



# OPUS NOTES

SUMMER 2026



Dunbar Magnet Middle School, Little Rock, AR

## Letter of Gratitude from Our CEO

Dear Friends,

Thirty years ago, our founder, Michael Kamen, stood before an audience and announced the formation of Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation. Michael shared his dream and stated that if we could simply place instruments into the hands of children, their lives would be sweeter. And what a privilege it has been to spend three decades bringing that dream to life for students across the country.

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**“Their lives will be so much sweeter for the joy of making their own music.”**

*Michael Kamen - Founder of Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation*

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Because of supporters like you, Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation has donated nearly 43,000 instruments worth more than \$39 million, serving over 536,000 students across the country. Each of these instruments has opened doors for students to participate, belong, and experience the joy and possibility that make life sweeter through music.

We are also deeply grateful for the music teachers who show up every day, often with limited resources and too few instruments, because they believe every student deserves access to music. Their commitment reminds us why this work matters, and inspires us to do more.

As we mark this milestone anniversary, we honor Michael's dream by recommitting to the work ahead. There are still so many children who need our help, and with supporters like you, we remain devoted to reaching them.

Thank you for being part of this story—whether you have been with us from the beginning or are joining us now. Your belief in this work is what transforms a dream into a life changed, one instrument at a time.

With deep gratitude,

**Tricia Williams, President & CEO**

# New Instruments Change Lives!

Thanks to you, this past school year was filled with meaningful impact: **1,689** instruments worth **\$2,088,663** provided to **76** schools, serving **21,113** students.



**"It's the best day of my life!"**

*—student at Laraway School in Joliet, IL  
when she first held her new bass clarinet*



JHS 189Q, Flushing, NY



Hickman Mills Middle School, Kansas City, MO

**"Because of your support, our students  
who may never have had access to  
instruments will now have a chance to  
learn, create, and grow."**

*—Janelle Walsh, Straley Elementary School, Princeton, WV*



Montello Elementary School, Lewiston, ME



## How We're Changing the Future of Music and Arts Education

**Something exciting is happening in music and arts education – and Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation is proud to be at the forefront.**

We're on a mission to ensure every student in America has the chance to experience the joy and lifelong benefits of music and arts education. At the center of that work is our data-driven MEDSS program. Launched 10 years ago, MEDSS brings together robust data and teacher surveys across entire school districts to reveal where underserved students face barriers to participation, where instruments and resources are needed most, and what it will take to open the doors of opportunity for every child who wants to learn.

**“It's really nice to see that we have new instruments not only for my class but for the future students to play.”**

– student at Florence Nightingale Middle School in Los Angeles, which received \$35,000 in new instruments

MEDSS findings are helping schools turn insight into action, ensuring solutions and resources reach students and programs where they will have transformative impact. Over the past decade, MEDSS has reached over **3,000** schools in **43** districts across the country, expanding opportunities for more than **1.7 million** students.

Now, MEDSS is helping shape a national movement to eliminate barriers to arts learning. Our assessments are guiding the collective action of our peers in the recently launched Music Impact Coalition (MIC), an alliance of 20 organizations working together to provide critical resources and create sustainable solutions.

Today, MEDSS assessments are underway across eight districts in North Carolina. Our findings will inform solutions deployed collectively by MIC member organizations, as well as the placement of Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation's own instrument donations, to ensure we are supporting the schools and students with the greatest need. Successful outcomes in N.C. will guide the development of a scalable model to expand into other states. The goal: equitable access to music and arts education for all children nationwide.



Nightingale Middle School, Los Angeles, CA



Over 30 years, we've placed  
**42,890** instruments worth over  
**\$39M** into the hands of more than  
**530,000** students nationwide.  
**ALL THANKS TO YOU!**

Thornton Middle School, Thornton, CO

## Aisha – Living the Dream!

When Aisha arrived at Washington Prep High School in South Los Angeles as a teenager, she walked into a music room filled with instruments donated by Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation. Having loved the drums since she was three years old, Aisha finally had access to the equipment she needed to pursue her passion. This opportunity helped set her on a path as a professional musician, touring across the U.S. and performing at major venues and events including NPR's Tiny Desk Concert, Coachella, and the Hollywood Bowl. Aisha's story is a powerful reminder of what can happen when students have access to quality music programs and the instruments they need to grow and thrive.



**AISHA THEN**



**AISHA NOW**

## A GIFT TODAY CAN CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFE FOREVER



Please give the gift of music by donating online at  
[mhopus.org/donate](https://mhopus.org/donate) or by using the enclosed envelope.

Consider a monthly donation to sustain our efforts throughout the year.

**On behalf of so many, thank you SO much!**

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