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The Suzuki Pyramid - Learning from our peers

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We have all heard of the Suzuki Triangle - child, parent, and teacher. It is an equilateral triangle, three distinct sides, each equally important. Each side of the triangle has it's own unique qualities, needs, and functions within the Suzuki process.

The child is the accomplished learner, the reason for the process. The parent is the expert on their child, the home teacher, and the child's first and most important teacher. The teacher is the expert in music education, the guide for this musical journey.

When we expand our triangle into a pyramid, we add peers. Every side of the triangle has its own peer group. The child has peers in group class, master class, and sometimes siblings that also study music. The parent has peers, other parents in the Suzuki studio and in the larger Suzuki community. The teacher has peers as well - Suzuki colleagues also leading and guiding families on many musical journeys.

Last night, STXSA hosted a Parent Night Online event featuring Dr. Shu-Yi Scott. As both a Suzuki teacher and Suzuki parent, she had an immediate peer relationship with everyone attending.

I began teaching in 1979, which feels like a very long time ago! It's easy to think, "I've heard it all", but every time I hear a colleague speak, I'm reminded how much more there is to learn. I left the Zoom session with my head full of new ideas!

Rather than summarize everything, I want to share a couple ideas that especially stayed with me.

daily routine. Parents and teachers can shift their mindset. By changing their outlook on practicing, the experience for the child can be more positive. Add games, define clear goals, communicate an endpoint, choose positive language, empower the child by offering them choices, and celebrate small successes.

She used the term “Suzuki Soundtrack” for daily listening to Suzuki recordings (the ones that we used to call “the CD” in the olden days). I like the idea that our lives have a musical ‘soundtrack’ and it’s a great way to think of the music we are learning as an integral part of our environment.

The idea of clearly communicating an endpoint also really resonated with me. It made me think of students who ‘watch the clock’. This might be a sign of uncertainty rather than disinterest. I know I feel anxious when I’m on the freeway, stuck in traffic, and just seeing the huge sign that says “4 minutes to Hwy 610” allows me to exhale in relief. I know that I can handle four minutes and I don’t have to worry about unknown situations. Similarly, just knowing that there is an end in sight could can bring a sense of calm and help children manage their energy during lessons and practice.

Dr. Scott also shared ideas from James Clear’s book, Atomic Habits. His strategies translate very well to music study; habit stacking, lowering barriers, temptation bundling, making it satisfying, celebrating micro-successes, and focusing on identity, not only results. This reminded me Stephen Covey’s 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, another one of my favorite books that also relates so well to music study.

I’m so grateful for Dr. Scott’s presentation and for the opportunity to learn from my peers. Suzuki’s idea of being a life-long learner continues to resonate with me and I’m looking forward to many more experiences like this.

If you are interested in hearing more, you can still register for the STXSA Parent Night Online Series and watch recordings of Dr. Scott and Ruth Meints through May 31. Register at www.stxsa.org/parenttalk.

This special newsletter is just for our paid STXSA Family Members and Teacher Members — we are so grateful for our Suzuki community!
Feel free to invite a friend to join us. They can **join STXSA here** and stay connected with all the exciting events and opportunities coming up.



You are invited to attend the Suzuki Graduation Concert 2026!

Saturday, May 2, 2026 at 2:00pm

Chapelwood United Methodist Church

www.stxsa.org/graduation

Resources

STXSA Parent Corner Newsletter Archives ***- UPDATED!***
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International Suzuki Association

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May 2 - STXSA Suzuki Graduation Concert

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