

# Why Join a Music Booster Group? The Surprising Benefits

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**Congratulations!** Your child has decided to continue on as a music student. The program will be taking your child to the next level, and providing incredible opportunities. But with those opportunities come more responsibilities; not just for your child, but for the program as a whole. There's way too much work for the teacher to handle, so the booster club supplies a stream of volunteers.

Why SHOULD you make time to volunteer with the music booster group?

## Do it for (your) children!

Each moment a music educator spends on administrative tasks is a moment that educator could be spending with a student. YOUR student.

A ten-minute task for a parent could save a teacher 30 minutes, or an hour. That time goes right back to the students, ensuring that your child gets a better experience.

Part of that experience may include more performance opportunities, which may in turn create more logistical wrangling. I'd much rather the logistics get turned over to parent volunteers, ensuring that the teacher has the time and energy to ensure that students are prepared to make the most of that opportunity.

Plus if you get involved with your kid's music booster group, you'll be in a perfect position to spend more time with your teenage child. You'll be able to see their progress, and who they're hanging out with. You'll catch all their performances, and be the first to catch their triumphant smile after a powerful performance. What could be better than that?

## Do it for your community

Music is singularly well positioned to build community. Local performance opportunities like concerts, football games, and parades rally a community around the shared experience of the music provided by your kid's ensemble.

Everyone within earshot will be improved by your student's performance. Research says that "people who engage in the arts or watch others do so are more likely to be civically engaged, socially tolerant, and altruistic."

These community performances, by the way, are wonderful opportunities to engage in some stealth music education advocacy. Each pair of ears is likely attached to a voter. If they see your child's music program as a positive force in the community, next time a funding referendum happens, they'll be that much more likely to vote your way. Why should you care? It'll make your kid's experience better, it'll strengthen the school and the district, and will benefit students for years to come. Remember that bit about being civically engaged? That means these music students—for year to come—will leave the program to spend their lives making the world, much less your own community, a better place. And who doesn't want that?



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## Do it for yourself

You'll get something out of volunteering for your child's music program, too! Research shows that volunteers benefit in so many ways.

Volunteering for a group like a music booster group will strengthen your network personally and professionally. Those connections will come in handy someday, whether it's in your career or your social life.

Volunteering for a music booster group sure increases the possibility of increasing those interactions. As one veteran music parent in my program puts it each year to freshman band parents, "Look around. Your new best friend may be in this room." The veteran parents nod—he's right.

Consider using a music booster group as a laboratory you can use to pick up new hands-on skills. From organizational skills to bookkeeping to logistics to communication to technology, there are so many important tasks to be done, and likely a shortage of people to do them.

Studies show that volunteers are *happier*.

- Being generous leads us to perceive others more compassionately; we typically find good qualities in people to whom we are kind
- Being kind promotes a sense of connection and community with others, which is one of the strongest factors in increasing happiness
- Being generous helps us appreciate and feel grateful for our own good fortune
- Being generous boosts our self-image; it helps us feel useful and gives us a way to use our strengths and talents in a meaningful way
- Being kind can start a chain reaction of positivity; being kind to others may lead them to be grateful and generous to others, who in turn are grateful and kind to others

And perhaps the number one reason to volunteer is because it's **FUN!** Most everyone involved with a music program is in it for the right reasons, and it shows. The students have a blast, and that positive energy radiates through the program. The experiences shared by everyone involved make happy memories for years to come.

Consider giving a hand to your child's music program. Any way you look at it, your child's music program is a force for good: for students, the school, the community and beyond.

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