up when I'm struggling.

### **Ian Brennan**

Occupation: Student

From: Wellsboro Area HS, Tioga County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life in many ways. Both of my parents are music teachers, the father a college professor with a doctoral degree and the mother teaching young kids from Pre-K to sixth grade. I started singing at a very early age and as I became exposed to musical theater early on in my life, my interest in the subject greatly increased. Now that I am in HS, I intend to use everything that my parents, various music teachers throughout the years, and various other experiences taught me to make music one of the most important aspects of my career. My main focus will be film, voice, and theater acting, but I also look to record vocal performances and instrumental music in my spare time. No matter what I do with my life, music will always be there with me.

### **Jacob Foil-Charles**

Occupation: Student

From: Wellsboro Area HS, Tioga County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has affected my life in so many ways I simply cannot list them all. Music is good for you physically and mentally, Music uses your whole body and also promotes healthy brain activity. Music and education go hand in hand as students who participate in music tend to do better in areas of math and science than other students who do not. Music gives me something to look forward to during my day and teaches me how to work with others, How to teach others and most of all how to have fun doing an educational and very rewarding activity.

### **Lauren Gooch**

Occupation: Student

From: Wellsboro Area HS, Tioga County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has had an incredible impact on my life. It has encouraged me to work harder and discover something that I love. It has made me a better person, increased my confidence, and given me a way to express myself. It has also helped me grow as a person, get out of my comfort zone, and experience things I never even imagined. I had the opportunity to perform at festivals, meet new people, and make new friends. Because of music education in my life, I have wonderful memories that will last a lifetime.

### **Allison Hepp**

Occupation: Student

From: Wellsboro Area HS, Tioga County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in various ways. When I began playing with the school band in middle school, I found a group of friends along with a lifelong activity. Unlike many sports, music can be utilized as a hobby or a career through a lifetime, rather than through a set range of years in life. Since my introduction to music in middle school, I have decided to pursue a career in music. My discovery of music would not have been possible without my school's music program, which has fallen back as I have continued my career in HS. Although my school's music program continues to be cut and my music teachers are moved or laid off, there are still many, many students who are truly devoted to music and I am one of them. My school music program has changed my life, given me a career path, and I now have a lifelong activity I love.

### **Andrea Tsao**

Occupation: Student

From: Wellsboro Area HS, Tioga County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in several ways. It has taught me how to work in a group, follow directions, and several other things. Being in music ensembles force each participant to be able to work in

groups to provide a satisfactory musical product. It also forces each member to follow what the director instructs the band to do. Music education provided discipline to my life, and taught me to be more organized. Music kept me out of trouble because it occupied much of my time that could have been wasted. Music has also helped me to achieve many great things in life that I could not have achieved without the help of musical educators. I have participated in many musical festivals and gone to prestigious musical camps where I have met many people that could benefit me in future career/academic pursuits. Music has been a vital part of my life and I would not have survived without it.

### **Rosemarie Worrell**

Occupation: Student

From: Wellsboro Area HS, Tioga County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life because it helps me to understand how to cooperate in a group and to work well with others. It helps me to read well and to understand what I'm reading. It causes me to use my mind, body, and soul to create something beautiful. Music is an escape that allows me to find relief from my normal day without it. If I didn't have chorus, my days would be filled with boredom and I wouldn't get to see the joy on peoples' faces when they hear the beautiful melodies we can create.

### **David Wert**

Occupation: Music Educator

From: Westfield, Tioga County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has provided me with guidance and meaning in my life since 5th grade. School held no motivation for me and I was often times bored with the material teachers would assign. I would often times not complete homework or pay attention in class. This continued through middle school. The one thing that did stimulate my mind and provide enjoyment was music class and my ensembles (chorus and band). I have had band directors throughout my career that have inspired me to do my best. The motivation I felt carried over into the rest of my classes and, eventually, other parts of my life. As I was nearing the end of my high school career, I struggled with determining a career path. I would often times be told by guidance counselors, family members, and others that music was not a viable option. "No one can make a living from music" would often times be their response. After much thought, I decided that music was the only thing I was truly passionate about and could only find life-long happiness with music. I have since spent many years of my life bettering my skills as a band director and continuing the cycle of inspiring students to do their best. I work in a low income school district where many students do not have opportunities. They may find little success in life but, I hope, will always find music to be an outlet where they can thrive. Music (and all of the arts) have so much emotional content within. This makes the arts the perfect place for people to be able to find a connection that they can benefit from every time they experience success. Whether music be comforting, energizing, or uplifting, it has the ability to move people. Even if they cannot put this moving experience into words, most have some sort of music that they identify with in their life. This is why I believe music has the ability to impact the lives of everyone who is given the right tools, educators, and experiences.

### **Sylvia Youse**

Occupation: College Student

From: Westfield, Tioga County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In high school chorus was my life. Every day I looked forward to perfecting that new piece, or trying out for that next solo. My chorus director, who was also my guitar teacher was the absolute best part of my school career. She was there for me through my toughest times, and she helped me to thrive. Without the chorus I would not be the person that I am today. The chorus taught me that it is just as important to work as a team and blend as it is to take a risk and stand out.

## UNION COUNTY

### Lynn Berg

Occupation: Vocal Music Teacher

From: Lewisburg, Union County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been such a large part of my life. It has provided me with a family of friends, professional colleagues, and students that has been the basis of most of the activities in my lifetime. I got "hooked" when I was in high school and participated in the musicals. It was then that I decided, definitely, that this was the field I wished to pursue and be able to provide for or share in this same experience with others. It has been meaningful in my church life as well. The creativity that music fosters in many directions is boundless. The rapport that is built by creating music with others is a wonderful experience. The critical thinking that is involved supports critical thinking in other areas. I am so happy that the field of music education has been a choice that has provided so much for me.

### India Bolton

Occupation: Student

From: Lewisburg, Union County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I've been playing the violin since I was four years old, and it has honestly made me so happy and I believe that music makes you smarter. By playing the violin I have been opened to doors never possible without the violin. :) I plan to play my entire life, and it's already been eleven years.

### India Bolton

Occupation: Student

From: Lewisburg Area HS, Union County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been playing the Violin since my fourth birthday, and I really enjoy it. By playing the violin i have been opened to opportunities I would not have without playing. I have been playing now for 11 years and i will continue playing hopefully my whole life.

### Quinn Cummings

Occupation: Student

From: Lewisburg Area HS, Union County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have always enjoyed being surrounded by music. By the age of 3, I started playing Suzuki violin, and eventually added piano and flute. I continue to love music, whether I'm playing or listening to it, and I know that music will always be an integral part of my life.

### Allison Graham

Occupation: Student

From: Lewisburg Area HS, Union County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had great impact in my life. Music creates a community and connection that no other subject area in school can possibly achieve. I've made so many friends in orchestra and choir that I would not otherwise have talked to had we not shared common musical experiences and interests. Without music, my life would be vastly diminished. It has given me a sense of identity as well as an escape and release from a sometimes harsh reality. Because of music I have gained a certain sensitivity towards people and emotions that I wouldn't have without it.

### **Ciel Smith**

Occupation: Student

From: Lewisburg Area HS, Union County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has helped me to thrive in my love of music. Musical groups such as orchestra and choir have given me the unique opportunities needed to really help me love and appreciate the art of music.

### **Jenna Swartz**

Occupation: Student

From: Lewisburg Area HS, Union County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life because it has given me so many opportunities to meet people, play great music, and experience many styles of different conductors. I believe music education helps with all other aspects of life including doing better in school, developing a good work ethic and leadership skills, and learning how to perform in front of people.

### **Carol Richard**

Occupation: LPN

From: Union County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music had Connected my whole family. We all play instruments and at Thanksgiving we all gather at my parents and play instruments. There are 3 daughters and 5 grandchildren and thanks to the encouragement of our parents we all were involved in band, choir, orchestra, and musicals. We even took a video of our thanksgiving music to a music teacher who had 5 of us for music in middle school. Everyone is out of school but still playing instruments and singing. Music is great for the soul.

### **Jordan Berger**

Occupation: College Student

From: Lewisburg, Union County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The spring of my 8th grade year, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I had never practiced so hard, with so many people to achieve a common goal. I quickly realized I had a false preconception of band camp: just like most things, it wasn't like the movies. Marching band is not a typical sport or activity; there are no benches, no substitutes, and every person is equally important to the band in achieving success. As an incoming freshman at band camp, I felt like a small fish in a large sea, struggling to hold my own. On the field, I was originally scared to play loudly and afraid to make mistakes; I became complacent cowering in the back. Off the field, the time commitment was tough for a freshman, and I had trouble balancing my classes and marching. Despite my struggles, my teacher Mrs. Kaufman stayed after practice to help. She not only taught the marching technique, but also helped me organize my schedule. While the season progressed, I gained the confidence to play out boldly, no longer afraid to be heard, and I volunteered to help with music and uniforms. I learned how to diligently plan my schedule to have time for friends, practice, and homework. When the band performed in state championships a few months later, I poured my heart into a winning performance. My senior year, I saw a rookie struggling to march and play, whose face was beet red and his hands trembling, I put my arm around him and said, "Hi, my name is Jordan!" Currently a sophomore at Bucknell University, I profess I do not remember exactly how to march. However, I do remember my teacher's unwavering encouragement as I struggled through the first few months of marching band. I remember how to organize my time efficiently and put myself out when others need help. I am grateful for my music education, as it has helped me develop into the person I am today.

## VENANGO COUNTY

### Tyler Hengstler

Occupation: Student

From: Cranberry Area HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in that I have made friends, found a field I want to go into for college, and found something that helps me cope with things that make me sad in life. My life would not be the same without music education.

### Brandon Donohue

From: Franklin, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education made my entire high school years worth it. Music made some of my closest friends which I am still in contact with. Music made me more confident in myself by going to PMEA and meeting with other great musicians. Without music I think high school would've been terrible.

### Nevin Brian Rosen

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Franklin, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have been a music educator in the Forest Area School District for 30 years. During this time I have taught every aspect of music with the exception of strings. I do, however, teach guitar and keyboard to secondary general music students. I feel personally honored to teach in a small school district like Forest Area. Without music in the school, many of the children of this district would not have a music making opportunity. I have seen many changes over the years; some good and some not so good. What has never changed was the support for the music program in our area.

### Nicole Way

Occupation: Student

From: Franklin HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life since I was in elementary school. I was blessed to have an outstanding music teacher who got me interested in music at a very young age. I started taking private voice lessons and playing the clarinet while I was in fifth grade. I continued to do both of those things in middle school and HS as well as started participating in shows at my community theatre. The people who I have met through music related activities have made huge impacts on my life. I have recently decided that I would like to major in music education myself. The impact that my music educators have left on me has led me to want to make that same impact on other students.

### Robbie Jenkins

Occupation: Student

From: Oil City Area HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me confidence, and lots a friends.

### Elijah Lewis

Occupation: Student

From: Oil City Area HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

How to be more responsible. Also it has impacted my life by making me successful in so many ways by making it to district chorus and region chorus. It also made me work harder in everything I do, not only music.

### **Cassie Phipps**

Occupation: Student

From: Oil City Area HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me an outlet for relieving stress. It has also been a way of making me happy. I have also met so many new friends from being involved in music.

### **Lauren Plummer**

Occupation: Student

From: Oil City Area HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was in 5th grade, I decided to partake in the instrument lessons provided by my school, and learning how to play the flute has changed me as a person. The lessons of music reading, flute playing, and composing have fostered greater math, reading, and writing skills in me. Without learning these skills and practicing my instrument these past almost 8 years, I probably would not be as calm, kind, or level-headed as I am now. I care more about my school attendance knowing I have a choir or band period at the end of the day. I do more homework, and practice time management when it comes to practicing my instrument and rehearsing my choir pieces. Music education for me, has created a welcoming, warm environment full of friendship and kindness that I will continue to participate in whatever ways I can, for the rest of my life.

### **Jennifer Rogers**

Occupation: Student

From: Oil City Area HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life by giving me an outlet to express myself. If it's been a hard day, I look forward to my study halls and Band/A Cappella period to just relax and focus on the music. It's a great distraction from the ups and downs of the day and overall puts me in a better mood.

### **Nicholas Glowacki**

Occupation: Student

From: Rocky Grove HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has become my life. It is definitely the most important thing in my life and I put as much effort as I capably can into it. It brings me joy to learn more about music as well as playing or listening to music.

### **Evan Sharp**

Occupation: Student

From: Rocky Grove HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

It relaxes me when I'm stressed.

### **Lacey Tologo**

Occupation: Student

From: Rocky Grove HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life in many ways. It has influenced me to not only to be a music teacher but has helped me develop into a more mature person overall, helped me make many life long friends and has created many memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life. As a HS student, school is very stressful, at many times it feels as if everything is falling apart. The best part of my day is going to band because I makes me feel that I am both a part of something and that I have worth. Music Education is something that is so vital, so crucial for people to learn. If I could give any advice it would be to not cut the music programs, believe in them, help them grow and support them as much as you can. Especially the directors because they have so many never ending jobs and put everything they have into their programs.

### **Joseph Fitz**

Occupation: Student

From: Titusville Area HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My life has been completely turned around from music. I use to be a shy person who just sat in the back of the class and did not talk to anyone. And then when i joined the choir, I was more open to people and have went to junior districts. The people I am friends with currently, I would have never met if it wasn't for my love for music.

### **Katheryn Frazier**

Occupation: Student

From: Titusville Area HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a wonderful sound that fills the empty space of average life. New memories and people are found at every new corner. Music also allows us to express thoughts to others in a whole new way.

### **Benjamin Snyder**

Occupation: Student

From: Titusville Area HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Opened myself to new futures, friends and opportunists. With music I can express myself, communicate with others or simply have fun. Music Education has inspired me to become a music educator myself as well as to follow my passion of performing. I have much more to write but I am limited on time. Music Education has molded me into who I am today, and I am eternally grateful for that.

### **Chase Upchurch**

Occupation: Student

From: Titusville Area HS, Venango County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been an amazing way for me to express myself. There are so many ways that music has impacted my life, and that is just one. Music is amazing!

## **WARREN COUNTY**

### **Sharon Harrington**

Occupation: Student

From: Eisenhower Middle HS, Warren County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a significant impact on my life. Throughout HS, I have taken AP and Honors classes. I've taken every science elective offered. This is because I'm going to college and grad school to become a CRNA. My life and schedule are very busy and I am often finding myself to be stressed out and full of anxiety. But, choir gives me a time of day where I can relax, sing, and just be myself. The bond I have with my choir teacher is a special one that I value. The kids I sing with I consider my close friends and I would trust them with anything. Music education has given me balance in my life that every kid should have. I truly feel sorry for those who no longer have it offered to them. Without music education, I don't think I'd be the same person I am today.

### **Elissa Davis**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Warren, Warren County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have had many wonderful music teachers throughout my education from grade school to college. Many of them have absolutely impacted my knowledge and appreciation of music. However I think my most recent impact has been my own teaching and learning about the music around me. In the past year I have taught a wide range of age groups from toddlers to over fifty. Most of this has been with the use of my ukulele. No matter the age this bright and joyful instrument has brought me and my students many smiles. The toddlers loved singing along with it and would actually request it during music time each day. My students, the age made no difference, found joy in the happy sounds and simplicity of the ukulele. It is a pretty easy instrument to learn, yes but not without some discipline. It is such a wonderful feeling to see the look on a students face who has just successfully mastered some aspect of the instrument. By teaching so many different age groups, sometimes within the same classroom, I have learned a great deal about varying my teaching styles and how to solve different learning difficulties as well as respecting each difference. Overall my experiences with the ukulele have taught me so much and made a definite impact in how I teach.

#### **Maria Miller**

Occupation: Student

From: Warren Area HS, Warren County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has provided me with opportunities to excel, travel, make friends, and experience the world on a broader scale. Music has lessened my social anxiety and has made me more comfortable performing in front of others. Music has increased my intellect and I feel it has added to my education overall. Music is greatness, and it brings overall joy to my life.

#### **Megan Moore**

Occupation: Student

From: Warren Area HS, Warren County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have grown up around music and I couldn't imagine my life without it. Music is such a huge part of my life that I would not be who I am without it.

#### **Olivia Thomson**

Occupation: Student

From: Warren Area HS, Warren County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I'm not sure I would have made it through HS without music.

#### **Ryon Kellogg**

Occupation: Student

From: Youngsville HS, Warren County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music changed the way I view my life emotionally.

#### **Danielle West**

Occupation: Student

From: Youngsville HS, Warren County

### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music impacted my life by bringing me out of shell and helping me become the great student and teacher that I am today.

## WASHINGTON COUNTY

### **Elizabeth Sloan**

Occupation: Student

From: Bethlehem Center HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my life. I am planning on majoring in music because of my music teachers and the PMEA festivals that I have attended.

### **Amber Antle**

Occupation: Student

From: Canon McMillan HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in so many ways. I know that I would not be the same person I am today without it. It has inspired me to push myself and always strive to be better, because you can always be better. My director has taught me how important music is...and so I have decided to inspire people just as she inspires me as a music educator. It has impacted my life in so many great ways and I want to share that with as many people as I can.

### **Nick Charles**

Occupation: Student

From: Canon McMillan HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has greatly impacted my life. It is one class during the day that I always look forward to and enjoy. Music has helped me through hard times, helped me make new friends, and helped shape my life. I have been singing for as long as I can remember, and music education has helped me get better and better. Now, I hope to make music a part of the rest of my life, possibly even a career, and it would not be possible without all of the friends and educators I have met through music education. To me, music education is not just about learning music. It is about learning life skills and learning about yourself. Students educated in music are shown to do better in other school subjects as well. Music education helps to guide students and help them achieve their goals, much as it has done for me.

### **Kripa George**

Occupation: Student

From: Canon McMillan HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made me a more well-rounded person. It relieves stress from schoolwork and other pressures. It has taught me discipline and helped me to manage my time. I have also made great friends in music and during music festivals.

### **Rachel Hodges**

Occupation: Student

From: Canon McMillan HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

While I'm not interested in becoming a music educator myself, the educators I've known have always been helping me to be my best, even when I only sing for fun. The music programs at my school give me a family. Many people don't sing because they say it makes them feel vulnerable. In my choir, we all sing because it makes us feel strong and connected. If our schools didn't have music education, I'd be incredibly shy and, frankly, my life would be boring. I'm thankful for my music education because it shaped me into someone I love being.

### **Adam Ross**

Occupation: Student

From: Canon McMillan HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has helped me grow not only as a musician but also as a person through the people that have helped me along the way. It has given me opportunities such as PMEA festivals to further grow my talents. I am truly thankful for all the opportunities that I have been given through music education and I look forward to the future experiences.

### **Emily Ross**

Occupation: Student

From: Canon McMillan HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My first time in a public school was HS. I have grown both as a musician and a vocalist in my three years in the music education program. I love coming to choir and seeing what I will do and learn that day. I know our director loves what she does and it is clearly evident to us students. I love our music education program and hope to see music education continue to grow in the future.

### **Allie Schmidt**

Occupation: Student

From: Canon McMillan HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has taught much more than music. It's taught me how express myself, how to work well with others, and how great of an impact a really amazing song can make. I've made my closest friends through music programs and I've also found something I really enjoy. Music allows you to be yourself in ways that you might not even realize.

### **Drew Sipos**

Occupation: Student

From: Canon McMillan HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has become a very important part of my life over the past few years and that is due largely in part to the education I receive everyday at school. The highlight of my school day is singing with the choir. There have been multiple occasions where I have had bad days and all it took was a little music to turn it around. I feel I have been taught well enough to take music further into my life. I am still unsure what I want to do for a career but if it is related to music I feel I will be well versed (pun intended) enough to take it on. Regardless of what I choose to do with my life music will always be a part of it in some way or another.

### **Dylan Springer**

Occupation: Student

From: Canon McMillan HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music makes me happy, it is something that I look forward to everyday! It is an escape from all the craziness of life and it helps me get through my day. I don't think there is ever a day where I don't sing, it has become a wonderful thing that I look forward to doing. Having music in school has made me learn so many things, not just music related, to managing my time, to learning how to control my frustrations and also to never give up, and to keep trying. But in the musical aspect, having it in my life everyday has made me grow into a better musician and performer, it has given me more confidence in myself and has enabled me to do many things that I would never do before. I hope that everyone can have music in their lives to help better themselves and create more joy! Music has always been a part of my life in one way or another and I hope it stays that way.

**Marissa Durbin**

Occupation: Student

From: McGuffey HS, Washington County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has given me a way to express myself in a way that most people do not understand.

**Grace Casper**

Occupation: Student

From: Peters Township HS, Washington County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I don't really know. I just like music. It's fun and I made all of my really good friends through music programs like marching band, school ensembles, etc.

**Mallory Duane**

Occupation: Student

From: Peters Township HS, Washington County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has made me a better person in every aspect. It's a place where I can get away from reality and express myself. Nothing else makes me happier.

**Kyle Johnson**

Occupation: Student

From: Peters Township HS, Washington County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Without the help and encouragement of my teachers, both public and private, I would not be the musician I am today. In addition to teaching me the necessary skills to be a successful musician, my teachers have helped me realize my potential both now and in the future when I will pursue music performance.

**Sabrina Liu**

Occupation: Student

From: Peters Township HS, Washington County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is most likely the biggest part of my life currently. I have loved performing ever since I was four years old. I can't remember a time in my life when I didn't sing. Music provides an escape for me. Whenever I am upset, angry, or basically any other emotion, I can express it through playing piano or singing. To me, music is more than just a hobby. It may sound cliché, but music is a lifestyle for me, truly. Every single day of my life I do something musical, whether it's participating in our school's musical, singing in choir, practicing piano, or going to dance class. Singing in a choir is especially therapeutic to me because I love to hear the dulcet harmonies and the blending of many voices into one. Music brings people together and it brings happiness. I am thankful that the state of Pennsylvania has supplied me with so many musical opportunities through music education.

**Kayley Morrow**

Occupation: Student

From: Peters Township HS, Washington County

**How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has taught me to feel. In life, often we lack emotion and shelter our feelings in order to save ourselves from the inevitable. With music, I can express myself and defy the stereotypes placed before me. Writing music has allowed me to expand my boundaries. Piano has taught me that you don't always see love. You can hear it. Singing has taught me that in that life, we crave affection and acceptance of the people around us. We stress, we cry, we break down. But when the curtain opens, and the first note is sounded, it's all worth it. Music is always worth it.

### **Jordan Ranallo**

Occupation: Student

From: Peters Township HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a very positive effect on my life in many ways. Band means a lot to me because I have found great friendships through it and it has made me into the musician and person I am today. I don't know where I'd be without it and I am very thankful for all the people who have helped me along the way.

### **Laura Shope**

Occupation: Student

From: Peters Township HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has played a major role in my life. Most of my life revolves around music and school. Music has taught me how to express myself and share my emotions with others. I love how singing or playing an instrument can affect the way an audience member feels. I met so many interesting and amazing people through District Choir.

### **Ben Artuso**

Occupation: Student

From: Trinity HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has thoroughly enriched my academic experience and helped to found a passion that I will pursue for the rest of my life. My introduction to music at such a young age has helped me to pursue this wonderful art form as an outlet and escape from the day-to-day droll of school life. The possibilities music provides are endless, and my school's music program has been incredibly helpful in allowing me to explore many different avenues, including marching music, concert band, jazz, small ensembles, theory, and experimenting with new instruments outside of my typical musical arsenal. Music teachers and band directors have always inspired me to achieve musical as well as academic excellence ever since I first began studying an instrument in fourth grade. I would not be the person I am today without music programs in the public school system, as music has enriched my quality of life and helped to build my self-discipline and character. I personally believe that widespread music education is crucial to the development of school students, and without it, the world would not be the same.

### **Breanne Carr**

Occupation: Student

From: Trinity HS, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has had a large impact in my life since I first began playing the trumpet in fourth grade. I enjoy the playing music and using music has an expressive outlet for myself. The teachers I have been lucky enough to work with since beginning to play music have inspired me to be the best I can be. Music Education has helped me be a better student in every class by teaching me time management, organization, and persistence. Music Education continues to impact my life everyday and I am so thankful to have the opportunities I have to work with others and create music.

### **Marsha Liberatore**

Occupation: Teacher

From: Washington, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I started playing the clarinet when I was in 5th grade. At such a young age, I never knew that playing an instrument was going to impact my life. Being a part of band taught me valuable life lessons. Once marching band was a part of my life, I learned the importance of being a part of team and the significance of working together. Many fond memories are from my high school (and college) band days. Now that I look back, I see now, how these lessons apply to the "real world." When I became a parent, I did not need to encourage

my child to be in the band. My daughter wanted to play the flute. I took on a new role. I volunteered my time as a chaperone and took on an office with the school band parents' booster club. I became part of a new group that required being a team player. It was imperative that the parents worked together. None of this focuses on the ability to pick up an instrument and play (which I can do at any time). My experience is one of a sense of belonging. Today's society has taken an odd twist, and the youth have no outlet to express themselves or have a place to feel comfortable.

### **Kimberly Pelkey**

Occupation: Middle School Language Arts teacher

From: Washington, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education greatly impacted my life in the most positive manner. As an elementary student at Washington Elementary Educational Park (WEEP), I learned to play many different instruments in music class. We were given the opportunity to learn the recorder, xylophone, bells, and many other ORFF instruments. In fact, we had a group called ORFF that met after school to sing and play these instruments through the fifth grade. At the end of fourth grade, I had the opportunity to join the band at my school. I chose to play the flute, which led to the piccolo, and the piano. In school we had small group lessons with our instrument once a week. This in school instruction helped us to become skilled with our instrument. Middle school was a difficult time for me, but music allowed me to express myself. It helped me to stay positive when life at school was challenging. As I entered high school, I fell in love with the Steel Band. It was a dream come true when I auditioned and was accepted into the Steel Band. My participation in the Steel Band brought even more positive opportunities to me. We began playing at various venues, and traveling to different states. I wouldn't have had the chance to experience any of those things without the band. My participation in music developed a love and appreciation for the various genres of the Arts. It taught me dedication, and the value of hard work. It helped me to develop special relationships with people that last to this day. There were many times that music was my only voice and my one escape from "real life." Some people turn to negative activities when things get tough, but through the incredible musical experiences that I was afforded the opportunity to have through my school, beginning at a very early age, music became my lifeline in tough times. Not surprising, it remains that lifeline for me today - 25 years later. Performing at the PMEA and NMEA conferences remain highlights in my life. The Arts are so incredibly important to children. It is critical that we value them in our society. Students at the school I attended all those years ago are not afforded the same opportunities today due to budget cuts and economic distress. It is a true travesty for the children of today.

### **Susan Robertson**

Occupation: Kindergarten Teacher

From: Washington, Washington County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life since I was very small. It began in church and the church choir. My mother always sang in the choir and sent us for piano lessons at a very young age. My uncle was a band director and music was always a part of every family get together. He played many different instruments and would bring them with him when he visited so that we could have family "jam sessions." I was quite young at the time, but I loved the rhythms and chords that I would hear. In 4th grade, I learned to play the flute and later in high school the Steel Drums. I played the steel drums in a band throughout college and enjoyed it immensely. I still play the flute for my home church as well as for my students. They love seeing their teacher get excited about music whether I'm making it or just sharing a song on the Smart board in my class. I too hope that I have passed my love for music onto my children. They both began by playing the piano and then the trumpet. My oldest son has just began playing the steel drums. I am so excited that he has had this opportunity as I know how it made me feel to be a part of such a group of musicians. I miss it very much. Our house is always filled with music especially during the holidays. My aunt and sister always play duets on the piano as I am preparing the holiday meal. There's such a comfort in my home when music is filling it. Music has definitely made an impact on us all. There is an excitement that I see in my children's eyes that I only see when they talk about, listen to or make music.

## WAYNE COUNTY

### **Michelle Silvia**

Occupation: Retail Manager

From: Gouldsboro, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My husband and I have 4 sons. When the oldest was in 6th grade he was approached by Rich Ciufferi the middle school band teacher at North Pocono middle school to see if he was interested in playing tuba. After talking to us Christian started learning the tuba. He went on to play in band and orchestra through high school and at Mansfield University. Our 2nd son Christopher played trombone in middle school band and orchestra and switched to tuba in high school. He is currently a tuba player at Shippensburg University. Our 3rd son Justin was approached in 6th grade by Tom Cessarini the middle school orchestra teacher who asked him if he would be interested in learning the bass. He went on to play bass in middle school and high school orchestra. As a freshmen in high school he was an equipment manager for the marching band. Frank Torquato the marching band director encouraged him to start playing. As a sophomore he played in the pit, junior year bass drum, and as a senior drum major. He is currently in drumline at Shippensburg University. Our 4th son Zac played French horn in middle school band and orchestra and now in high school band and orchestra. He will also play when he goes to college. Music has shaped the life of these 4 boys and our family. They have met great teachers and friends and traveled and performed in places that music brought them to. This was all made possible by 1 man taking an interest in a boy and giving him an opportunity to learn something that he and his brothers will have for the rest of their lives.

### **Patricia Spoor**

Occupation: Retired Music Educator

From: Honesdale, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have always loved music. At the age of 11, I met the new music choral director at our local high school. He became my piano teacher, my mentor, my inspiration and my friend. I participated in concerts, church choirs, musicals, etc. I became a music educator at the age of 38. I taught elementary, middle and high school along with church and community groups. accompanying and directing. I have privately taught voice and piano for over 35 years. Music brings joy into everyone's life. Participation in musical groups gives people self-esteem, pride and a sense of individual and group achievement. It is something that people can do from toddler to senior citizen status....it is with us through sad times and happy times...students from many years ago will tell me about concerts and shows they were a part of, even remembering a song we did in 3rd grade. Bottom line...music is an appreciation everything that is good in life. I cannot imagine my life without it.

### **R Cherinchak**

Occupation: Secondary Education Teacher

From: Lake Ariel, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music was my creative outlet while I was in school. I first began in 4th grade, and it was through the safety of the music room walls that I was able to find comfort, solace, and a release for my depression, brought on from abuse that was going on behind the scenes at home. I was able to find myself and to grow and to find joy in things. Without my music classes, I'd have lacked the ability to lose myself in something other than my depression.

### **Bill**

Occupation: Chef

From: Lake Ariel, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

The music education I received while at school has helped me become a more open minded, kind, and peaceful individual. Music is a universal language that we can all understand and appreciate. Some more

tangible results of music education's positive effects on me include a fondness of musical theatre and acting as well as that one of my biggest passions in life is playing instruments and singing in my rock band. We play at bars and clubs in the area and make good money doing it. So, in a way, music education had helped me supplement my current income by doing something that I love. Keep music education in our schools!

### **Shannon Crone**

Occupation: Baking and Pastry student

From: Lake Ariel, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in more way than one. I've learned things not necessarily "taught" to me, such as leadership, teamwork, and even a different way of thinking about things. In a musical group, we all have one common goal: to make music. Working together to reach that goal is a must. Having a leadership position in my high school band, I was able to apply that experience and knowledge in other important situations, such as in my college classes. I can easily work with a larger group of people. I also feel that because of music education, I can think of things in different ways. I have better problem solving skills, and even my basic math and reading skills are improved. I can relate or connect something I'm struggling with in some way to something I learned in a music class, and I can work through it. I think music education has impacted my life more than I think, and I'm thankful for every day that I've had a music educator in my life, because I can't even imagine my life without music or music education.

### **Maria Arneil**

Occupation: Band Teacher

From: Newfoundland, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music began as something I enjoyed at an early age and began taking piano lessons because of it. When I joined band I soon found that it was a close knit group of people who were more like my family than my own family was. I learned work ethic, discipline, and a desire to achieve through music. Music challenged me in so many ways that an ordinary subject could not. I had a voice with music a voice that was listened to. Now as an adult I help students find these connections that they will find no where else. Students who need an extra challenge are given one. Students who need a family are given one. Students who need a place to find friends are given one. Students who are deemed a behavior challenge or mentally impaired find out they are not when it comes to the music. The importance of music is downplayed because it cannot be assessed by a multiple choice test; but people need to look past this and realized it is assessed by the quality of life itself.

### **Teri Morcom**

Occupation: Director of Human Resources

From: Waymart, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My years in chorus from 5th through 12th grade were some of my favorite memories throughout school. I attended parochial school through 4th grade and unfortunately they had no music program whatsoever at that time. So, it was a real joy to me when I transferred to public school and realized that not only would I have music class on a weekly basis, but would also be able to participate in extra curricular chorus. Please do our students a favor and keep music in our schools!

### **Tyler Bergsma**

Occupation: Student

From: Western Wayne HS, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed an escape for me. In times when I'm feeling down I think of all the singers, directors, and instrumentalists I've met, as well as songs/concerts that I have performed. These experiences lift my spirits and makes me happy. My music education has allowed me to channel my emotions in a beautiful way. I have opened up and discovered more things about myself through music. Tyler Bergsma

### **Ellie Motichka**

Occupation: Student

From: Western Wayne HS, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in countless ways, and I don't know how I could live without music. Music is a part of my life in more ways than one. Music is not just one subject; therefore it opens up the mind to all different skills at once. It accounts for math, reading, history, and science skills. Counting measures of music seems easy, but not when you have complex rhythms that need to be unraveled. There is a common misconception that music is easy because you just read notes. Music does not have just notes. Music has tone, pitch, and volume. For one to understand how a piece of music is played, one must perform research on the composer and the title. Someone may find it hard to apply science to music, but the way we play our instruments is key to the best sound. The way the air is angled and how much pressure we apply to certain notes is how we achieve the highest quality music. A musician needs to breathe properly in order to have optimal support. This is how music education has impacted my life. It has opened up my mind to things that normal people would not have the opportunity to discover. Music education has taught me that music is not black and white. It is not ink and paper. Music gives color to life, and without it, life would be colorless. In a book that I read about the nature of music, something popped out at me that made me think of music in a new way. For music to be meaningful, sounds must be organized. The letters U-M-I-S-C are all letters in the alphabet (just like random instruments make noises), but unless they are unscrambled to spell M-U-S-I-C they make to no sense (just like looking at a music score and seeing how the notes and rhythms are organized together to make The Star Spangled Banner sound the way it does). Music makes life meaningful. This is how music education has impacted my life. It has made my life meaningful.

### **Rebeka Piccolo**

Occupation: Student

From: Western Wayne HS, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by making me feel passionate about something. Before music education, I just went through the motions, but I fell in love with music and it has forever changed my life. Music has taught me how to express my feelings and to show those feelings to others. It has provided me comfort through the hardest time of my life and has left me with confidence I never thought I'd have. Rebeka Piccolo

### **Tanya Harty**

Occupation: Student

From: Lake Ariel, Wayne County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had an immense impact on my life. Through music education, I have learned many valuable life lessons. I have learned through song, the inner qualities of instrumentation. Combined with lyrics that have the potential to move mountains, I can vividly imagine myself in a song. Music is the relaxation and peace to everyday I live. I strongly believe that music is an unheard of form of communication, which is why it is so important to me. Music is my life and soul. Songs can convey messages that are far more difficult to say with any simple writing or speech.

## **WESTMORELAND COUNTY**

### **Thais Bagiatis**

Occupation: Student

From: Belle Vernon Area HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in so many ways. I have gained so many valuable qualities that I could not have acquired in any other setting. I have learned not only to become a good musician, but also a better

person. Because of Music education, I am a critical thinker, better listener, and team player. If I wasn't a musician, I would have no clue what I would be doing with my life.

### **Stephanie Pavlovich**

Occupation: Student

From: Burrell HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been impacting my life ever since I joined band in middle school. Whenever I was just entering HS, our band director retired after at least 15 years of teaching, and our school district would not hire a new one. So they shuffled around directors and teachers for a while. We had a new band director every year for four consecutive years. We now have a really great newly hired band director who we are all thankful for. Through all of the directors we have had, I have seen some really talented ones, and some that I just could not really relate with. But every single teacher has known my passion for pursuing music in college and they have all been incredibly supportive. I have been allowed to teach music and band classes and they have helped me on everything and anything I needed assistance with. I am thankful for every music educator I have been in contact with over the past five years, and without all of their help, I would not be as driven to pursue music just as they did.

### **Morgan Rockwell**

Occupation: Student

From: Burrell HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From a young age I was drawn to music. So I was very excited when I had my first opportunity to learn an instrument and join the band. I chose the flute, as this was the instrument my mother played, and I really wanted to be like her. I never expected the love that I had for the instrument to grow as much as it did. Band was my new favorite hobby. When I started taking lessons in school, my instructors encouraged me to continue with private lessons outside of school. When I found a teacher and began to develop my skills as a musician, I learned that I was a lot better than I originally believed myself to be. Instead of being arrogant about my skills, I found new ways to challenge myself, and my teacher helped by working on difficult solo pieces with me. After a period of time, I realized that music was my passion, the one thing that could always make me happy when having a bad day. It's the one thing that I am hardest on myself for, but I ultimately become a better musician when I push myself and work a little bit harder every time I play. When I was in eighth grade, I sat next to a seventh grader in band who did not know as much about music and playing the flute as I did. I took the opportunity to help and teach her what I knew whenever something difficult came up in our music. No matter how long it took to explain something or if she just did not understand, I was willing to explain things again and demonstrate for her if I had to. It was a lot more fun than I originally expected it to be. This was how I realized that I really wanted to go into music education as a career. I always knew that it would be a part of my life, but with the help of my amazing music teachers, I know that I can make it my entire life. Music has impacted my life in a way where I never want to let it go.

### **Lauren Eckersley**

Occupation: Student

From: Franklin Regional HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Band has brought out the leader in me. It took a painfully shy and quiet 4th grader and changed her into a confident, outgoing, and passionate girl. Band has helped me to manage my time, as well as focus and to work hard. In middle school I wasn't sure if band was for me. I was even considering quitting, but I stayed with it and I am now 6 years later the only sophomore section leader. I have performed at Carnegie Music Hall, been in county band twice and have made it all the way to regions. As well as trying out for drum major for my second year. Band has shown me that hard work and heart pay off. Band isn't easy, but it teaches teenagers important life lessons such as you have to work for what you want, and you have to have passion behind everything you do. We don't just push down buttons, bang on drums, and move slides. We perform, we are proof that hard work and dedication can lead to greatness. Whether it's spending hours on the field

preparing for half time, or in the band room going over and over pieces until you are humming them in your sleep. Band is a way for people to express themselves in ways words cannot. Music can cause people to feel emotions they didn't know existed, and it doesn't matter what language you speak, what sex you are, or what race you are everyone can understand the beauty of music. Music is and always be apart of me. The relationships i've made will stay with me for many years and the feeling of performing will remain with me as long as I live.

### **Holly Furnari**

Occupation: Student

From: Franklin Regional HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Three hundred men and women dressed in black tuxes and floor-length gowns; gold-crowned, embellished ceilings high as to allow room for two elaborate balconies of seats, filled completely with hundreds and hundreds of people; and all this brought to silence by one man walking to the center of the stage and tapping his baton. He flicks his wrist and the great ensemble begins. "Oh fortuna, velut luna..." The overwhelming and glorious sound that held the entirety of Heinz Hall captured my very being as I stood with the other musicians for a standing ovation. I would have never imagined being a part of such an extraordinary opera performance when I, a timid teenager, asked my director if I could begin playing the oboe. Music has always been one of my greatest passions. I began playing the piano and flute in the fourth grade, and I became a member of the band and chorus to further pursue my interest. Music was something that came rather naturally to me, and I found great enjoyment in it. At the end of my freshmen year of HS I approached my band director about playing the oboe. There was something wonderfully intriguing about it. The oboe is a difficult instrument to play because of the finicky double reed that can drastically alter the sound and method of playing. I needed to put in a great deal of time and effort to learn to play it well. What I loved the most about the oboe was that it was a challenge. My director moved me into our wind ensemble, and I had to work quickly and diligently to be able to play the college-level music that was our repertoire. I practiced for hours upon hours, and I soon found that I had exceeded my goals. I advanced through PMEA events and played in youth orchestra. Driving down to the city every week for practices fostered a sense of independence and commitment that I hadn't fully experienced before. It was there that I had the amazing opportunity to play at prestigious establishments like the Carnegie Music Hall and Heinz Hall, where I played Carmina Burana amongst professional musicians. I have gained so much from playing the oboe, and although I don't plan on pursuing music as a career, I will certainly continue to play. I have formed lasting friendships, and I have learned to face challenges in an effective way. I also learned to appreciate my own effort and have become more confident and independent. I feel the same pride and strength of character that I did when I was able to play in the opera. Music has enabled me to develop positively as a person and I am very grateful for the experiences I have had from playing the oboe.

### **Tatiana Kinsel**

Occupation: Student

From: Franklin Regional HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has kept me sane when school kept me stressed.

### **Megan McKelvey**

Occupation: Student

From: Franklin Regional HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

For a majority of my life I was an average child. I played and listened to music and did well in school but I didn't stand out. All that changed the summer before my first year of HS. That summer I took lessons from my HS band director and in the first lesson he immediately set me up to audition for the PMEA Honors Band. I auditioned and made it into the festival as first chair. After that, I auditioned and made it to the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra, which was a dream of mine ever since I started playing music. I also auditioned for different events and was accepted to prestigious music programs and became a state and then a national

level player. My confidence rose and I met a lot of people with the same interests as me. Without the music program at my school and my band director, I wouldn't be where I am today. I wouldn't have planned to major in music, hoping to encourage other children to discover and embrace their talent.

### **Drew Ramsey**

Occupation: Student

From: Franklin Regional HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Having the opportunity to express myself musically and having the opportunity for others to teach me to do so is absolutely incredible. Because of the love for music I have seen in various teachers and mentors, I am going on to become a Music Therapist and share the healing powers of music with the entire world.

### **Anishaa Sivakumar**

Occupation: Student

From: Franklin Regional HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I've always loved the science of things. The underlying mechanisms, the way things work. But in a world with the defined black and white of science, music adds the splashes of color that make life worth living. Music education has allowed this world to become even brighter, because I've been able to learn how science and music work together to produce what we so love to hear, whether it be in a rock concert or in Carnegie Hall. Without music education, there would be no one left to carry on the legacies of the great artists of the past, and no one to make the great artists of the future. By understanding music and by getting to participate in music groups through school, I've begun to see the world entirely differently, and notice how the little things around us come together to make the great symphony of life. Essentially, music education has taught me not just about music, but about the importance of the little things in life, the dynamics, the accents, the ups and the downs, the sad points and the joyful ones. When we live our lives according to the rules of music, we learn the best way to live our lives to the fullest.

### **Jessica Smith**

Occupation: Student

From: Franklin Regional HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted me by teaching me life skills, introducing me to many of my best friends, and giving me a life long appreciation for music. Because of music education, I've learned to practice and work hard for what you want to achieve. I've also learned that failure is a part of life. Not every audition we practice for is one we will win. Music has also allowed me to do fun activities like marching band and wind ensemble with some of my best friends. Lastly, music education has taught me things like rhythm, style, harmony, and so much more. Because of these skills, I have become a better person and music has changed my life.

### **Mara LeJeune**

Occupation: Student

From: Greater Latrobe, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is the glue that holds together my school family. Music has also opened many doors to numerous opportunities for me over the years. I have learned to strive for perfection, not only in music, but in all aspects of my life.

### **Nicole E. Bradley**

Occupation: Music Education Student

From: Greensburg, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

One thing that inspires me about music education is the real life impacts it provides more than some of my other school subjects offered. Growing up in my early years of grade school, life was difficult for me. I was

an IEP student, I was bullied, I had very few friends, and absolutely no ambition to improve myself. Once I started band and choir in middle school, I slowly began gaining a strong group of friends and began to become ambitious in what I was doing in my life. Getting to high school it became even stronger. I had not just gained a support group of friends, but a family. Music also taught me life lessons about working hard, being a leader, and not giving up. The opportunities I've received because of music I wouldn't trade for anything else in the world. I truly believe music classes in grade school is what has allowed me to get to the point I am now today: a provost scholar and dean's list student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, studying music education and English education, with a minor in special education, enrolled in the Robert E. Cook Honors College, a recognized student leader on my campus, and an executive state board member of Pennsylvania Collegiate Music Educator Association. I wouldn't be who I am today without music education in school. For the thing that matters the most about music is the real life lessons and impacts. Lessons students actually need to succeed in life. Why should this not be supported and taken away from the youth of this state or country?

### **Sydney Ellison**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield Area HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life by helping me to relieve stress. When school and other things become hard and stressful, playing music helps to calm me down and regain focus.

### **Tasha Simoncini**

Occupation: Student

From: Hempfield Area HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has made such an impact in my life. When I first started music in 4th grade and started private lessons in 5th grade, I wasn't so good. With my amazing educators in music, they helped me become the musician I am today. I am greatly appreciated that I've had this opportunity. The past Three years have been such a wonderful and educating experience. I would love to thank everyone that makes these festivals possible.

### **Brandon Colaianni**

Occupation: Student

From: Kiski Area HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a magnificent thing that anyone can possess. Music can be made anywhere, with anyone, about anything. Music has the power to unite the world as a whole with messages of love, hope, and peace. In addition, music inspires people to reach for the sky and achieve their dreams. In achieving my dreams, music has been there every step of the way. Even my non-music related goals have been achieved through the motivation and passion I possess with music in my life. For others and I, music is not an activity or something to try for fun. Music is part of my life that makes me who I am. It provides me with words to speak when I cannot talk and confidence to have for when I am scared. Music in my belief is the largest common link across the world in different countries and cultures. Music teaches us life lessons through words and allows everyone to embrace their thoughts. Music in my own life has motivated me everyday only to do my best. I always have a sense of determination with music around me and it impacts the way I act as an individual. Many will come to think of music as the new, somewhat overplayed song on the radio. Although, I see that music is more than notes strategically placed on a page. Music is a language, and every song is a different voice in that language. Music has taught me that nobody is perfect, although we can all strive to be better than our best. Music has benefited others and I our entire lives, and Music in my eyes will never die.

### **Jacob Murray**

Occupation: Student

From: Kiski Area HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has sparked a desire to further increase all areas of my education and has given me greater work ethic and discipline to do all things required of me.

### **Elizabeth Vita**

Occupation: General Music Teacher

From: Manor, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

When I was growing up, music inspired me. I took private lessons for several years, and in high school I joined the band and was in chorus. Those four years of being in Norwin High School's band were some of the best of my life. It was during this time that I decided I wanted to pursue a degree in music education. I accomplished this at Seton Hill University where I studied flute as my primary instrument, as well as piano and voice as secondary instruments. While there I was also involved with the Griffin Band, University Choir, and Women's Choir. Learning about music and education was a wonderful experience for me. Now, I am blessed to be able to teach music in a Catholic elementary school. I go to school everyday excited to share music with my students. To see the excitement about music in their eyes brings me joy. My only hope is that my students will see how wonderful music is as they continue to grow.

### **Dominic Gaudio**

Occupation: Student

From: Norwin HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has taught me many important things in life, including working together in groups/ensembles/teams, etc. Because of music, I have decided to devote my life to teaching it. I have learned many different cultures through my music education and have been impacted by them. Coming from a non-musical family, it has also exposed them to how music can affect one's attitudes and personality.

### **Isaac Meyers**

Occupation: Student

From: Norwin HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life by altering my views on everything. With music, the world seems brighter, people communicate and share experiences. I have learned that music is way more than a bunch of dots and words on a page. Music is an expression of the soul. I am a part of the show choir at my school that has one goal in mind, spreading joy through music. Every year we take various trips to nursing homes, the Hearth shelter a home for abused women & children, and we go to the childrens institute in Pittsburgh. The people in some of these places are so afraid and fearful because the world has dumped them on the side of the road with nothing but for these people our show choir takes the time to perform and raise money for these organizations. The looks we get during christmas when we bring toys and have a party for the women and their children at the Hearth Shelter, just the expressions of gratitude and hope. Hope that was brought about because of Music! I know I will never underestimate the power of a simple melody ever again. That is what music education has taught me. I now plan on going to school for music so I can hopefully continue to bring joy into peoples lives.

### **Austin Schmidt**

Occupation: Student

From: Norwin HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has provided me with an outlet of creativity and emotion that not a lot of activities can provide one with. The idea of music is just a wondrous thing that is just so open-ended and phenomenal that

it can just carry people through tough or even happy times in life. What do people do when they are feeling down? They listen to music. What do people do at parties or other joyous occasions? They sing and play music. Music provides just a set of emotional experiences like no other. A song can go from ecstatic to somber to energetic all in a matter of minutes taking you on this roller-coaster ride of emotions that is just unparalleled to anything else on this earth, at least to me. That is why, in my future I am planning to become a music educator to provide the future generations of the world with opportunities similar to those of mine.

### **Austin Belzer**

Occupation: Student

From: Southmoreland HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Austin Belzer The meaning of music is somewhat vague because it means something different to every person. In my life, I see music as an art form that allows people to express their emotions where words simply do not suffice. Whenever a musician whole heartedly performs a piece of music, they create much more than just noise out of their instrument. Emotion and feelings are presented in their performance of the piece. My perception of music is that it can be used as a language all its own. It is a language for musicians, myself included, have used and will continue to use to bridge the sometimes difficult gap of expressing our emotions. I feel that music goes beyond any other art form in its power and deep reaching effects it has on its musicians and audiences. In my life, music has given me a form of expression that I can compare to no other. I have found no better way to be able to express my emotions than with music. The idea that the emotion and feeling I can put into a performance is transferred to others is still astonishing to me. To be able to perform something so that the audience can feel just like the performer gives not only a unique form of expression, but a unique understanding passed on to the audience. That quality unlike any other allows me to have a deeper appreciation for the art of music. Expressing myself through music has also been a learning experience about myself and my musical abilities. After playing at holiday church services or local brass quintets, the compliments I have received have allowed me to see that my effort and emotion put forth is appreciated far more than I imagined. Also performing in the marching band has allowed my leadership skills to shine. My effort is very important to me because as a senior member of the marching band, I must set an example in the effort I put forth in my playing. It is because of music that I can pass on my example in using the language of music to express emotions in a dimension all its own. Throughout my life, music has been an important and powerful element. It has given me a unique form of expression and has taught me about myself and my skills as a musician and a leader. The freedom of self expression encompassed in music, has helped me grow as a person and has helped me develop my leadership skills.

### **Katie Kimmel**

Occupation: Student

From: Southmoreland HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In my lifetime, music education has shaped the person I have become in many ways. Taking instrumental music classes in my school has allowed me to blossom as an individual and grow both in terms of confidence and bravery. I have learned to take responsibility and accountability for my actions and tasks that I must accomplish. Music also has taught me how to manage my time between practicing, schoolwork, and social activities. Music education also allowed me an outlet to express my emotions and deprive stress in an enjoyable and fun manner. Education of music has taught me more than music; it has also taught me skills that are wildly helpful in the journey of life itself and helps provide light and beauty to me in a world of growing negativity and violence.

### **Steven Murphy**

Occupation: Student

From: Southmoreland HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life in that I am a better person because of it. I began playing saxophone in elementary school. My first impression of the instrumental world was a positive one. Shortly after starting,

I was placed into a concert band atmosphere, which I thrive in and enjoy currently in my HS. I continued through junior high and survived! I joined the marching band in the 8th grade. I believe that is where my foundation truly took shape. The lessons I learned from there will take me far beyond the classroom and into my professional life. Not until my senior year did I delve into the waters of the HS choral atmosphere. It has been an amazing experience. I auditioned for and was accepted to Honors Choir, which I thoroughly enjoyed and benefited greatly from. I then felt confident enough to audition for District Chorus, which I also made. Both of my HS instructors are women and they are amazing. My band director is the most dedicated musician and educator that I have ever had the opportunity to work with. My choral instructor is so multi-faceted, I can't keep up with her. I have made the most of my HS experience. I am involved in everything musical that is offered to me. I am thankful for PMEA and its unaltered quest to keep music in the public school in PA. Not only keep it in the public school, but insure they are the best programs that can be offered. Thank you.

### **Ben Wilcox**

Occupation: Student

From: Southmoreland HS, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was only a little kid back when music started to impact me. I was having a rough time as a child as my parents were going through a divorce and I was looking to find something in my life that would help me through this time. This is when I discovered the art of music and the love for my instrument. I was able to go home and just sit down and play and tinker around on my instrument. This not only drove my parents insane but turned me into the musician I am today. I really started to work hard on my musical ability and my director really started to notice me and all of my hard work. He commended me for all of my hard work and it made me feel awesome and it gave me the boost in confidence to come out and become the player that I am today. I made a ton of friends all throughout my music career and they have helped me so much. Music students become some of the most influential people in our world today. This is just a little of how music has impacted my life. I feel like I could write an entire novel of how music students change the world and make it a better place!

### **Edward Knight**

Occupation: Choir Director/Vocalist

From: Vandergrift, Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

First and foremost, I received three hematomas to my brain as the pedestrian in an auto/pedestrian accident. One of those eliminated the use of my short term memory. Through studying music intensively, over many years, new pathways were opened around the damaged areas. Several years later, I was able to score 142 on an IQ test. Ten points higher than the test I took in elementary school. I fully attribute that to my studying music. In addition to helping me overcome an acquired learning disability, my music education has been the foundation which helped me achieve all of my life's goals and dreams by the age of 32. Those included performing Mozart's Requiem, and making at least part of a living in the music field. I made that partial living as a church music director and tenor soloist for a combined 15 years.

### **Jon Schaeffer**

Occupation: Student

From: Westmoreland County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music hasn't merely impacted my life - it's sculpted who I am today. At the start of 9th grade, I was depressed and my life had no direction until my Music Teacher offered me to take saxophone lessons at his house. He could tell I was down, but didn't say anything. He instead used the power of music to "speak" with me. We would play the blues at his house for hours and over time I started to grow out of my shell. At first music was just a way to express how I felt. It made me enjoy life and to appreciate what I had. My music and my saxophone became an extension of me, not just an instrument. The intangible qualities of music are what made me better and what drove me away from my depression. You may ask students or teachers what

music means to them. Most will give the answer that it gives a way to express themselves, or it makes them happy. But when people ask me, it's so hard to answer because music gave me life. It's just not a mere way to get happy. I play when i'm down. I play when I'm happy. I play when I'm confused. Playing is apart of me in so many ways that it is kind of scary. Without music education I never would have met my saxophone teacher. I may not have been able to get out of my depression. I can greatly assure you that without music education, I wouldn't be who I am today - and I like who I am today. But it's not just music, for others, sports are their escape, their way to become a better person. I'd be angry to see music and sports to be cut. These activities.. you don't learn in a classroom. You don't take paper and pencil to try and memorize math, or tone verbs. It's a natural experience that is different for everybody. It doesn't come down to a letter grade. With music or sports you grade yourself - it's what you want, not what everybody wants of you. In conclusion, music has made me who I am today. To place first chair in PMEA Honors Band for alto saxophone was the best moment of my life. Just not for the 1st chair but it shows how I've overcome my inner struggle of depression. Music is something that people can't take from me because it's intangible but it's also a good part of my life.

## WYOMING COUNTY

### Kelsey Hopkins

Occupation: Student

From: Lackawanna Trail JSHS, Wyoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My education that I have received is the reason that I will be continuing music education at Mansfield University in fall of 2015. I have been in band since third grade, and music is my life. I play in many ensembles, and without which, I would not be where I am today. My education has shaped my life, and will continue to shape my life for many years to come.

### Alyssa Walker

Occupation: Student

From: Lackawanna Trail JSHS, Wyoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has been a huge influence on my life. It has been such a privilege to learn from my teachers at Lackawanna Trail. I have been in choir and band for six years now and without the help from my teachers I wouldn't be the musician I am today. Not only have they been wonderful teachers but also good friends as well. They actually care about their students and want them to succeed not only in music but in everything they do. Because of my directors music has forever impacted my life and I am so grateful for them and all that they do.

### Seth Williams

Occupation: Student

From: Lackawanna Trail JSHS, Wyoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has given me eye-opening experiences by enabling me to attend festivals and events to learn and enrich my musical abilities. In fact, PMEA's All-State Choir festival showed me the very school I will be attending in the fall of 2015 for a major in biology. Due to my Pennsylvania music educators that I have had and currently have, I plan to actively continue participate in community choirs and events. Music education has shaped my life over the years to make myself a more evenly-rounded, robust, and social person.

### **David Cooper**

Occupation: Retired Music Teacher/Band Director

From: Tunkhannock, Wyoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My high school choral director was a huge influence on my life. She showed me my true potential and gave me the push I needed to start on my way to becoming a music teacher. With her guidance I was able to attend district and regional chorus festivals my junior and senior years. I doubt that my choice of profession would have been teaching music were it not for her. I have never regretted my decision of becoming a music teacher. By following examples set by my high school music teacher I was able to make a positive influence on many of my music students throughout my teaching career.

### **Patrick Cronin**

Occupation: Student

From: Tunkhannock Area HS, Wyoming County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is my muse. It inspires and ignites me, calms and soothes me. Music education has allowed me to explore and expand my horizons. It gives purpose to my day and allows music to penetrate my school experiences. Because of my school district's strong commitment to music education, I am fortunate enough to have evolved as a musician under the tutelage of dedicated and determined teachers striving to bring out the best in their students.

## **YORK COUNTY**

### **Briana Heinly**

Occupation: Student

From: Cedar Cliff HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is probably the biggest part of my life. Without music education, I would not have been exposed to nearly as much repertoire and theory. Music programs in the school introduced me to different possibilities that have made me a much better musician. In previous years, I have been a part of the Hershey Festival of Strings, and I am currently a member of the Harrisburg Symphony Youth Orchestra. The only reason that I was introduced to these opportunities was the HS music program, and for that I am very grateful. There are so many young students that have no resources and opportunities, and the music program lets them explore the realm of their abilities. Music is an extremely therapeutic activity, and it has allowed me as well as countless other young people to empower ourselves.

### **Leah Kiner**

Occupation: Student

From: Cedar Cliff HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had such an impact on my life and on who I am today. From my elementary school years, music education has helped me to gain so many friends and build lasting friendships with people I am still close with to this day. Music education has helped me to fit in, and has created a home for me, a niche where I feel like I belong. I honestly cannot say I know what I would do without music. Every day is filled with some kind of practice I have to go to in different ensembles, or drill I have to learn for marching band. With music, I always have something to do, and something to look forward to. Wind Ensemble at my school is truly the highlight of my day, because no other teachers in the building have such a unique job my music teachers have. Learning how to express yourself on an instrument goes deeper into the brain than the basic school subjects that are taught, and I love how I get to experience a feeling of accomplishment every day I play my instrument. My life would be 100% different if I didn't have music or the education my school provides for the subject. Music is my passion and no other hobby, subject, or activity means as much to me as music has. No iPhone or TV can replace the feelings you can experience with music. It's so hard to describe how meaningful music education has been, and how influential and impactful it has been on my life.

Music has taught me diligence, organization, and how to express myself in ways other than the norm. I love music, and I will always remember when I'm older the impact that it had on shaping my life, and how much I benefited from it.

### **Leah Munn**

Occupation: Student

From: Cedar Cliff HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has enhanced my life in numerous ways. I started piano lessons at 7, and loved performing in recitals with my older sisters. In 4th grade, I began flute lessons and practiced constantly so I could be the best. When I got to HS, I joined Marching Band and followed in my sisters' footsteps. The long hours of band camp and practices have not only honed our band into a top-level ensemble, but also formed strong friendships that will be lifelong. My younger brother has followed in my footsteps and joined Marching Band this year as an eighth grader. It is a legacy that I'm proud of, and one I will encourage in my own children someday.

### **David Renoll**

Occupation: Retired PA teacher

From: Chester, MD, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I learned to enjoy music in elementary school in York Co, PA. Took private accordion lessons for over 10 years. While teaching in Tunkhannock Area School District I directed over 10 plays including about half of these as musicals. My wife is a music teacher who started in Wyalusing Area School District and since my retirement continues to teach in Anne Arundel County Schools. My oldest daughter is a music teacher in Towanda Area School District. My youngest daughter took private flute lessons starting in 2nd grade through 4 years of college. We all attend many musical performances throughout the year. Life without music is not living. It is an educational psychology fact that children who are exposed to music and art achieve better academically than those who do not experience music and art. Music is the essence of being human. Just listen as you go through any day of your life. There is music surrounding us everywhere.

### **Rose Arbittier**

Occupation: Student

From: Dallastown Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has provided a huge comfort in my life. In school, I know that a safe haven is available for me to enter and release stress. Choir is a class that I always look forward to, and I can always count on a close family bond with the other singers.

### **Sarah Hill**

Occupation: Student

From: Dallastown Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a huge impact on my life. With the guidance of my school teachers, private instructors, and parents, I have been able to gain many life skills that I would not otherwise have. I have learned how to be responsible, how to manage my own time, and how to be a leader. These skills that I have learned over the course of my music career have given me life experience that I shall treasure and use for the rest of my life.

### **Josiah Ilyes**

Occupation: Student

From: Dallastown Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has changed my life in many ways. Music has stimulated my mind and helped me in school. It has led me to many opportunities and friendships.

### **Alexander Kim**

Occupation: Student

From: Dallastown Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has allowed me to express my individuality like no other subject at school has. I have complete control of my inner self and emotions. It allows me to escape the reality.

### **Adam Kohlbus**

Occupation: Student

From: Dallastown Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has forever changed my life. Not only has it encouraged me to be myself, it has also impacted my career choice.

### **Ray Markey**

Occupation: Student

From: Dallastown Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music Education has impacted my life by helping me realize my true potential. Music was something that I always enjoyed, but I never understood that I could become so much, with practice. Music educators through middle school and especially HS helped me realize what I really was capable of.

### **Jason Pandelidis**

Occupation: Student

From: Dallastown Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Ever since I joined chorus in 4th grade, music has been a huge part of my life. Since then, I have joined many choirs, both through my school and community. The directors of these choirs have affected my life more than I can say. I have looked up to them as they've taught me notes, rhythms, and my love for music and singing. My penchant for all of my various music teachers has led me to decide to go to school for music education. I hope to one day affect the lives of my students the way my directors have affected me throughout my life.

### **Sarah Pell**

Occupation: Student

From: Dallastown Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My life has been greatly impacted by my school's music department. Our program has been an escape to me and many of my peers from a heavy, academic course load and the stresses of the world. I feel that without music education, I would be greatly overwhelmed by the complexities of life and I am extremely thankful to be a part of a greater cause.

### **David Shapiro**

Occupation: Student

From: Dallastown Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has had a great impact on my life. Through the music education system, I have learned to become more organized. In addition, the music education system has taught me self discipline by having to master and practice music to a level that is acceptable. This is applicable to things out of music, such as my grades and how efficiently I get work done.

### **Caroline Wolfe**

Occupation: Student

From: Dallastown Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I have grown up in a house filled with music. It has greatly influenced my life, and it is what I wish to pursue when I grow up. My music teachers mean a lot to me, as they have molded me into the musician I am today. I am grateful for all they have taught me.

### **Jacqueline Hoffman**

Occupation: High School Senior

From: Dillsburg, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has guided me to the gift and talent that I possess. If it wasn't for my band program I would have never discovered my gift for music, nor would I have a goal set for myself to one day be a music educator/performer. Music is something that brings me joy everyday and something I couldn't live without. I spend hours a day practicing, studying, and preparing myself for what lies ahead in my future, that without music, I wouldn't have planned out or be able to reach. Music helped me get my schooling and thoughts back on track and I'm doing better than ever. I'm excited to go back to school because I get to play in my music ensembles, I get to do my internship with my director, I get to teach, and most importantly, I'm getting to spend time doing what I love: Making music. We need to save our programs, so that people have a way to express themselves, a way to show talent, and that people like me can be able to do what we love for a living.

### **Isabella Portelles**

Occupation: Student

From: Dover HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has impacted my life in many ways. Throughout HS I have had many opportunities to share my love for music with people all across the country. I would not have had these opportunities given to me without the help of my music teachers. They have never stopped trying to help me pursue my musical goals and go above and beyond what is required to help me become the best musician I can. One day, I hope to share my love of music with my students and impact them in the same way that I have been impacted.

### **Shannon Pizzirusso**

Occupation: Student

From: Eastern York HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is a powerful teacher itself. It has the ability to move the strongest person to tears, or the saddest person to joyous laughter. However, if it weren't for the experiences I gained through music education, I wouldn't be where I am today. From when I started playing my violin in third grade through all of my music classes and musicals, to now, I have benefited immensely because of my teachers and the exposure I gained from being in new environments and new groups of people. Music education has a way of connecting people and students in ways they may have never imagined before. Even the musical involvement outside of school is educational, such as various choirs and musical groups students and adults participate in. Anything

music related anywhere is an educational experience and I know that all of my musical groups have given me different everyday skills. Music education has taught me to be patient, to listen, and to never judge a book by its cover. When learning music or rehearsing to put on a show, you must be tolerant because others may not pick up on notes and such as easily as others and that is a valuable life lesson anywhere. Another important lesson learned in both music and life is the need to listen. You must observe the different parts of a piece of music and hear the harmonies in order for a song to come together correctly. Also, listening to others is beneficial to both the other person and you because you have learned something new about a person. Finally, not judging a book by its cover is one more way music education has impacted me. This is taught through looking at a piece of music and thinking one way about it and then when you sing it, you find that you like it. People aren't always who they seem to be on the outside, getting to know them is a meaningful part to understanding the person as a whole. Music and music education is a way for all people to connect, because after all "Music builds a bridge, it can tear down a wall. Music is a language, that can speak to one and all" and that, is why I sing.

### **Richelle Groff**

Occupation: Auditor/Accountant

From: Hanover, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I was involved in music from 4th grade through college in marching bands, concert bands, and various ensembles. These ensembles harbor friendships that last a lifetime. If learning about music and participating in the creation of music was not available to me throughout my public school years, my life would have been astoundingly different. Learning to play and mastering an instrument requires dedication, diligence, and perseverance. Not only is a student practicing their instrument for their own personal goals, they are practicing in order to better the ensemble as a whole. The ensembles really are teams, and students learn that early on in their music education. I was able to include multiple leadership roles from college music ensembles in my resume, which really aided me in obtaining a job after college. I truly believe that offering music education to students is extremely important.

### **Tyler Webb**

Occupation: Student

From: Kennard-Dale HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

A passion that I have is playing the violin and viola. I began to play in fourth grade and have been taking private lessons since my seventh grade year. In eighth grade I was accepted into the York Junior Symphony Orchestra and throughout my entire HS career I have been playing with the F.A.M.E. Orchestra. During my eleventh grade year I started playing the viola, and I was chosen to participate in the PMEA District and Regional Orchestra as a violist during both eleventh and twelfth grades. In addition I have been honored to be the concert master of my school's orchestra for the past three years. Music is what I love and has shaped me into the person I am today.

### **Bryson Herb**

Occupation: Student

From: Northern HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has allowed me to meet new people and make close friends. With participating in music, I was able to learn my instrument and I will be able to play it for the rest of my life. Music is a lifelong activity that is part of a well-rounded education, allowing people to express themselves in ways that are not possible in the typical classroom. Lastly, participating in music education allowed me to travel to new places and learn new things.

### **Jeannine Webb**

Occupation: Student

From: Northern HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

How has music education impacted my life? This question seems to make more sense when rephrased in this manner: How hasn't music education impacted my life? From the very start, when I received my first violin at age seven, music education taught me responsibility and discipline. I remember gazing in awe at the deep mahogany and the shiny metallic strings of the instrument, the enormous weight of responsibility resting on my shoulders. I knew I had to protect it. While other students carelessly skipped through the hallways, I moved cautiously, painstakingly. I created a "practice calendar" and followed it religiously. Over the course of several months, these behaviors carried over into my schoolwork. Music transformed me into a responsible, hardworking student. As a musician, I know a few things about participating in music ensembles while attending school full time. It takes dedication, a willingness to grow, as well as many sleepless nights. Imagine a day in the life of a high-school musician: We rise before the sun, we soak up academic information all day long (in the most rigorous classes, I might add), we head to an ensemble rehearsal directly after school, followed by a brief dinner (maybe fast food?) before we are whisked away to yet another rehearsal for a different instrument. Sometimes, this schedule means beginning nightly homework at 11:00 PM. Sometimes, this schedule means turning down an invite to a basketball game, or a dinner with friends. Music education taught me how rewarding these sacrifices can be. Instead of resenting my complete lack of free time, I revel in my ability to multitask and handle stressful situations with a calm mentality. Music education has improved my social interactions with peers and adults alike. I have been involved in virtually every ensemble since elementary school, and in recent years, I have joined community choirs and orchestras as well. It has forced me to step outside of my comfort zone and communicate with strangers. After all, making music is impossible without communication. I have surprised myself with my ability to create lasting friendships through musical activities. It simply takes a small smile, a shared appreciation of music, and ten seconds of courage. Last but not least, music education has changed me in the most drastic of ways: I am planning to devote my life to it. This beauty we call music surrounds us every single day—and I am thankful for the gifted teachers, friends and mentors who have pointed it out to me along the way. So many people only graze the surface of what music truly is. After years of education, even I know practically nothing of all there is to learn and know and grasp. Each day, I plan to grow a little as a musician, unraveling the mystery piece by piece. That's what music education has done for me: it has shaped my life.

### **Dustin Dicely**

Occupation: Student

From: Red Land HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

My music teachers have changed the way I look at life. Learning about music has not only improved my artistic skills, but also enforced valuable life lessons. It proves to us that with hard work and dedication to your craft, anything is possible. Every day, I look forward to music being a part of my daily routine, and because of that, I have benefited as a human being. Music is a valuable part of our lives, and music education helps bolster our experience with the arts. Because of the skills that I learned from my teachers, I have been given the opportunity to perform music at various outings, and meet new people as a result. Without my teachers, I would never have such experiences.

### **Mary Loyer**

Occupation: Music Teacher

From: Red Lion, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has made me a better person. By guiding the learning of music in students, I feel renewed and invigorated each day.

### **Lynn Krieger**

Occupation: Student

From: Red Lion Area Senior HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

In the 21st century, many consider music, especially music education, as irrelevant. However, the exact opposite is true: music education has helped shape many lives, including mine. Playing in a school orchestra and other orchestras and chamber ensembles have taught me to work with others when other classes simply said, “work together.” Orchestra taught me how to work with others, not just try to do it and hope it works. Also, music is challenging. With every other class, there always came a point for me where I got bored; either it was too easy or uninteresting. Music education was never like that, at any time. There was always something new I could learn, something I could improve upon, and to me, it was (and still is) the most interesting thing in the world. I was never bored, at any time. There was always a new piece to learn and interpret, more theory to study. Not only that, but music education has actually helped with my other classes. It has taught me discipline to get things done while I can and not procrastinate, how to interpret literature (music and words), and how history can shape society. There is not a doubt in my mind that music education has shaped my life more than anything else. Music is my everything, and music education has helped make me into the person I am today.

### **Anna Lorenzen**

Occupation: Student

From: Red Lion Area Senior HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education is one of the most important things in a school environment that should be preserved and respected. For me, music education is my life. I want to become a professional French horn player all because of the amazing teachers and programs that I have gone through at my school. I am currently seated as principle horn at Region V Band in PMEA. One would think that I have had private lessons ever since a horn was placed in my hands, however that was not the case. I didn't actually begin taking private lessons until the end of my freshman year of HS. Up until the time I began lessons, my only teachers were those provided by my school district. I am so thankful that I had such helpful teachers that got me so far, even without extra lessons. That just proves that the music education programs do a fantastic job with any student. One thing that I have noticed in my school is the growth of the music students throughout their four years of HS. Just imagine the class clown trumpet player walking in on their first day of ninth grade turning into the completely mature senior graduating with honors. Not only do music students succeed academically, but music is something that they carry with them throughout the rest of their lives. Even if they aren't pursuing music as a career, they will still be able to come home from work one day when they are thirty years old and play some tunes on their clarinet. I cannot stress how important music education is, because I would not be the person I am without it. I am going to make music my career, and just imagine what would have happened to me if I had not found this calling. For all I know, I could be planning a career in something like astrophysics and not even realize what music would mean to me. If music education was lessened in schools, you have no idea how many possible Yo Yo Ma's you are keeping from becoming the best musicians in the world.

### **Brendan Malloy**

Occupation: Student

From: Spring Grove Area HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education has been the most important thing in my life. Without music education, i would most definitely not be where I am today. All throughout my school career, I have had great directors to help guide me as a musician and encourage me to push further and be the best that I could be. Music is the most enjoyable part of my life and I would probably be miserable without it. Whenever I'm stressed, music is the best belief. Even dissecting the most difficult pieces is enjoyable for me. I am very thankful for my music education and wish to continue to become a better musician in HS and in college where I will be majoring in jazz guitar performance.

### **Ethan Paules**

Occupation: Student

From: Susquehannock HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music is one of the world's only forms of universal communication; it can be used to convey beauty, sadness, wonder, bewilderment, and amazement among countless other emotions. Music has played a substantial role in influencing my academic career at Susquehannock HS. I know that I would not be where I am today in academics and in character if music had not been such an important part of my life. My roots in music have helped me persevere as I pursue various academic endeavors in HS, and I know that it will continue to help me in the same way as I move on to college and beyond. By being so heavily involved in music both inside and outside of school, I have learned the importance of self-discipline, infallible dedication, and having a well-established work ethic. My school's music program has shaped me into the student that I am today, and has fully enriched my academic experience in the classroom. I have learned how to work well with others, how to deal effectively with multiple tasks simultaneously, and how to fully engage myself in classroom discussions thanks to my education in music. I am absolutely certain that music education has been a major influence on shaping me into the person I am today. I would not trade the experiences, skills, and memories that I have gained from music for anything in the world.

### **Tracie Clancy**

Occupation: Teacher

From: York, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

As a child and young adult, music education not only allowed me to appreciate the talent and craftsmanship involved in the music field, but learning to play an instrument increased my confidence and cooperation skills. In high school and college I continued with singing and music appreciation classes. As an adult I've encouraged both of my daughters to pursue an instrument and I'm sure they'll benefit from it as well.

### **Katie Giambalvo**

Occupation: Student

From: York, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Having a tremendous music education program at my school (Central York High School) has given me so many opportunities and I can never be more thankful for all that our teachers have allowed us to do. I'm involved in the marching band, symphonic band, jazz band, holiday brass, concert chorus, showchoir, musicals, and maybe even a few other programs and each one has given me so much happiness. We've taken some amazing trips and gone to amazing places through these programs and I will never forget those memories. Our teachers devote so much of their time towards us students to make our music education in high school some of the best times of our life. My greatest memories come from music programs for sure and I've made friends that will last me a lifetime. Not only have these programs been fun, but I have also become a better individual by participating. Before being a part of performing groups, I lacked self confidence and had horrific stage fright, yet I always had the dream to perform on stage, so I decided to start getting involved. Almost immediately, I became more comfortable with my abilities, realized my strengths and weaknesses, and gained confidence. My anxiety level decreased drastically as I made new friends and began to work with them to accomplish big things. By the end of my freshman year, I couldn't get enough of these programs. I'm now a junior and still continue to join almost any music group that I can and have become a more confident musician and became comfortable in my own skin. The music teachers and directors at our school have always supported me and given me advice to become a better musician. They work so hard to give us the best and they have definitely achieved it. They push us to work harder when we're at our weakest and always realize our potential. I could not be more thankful to all my teachers and directors for providing me with these amazing experiences and allowing me to spread my wings and become who I really am. It is my hope that more schools begin to provide their students with opportunities like these, and who knows, maybe I will even follow in my teachers footsteps.

### **Delores Krebs**

Occupation: Retired teacher

From: York, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

I can't imagine a life without music! I started early with piano lessons, singing for PTO, etc. taking dancing lessons. Later I played in the band and sang in the glee club and graduation chorus. I'm 74 and playing in the band was one of the best times of my life. Now I love to go to musical shows and see singers, bands, etc. Music---one of the best parts of life!!

### **Sharon McMaster**

Occupation: Mortgage Processor

From: York, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music for me gave me a chance in Elementary School, Middle School and High School to not only make friends with people that I wouldn't have normally been friends with but also gave me some of the best memories of school that I remember. I participated in Chorus until High School but played the French Horn from 3rd grade until Graduation participating in Concert band, Marching band and various musical ensembles as well as being a part of the Pit Orchestra for the School Musicals. I was able to go to Penn State Band Camp over the Summer for 2 years and meet people at the College level that participated in Music programs as well as other kids my age - again making friendships that I still have today! Music helped me to feel like I belonged to a group of people and wasn't just out there on my own. But by being in Marching band and performing at other schools also gave me a sense of pride in my school and myself. It takes a lot of dedication and patience to be in a marching band and perform at half time in front of a lot of people. It is hours of practicing and performing to get it right and that feeling of accomplishment is like no other. On a side note, by learning to play an instrument also gave me help with math skills as I was in Elementary school that were needed up through my school years. As an adult now - I enjoy music mostly to listen to but also my Girl Scout troop for the last 6 years has gone to a retirement home to sing Christmas Carols around the holidays as music is also something that bridges the generation gap. I know that this is something that they really enjoy at the home and it always brings a smile to the residents faces. But is also something that is used in therapy purposes. I think it is very important to keep music in the school curriculum as there are so many talented students that could benefit from these options and hope they all enjoy it as much as I did!

### **Suzanne Schlager**

Occupation: High School Counselor

From: York, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

From the moment our daughter came home from elementary school over ten years ago and announced that she was going to learn to play the flute, music education has had a significant impact on our family. Whether it be playing in the marching band, singing with the select choir, or performing on stage in numerous musicals, she not only grew as a musician but developed life long skills in the areas of leadership, interpersonal relationships, and team work. As parents, we were afforded numerous opportunities to participate in our district's music education program and as a result witnessed first hand the transforming affect these opportunities have on the lives of so many young people.

### **Breah Koller**

Occupation: Student

From: York Suburban HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music education isn't just about learning to play an instrument, or teaching someone how to sing. It's about discovering the language of expression and finding that musical thread inside of you. But without music educators, where do we even begin? It is those people who open the door to music for us, whether we are

young or old. I began music education when I was only in first grade. In our general music class, we experimented with sounds and rhythms, and sang simple solfege songs, but it was the basis on which I built a strong love for this new art. Over time, this education unfolded with reading sheet music and learning how to play different instruments, and introduced me to something I had never been able to do efficiently before: expression. With the guidance of many music teacher over the years, I finally found a way to show others-- and myself-- my inner thoughts, hopes, and dreams. Throughout this process, music educators have also helped me realize who I am and who I could become. In the past few years, I realized that I am a leader, not because of any opportunities in science or literature classes, but because of the positive reinforcement I received in band. Music educators propel us not only create great art through music, but also to do what seems impossible. They fan the small flame of passion and talent, and knowing someone believes in you gives you the hope that you can achieve great things. I made regional band this year because after districts in 2014 my director said, "You're going to make regionals next year. I know you can do it." Together we pursued this dream and I was able to accomplish something I never thought possible. In this way, music education is unlike any other form of instruction: it shapes and molds us into who we are and illuminates pieces of us we never thought existed. It plays a crucial role in defining individuals by building them up and allowing them to experience a unique form of expression. With that, we experience a greater understanding for the beauty of the world, and the hope that lies within us.

### **Daniel Lee**

Occupation: Student

From: York Suburban HS, York County

#### **How Has Music Education Impacted Your Life?**

Music has impacted my life through playing wonderful music with many great companions that I meet in various festivals. Music has taught me many things, one of them being cooperative; being in an orchestra teaches me to work with other students and unifies us as a whole. Not only do I make friends, but I obtain opportunities to play music that is world-class and respected throughout history. I have grown to love playing music through meeting many people and being able to perform great music with those people I befriend.

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PMEA is a statewide nonprofit organization of over 4,500 members, dedicated to promoting the musical development of all Pennsylvanians. The present membership evolved from a small group of band directors dating from 1933. Today, the organization includes those engaged in music instruction at all levels, from preschool through college and university, as well as those in the music industry, merchandising and publishing.

The organization promotes and supports quality music education, learning and performance as well as promoting and supporting music education in schools and communities. PMEA is affiliated with The National Association for Music Education, NAFME.



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