

## The History Of Music For Minors II

### Part I

MFMI began thanks to a child in Carol Zilli's son's first grade class at Hacienda School in Fremont in 1985. Carol was sharing music with the children as a parent volunteer when a classmate, Elizabeth Levy, taught Carol a chant called "Hi My Name is Joe." The student shared that she learned it from a friend in Los Altos who learned it from her Docent. Curiosity led Carol to find out more which brought her to Music for Minors I in Los Altos, the mother organization, and why our program is called Music for Minors II.

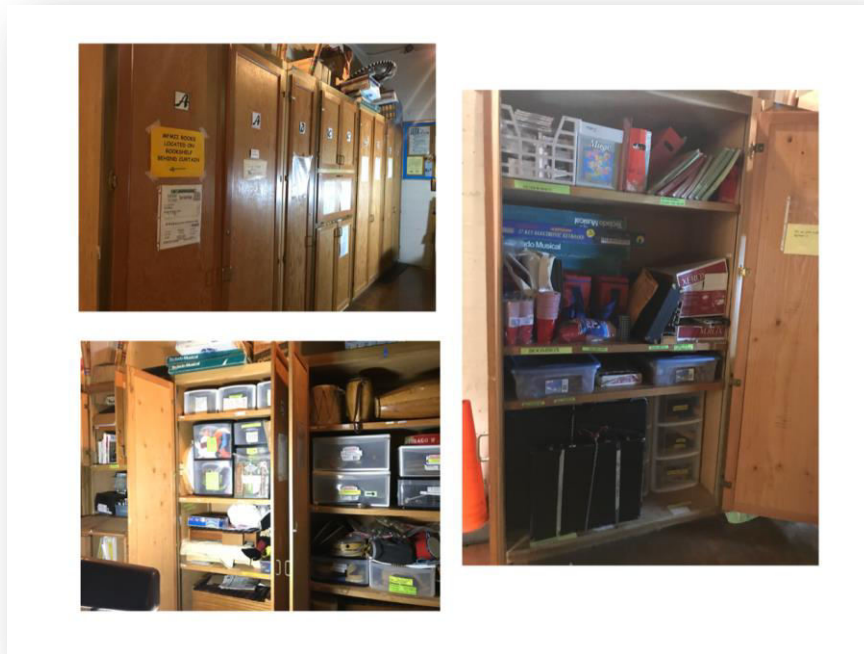


*(Pictured, Niles Elementary School)*

While becoming a MFMI Docent in 1986 for all of the students at Niles School where her three children were students, and being inspired by Deanna Stock, the Executive Director of MFM I at the time, Carol established MFMI as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in Fremont in 1988 with a Board of Directors she recruited and oriented who were parents of the children being served.

By 1988, there were 17 docents serving 6 schools in Fremont: Niles, Glenmoor, Hirsch, Mattos, Vallejo Mill and Warwick, and 850 students received music. In 1989 there were 30 docents in 9 Fremont schools thereby doubling the coverage. The growth over the decade would continue as the program increased its visibility with school performances, MFMI sponsored community concerts and presentations.

The first Music Resource Center was established at Niles School with funding from Fremont Unified School District and the Candle Lighters philanthropic organization. Two other centers would follow in a few years at Glenmoor and James Leitch Schools as the program expanded.



*(Pictured: Top, Our Niles School Resource Center, built by local Niles Business, Winsted Lumber, with wood donated by Hulbert Lumber. Bottom, some contents: percussion instruments, including drums, tambourines, xylophones, keyboards, puppet charts, etc. Right, Tone bells, hand bells, recorders, teacher manuals, and assorted homemade instruments.)*

Recruitment of Docents meant they needed to be trained in Los Altos like Carol, however, in 1990 MFMII established its own 22-session training class at Ohlone College in Fremont and Carol became the training teacher. Three semester units of credit were received by registrants. This local training greatly increased the volunteer recruitment. Carol taught the class at Ohlone for 20 years, and then due to budgetary cutbacks of courses at the college, she taught it at the Fremont Adult School for several years.

Annual MFMII sponsored children's showcases followed with sometimes 300 children performing on local professional stages in the community. There's just nothing like that many children singing together for the opener and closer of the performances, in addition to their individual grade level performance pieces. These unifying and confidence-building experiences have left long-lasting and wonderful memories in countless children and many have returned to MFMII as parents of their own children recalling the songs they performed when in elementary school led by their MFMII Docents.



*(Pictured: 300 MFMII students together on stage at Harbor Light in Fremont.)*

MFMII soon spread to Parkmont and Maloney Schools in Fremont and some Newark Unified School District schools such as Musick and Lincoln. Soon Sinnott Elementary School in Milpitas became the first MFMII School in that area. Recruitment in the Milpitas area subsequently brought 6 schools from that area to our program and MFMII served that school district for almost 10 years until they hired music specialists in all of their schools. MFMII kept music alive until funding was acquired.

Meanwhile, news of the program spread further north and in the late 1990's a second training class was being planned at the Castro Valley Adult School as volunteers were being recruited from Castro Valley, Hayward, San Lorenzo, and Oakland. Once a school's classrooms, halls and playgrounds as well as community performance centers are filled with the sound of children making music, parents, teachers, principals, and community members and leaders become aware of the importance of music in children's lives. They see firsthand what music does for children and those around them. Increased joy, self-confidence, and academic success prevail as songs of various cultures are exchanged thereby unifying communities through the power of music.

For Part II of the MFMII story, see our June newsletter, which will further convey the amazing impact the MFMII program has had on children and everyone involved in the program. Testimonials say it all and there will be many of them shared in our newsletters, on our website and at our upcoming 30<sup>th</sup> Gala event.

May school classrooms this spring continue to ring with the joyous sounds of music which transforms lives!

Carol Zilli