

Making a Bigger Impact with Music In Your Community

Fran Kick

While many music programs have a Tri-M[®] Music Honor Society chapter in their middle, junior, and senior high schools, many more do not. www.nafme.org/tri-m gives lots of reasons for starting one. Lots of reasons are given for not starting one. More often than not, it's a time crunch that's blamed as the #1 excuse for not starting and maintaining an active Tri-M[®] Chapter. The society is designed as a way to "recognize students for their academic and musical achievements, reward them for their accomplishments and service activities, and to inspire other students to excel at music and leadership." It's these last two—**music and leadership**—that might be the #1 reason to start doing something with *all your students*.

A Tri-M[®] chapter can be much more than just another "step to get" or "certificate to achieve" in your school. Imagine what might happen if more music students started making things happen in your community? Developing student leadership is very different from just picking leaders or giving them a certificate suitable for framing. Part of our pledge is to promote wider opportunities for sharing joy through music both within our school and within our community.

Tri-M[®] creates the opportunity as well as the environment outside the classroom or rehearsal for your students to:

- Develop and practice their leadership skills.
- Fine-tune their leadership abilities.
- Increase their leadership awareness.
- Demonstrate and share their musical abilities.
- Experience how to constructively make a difference.
- Improve their individual positive attitude and influence others as to the impact music and leadership can have beyond the band room, the choir room, or the orchestra room—into the community.

In my presentation at the 2015 TBA Convention/Clinic, I suggested two movies to watch as a homework assignment that might creatively illustrate and inspire you as well as your students:

Pay It Forward (2000)

Warner Bros.

www.imdb.com/title/tt0223897/

Sister Act (1992)

Touchstone Pictures

www.imdb.com/title/tt0105417/

While the main emphasis of Tri-M[®] is service, leadership, and community involvement,

too many times activities end up being solely self-serving for the music department (such as setting up and tearing down concerts, helping out with music-related school activities, maintenance of equipment, etc.) Ultimately, "giving back" would ideally reach beyond your own program and into the broader community. *Warning: If your students perceive you're simply trying to "honor them" so they'll do more for you, it might seem shortsighted, self-serving, and backfire!*

Sure your students can host or perform concerts and music-related events to fund-raise, to demonstrate their musicianship, or to offer small-ensemble opportunities. Yet what if you could do that in the context of something greater than your own program? How can you "bring the community in on it" especially in ways that reach beyond your normal concert-going crowd of parents and booster supporters?

Question: How many times have you found yourself passing out some music advocacy pamphlets to all the parents who already know the value of music education? Sure we want to fan the flames. Yet what about sparking some fires in the hearts, minds and souls of those who don't have students in your program?

Making a Bigger Impact with Music In Your Community

A few examples...

Since most of us “have to see it before we can be it,” here are a few YouTube™ videos that highlight some creative ways your music students might “reach beyond” where they thought they could go in making a bigger impact with music in your community:

“Capes for Kids”
Franklin High School, TN
<http://youtu.be/kYUc-pskkzE>

“Music-Grams”
Gulf High School, FL
<http://youtu.be/KWJQAsAtqAQ>

“Used Instrument Donation Drive”
Iliahi Elementary School, HI
<http://youtu.be/yyhuAU9cOtk>

“Pop-up Concert/Coffee House”
Lawrence High School, NJ
<http://youtu.be/RLYDlONw7KY>

“Bucket Drum Line Play-a-long”
Corona del Mar HS, CA
<http://youtu.be/wgq8v2uNa08>

“Tuba Christmas”
Williamsport Area Schools, PA
<http://youtu.be/CpN5oRKI4d4>

“You Conduct Us” (High School)
Ashley High School, NC
<http://youtu.be/cfj6qDSNBv0>

“You Conduct Us” (College)
Penn State Chamber Orchestra, PA
http://youtu.be/Z_MPvFvIR00

“You Conduct Us” (Professional)
by Improv Everywhere
<http://improveverywhere.com/2013/09/24/conduct-us/>

“Flash Mob Sing-a-long”
San Marcos High School, CA
<http://youtu.be/VUA2mSMerOg>

“Glenwood Guitar Music Project”
Glenbrook North High School, IL
<http://youtu.be/ENchVdl1LJM>

Note: When you create a summary video of your project and upload it to YouTube™, consider how both the Franklin High School and Glenbrook North High School videos share a bit more as to **how**, **what and why** they did their projects. This background detail will also help others who want to do what you did too.

Make It a Movement, Not Just a Project

Ideas like “You Conduct Us,” “Flash Mob,” “Tuba Christmas” and many others, are becoming more of a movement vs. just a one-time project. Perhaps that’s a good way of mentally picturing what you’re doing. You’re really creating “a movement,” not just “a project.” Leading by example, bringing more people in on it, and making it easy for others to follow all play an important part in creating a movement. Derek Sivers, a professional musician who created *CD Baby* in 1998, which went on to become the largest seller of independent music online, did a 2010 TED Talk worth sharing when it comes to leadership in action:

Derek Sivers: How to start a movement
<http://youtu.be/V74AxCqOTvg>

Adapt vs. Adopt

As with anything in life, **adapt** the ideas to your situation, your program, and your community. Don’t just **adopt** what others have done. Make it your own version of what others have done. During our Texas Bandmasters Association session, everyone had a chance to add his or her ideas to the mix. We ended up with over one hundred different ideas on 3x5 cards, prioritized by the participants, and shared with everyone in the room. Consider creating a Trombone Choir Christmas, or a drum-with-us drum circle play-a-long, or perhaps a Children’s Hospital Kazoo Band.

Tips to keep in mind!

There are a few elements of interaction that make what you do musically magical. Consider these best-practice suggestions as you guide your students in planning their next random-act-of-kindness community out-reach experience:

- Obviously bring music making into the project as much as possible.
- Let projects be student-led with you (or other adults) serving as “guides on the side” asking questions that’ll inspire students to learn-by-doing.

Making a Bigger Impact with Music In Your Community

- school. Imagine organizations working together? (i.e. Caroling at a Boy Scout Christmas tree lot, U.S. Marine's Toys-for-Tots donation containers at your concert, local Symphony Orchestra instrument donation drive, district-wide bucket drum line battles at basketball games.)
- Use locations that will naturally make the music sound better. (Think big hall acoustics, surround-sound set up, position younger performers within and in-between more experienced performers, all to ensure a better-sounding singing-in-the-shower success!)
 - Combine experienced players with younger players. (i.e. High School + Elementary or bring college music majors into the mix with your kids.)
 - Raising money for others is much better than just raising money for yourself.
 - Organize project-based roles NOT standing-committee roles. (i.e. Let projects drive positions of responsibility vs. positions drive projects: Project Lead, Project PR, Project Equipment Logistics, President, VP, Secretary, Treasurer.)
 - Avoid having standing meetings (i.e. Every Monday after school 3:30-5:00 PM. Only meet as project requires with clear deadlines and follow up.)
 - Mix it up: once-every-four-years type projects vs. every year projects.
 - Video capture and record as much detail on video, on paper or on-line—what you did, how you did it, who did what, how you'd improve, etc. Document how many people, how many hours, how many times, how much money, etc. so that you have a way to share the substantial impact you made.
- Think “adding alongside” current schedule vs. “adding to” current schedule.
 - Don't limit the project to just Tri-M[®] chapter members or band members. Open it up to any student in your music program and in your school.
 - Consider opening it up to alumni from your program too.
 - Enable non-musicians to “be a part” of it. (i.e. Sing-a-long, play-a-long, you conduct us, bucket drumming.)
 - Intentionally create synergy collaborating with other groups outside your school and/or inside your

Making a Bigger Impact with Music In Your Community

- Highlight the project with others who weren't there via school district website, newsletter, local paper, and send LOTS of thank you notes to all involved.

Bringing to life student leadership in your music organization will only happen when students do something. After all “actions speak louder than words.” Helping students see what's possible and guiding them to create a project that has more impact with music in your community makes what they do and how they do it more meaningful. Rather than seeing yourself as someone who has to spend time managing the projects, the chapter, etc. bring more students in on the process. Coach them on how they can “start a movement” using the magic of music to interactively make things happen in your community.

Fran Kick is an author, educational consultant and professional speaker who knows What Makes Kids KICK! He is the creator and presenter of KICK IT IN® a series of self-motivational personal leadership presentations and materials. Since taking an educational leave of absence from teaching music, he has developed his part-time speaking adventure into a full-time mission. Every year Fran presents programs across the U.S. and Canada to thousands of college/university, high school, junior high/middle school students, plus the many people who work with them. Since 1998, Fran has served as the leadership coordinator for the Music for All Summer Symposium <http://www.kickitin.com/boa/>. He also works with Drum Corps International every summer to help music students, their directors and parents kick start their season with DCI! <http://www.kickitin.com/dci/> Outside the music education world, he works with association, convention and corporate organizations that are actively engaged in teaching and reaching today's kids. Fran speaks at many state, regional & national conferences about What Makes Kids KICK and how they can KICK IT IN & TAKE THE LEAD. He has his B.A. in Music Education and a M.A. in Educational Psychology. For more information, check out <http://www.kickitin.com/music/>

Fran Kick was a clinician for the 2015 TBA Student Day and presented his session at the 2015 68th Annual Texas Bandmasters Association Convention/Clinic. His involvement at TBA was graciously sponsored in part by Drum Corps International and Music for All. For more information about Fran's work with TBA visit www.kickitin.com/tba/