



## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



# Our Mission

## Music, Mentorship, Empowerment

Lead Guitar's **Mission** is building free guitar ensemble classes in partnership with neighborhood schools nationwide. Daily mentorship, classroom connections with global artists and college campus experiences empower students to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

## Engage Every Learner

Lead Guitar's **Vision** is to engage every learner with an instrument that appeals across genres and generations, using music from a broad range of traditions, and differentiated materials like Adaptive and Spanish-language curricula. We focus resources on children with the least access to arts education by collaborating with schools where 80% or more of students are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch.

We **Value** equal access to education as the underpinning of a free society. At Lead Guitar we are expanding access to music learning while modeling excellence, inclusion, and accountability.

“[Lead Guitar shows]  
tangibly better  
student outcomes  
in terms of dropout  
rates, behavioral  
issues and academic  
achievement.”

– U.S. News & World Report



## Dear Friends,

In the 2022-23 academic year, Lead Guitar served 6,432 students through 242 daily to twice-weekly classes at 92 schools across the U.S. Year-over-year our total number of students grew by 47%. That means more kids from historically underserved communities coming together at their school to make music. The data shows that those students are also finding their tribes, broadening their horizons, and improving focus, grades and attendance as they engage through Lead Guitar classes and events.



That growth and those impacts are because of YOU - our donors, sponsors, community partners, collaborators, advisors, advocates, and colleagues. I hope you enjoy seeing the difference you are making, and meeting the folks that turn your investment into action on the pages that follow. Folks like our Teaching Artists, whose dedication to strengthening music education in challenging school environments inspires me.

Lead Guitar Teaching Artists are highly trained musicians and pedagogues with a diversity of experiences that make them engaging mentors. Among them are certified teachers, global touring artists, artists born and raised in the neighborhoods where we work, professors, a Grammy nominee, a yoga instructor, a champion billiards player and a former officer on a nuclear submarine. They hail from Bosnia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Israel, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Slovenia, South Korea, Turkey, and the U.S. Thank you for helping this talented team deliver music education to the kids who need it most.

**Brad Richter**  
Executive Director

It is a pleasure to be joining the Lead Guitar community, a truly extraordinary group of musicians, staff, educators, board members, and supporters making a difference in the lives of more than 6,400 young people each year through music education. As many of you reading this can attest, music is powerful. It no doubt has been a significant part of each of our lives in different ways. But by coming together, as evidenced in these pages, music has been not only powerful, but transformational.



In the pages that follow, you'll get a sense of what it means to kids from across the country in the lowest-resourced schools to have opportunities to learn guitar among their peers as part of their school day, as well as the positive impacts for teachers and communities. Participating students not only experience the joy of music-making, they develop discipline, self-esteem, and teamwork skills—attributes that help them realize success throughout their lives.

The engine that enables the work of Lead Guitar is the generosity of many. We're proud and honored to count each donor, foundation, and grantor a partner in our mission. Simply put, you make it possible for music education to be part of the lives of kids who have the least access to it. Every gift matters and makes a difference. On behalf of Lead Guitar, thank you for your partnership. This report is a celebration of the impact we make together.

**Whitney Herr-Buchholz**  
Director of Development & External Relations

# Outcomes

In the 2022-23 school year:



**6,432** students



**242** daily to twice-weekly  
Lead Guitar classes



**104** teachers



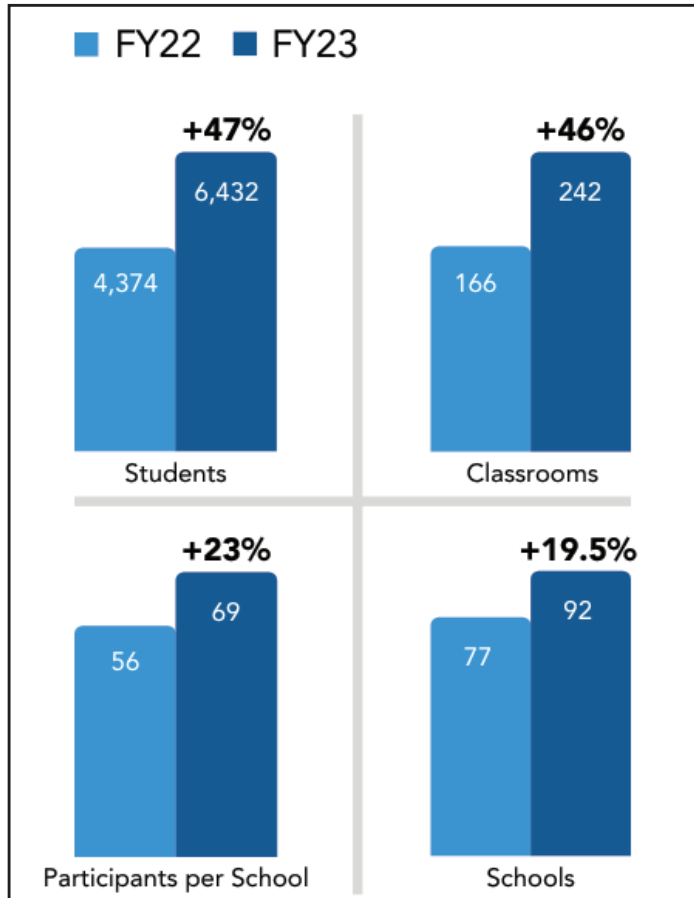
**92** schools in Atlanta,  
Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles,  
Phoenix, and Tucson



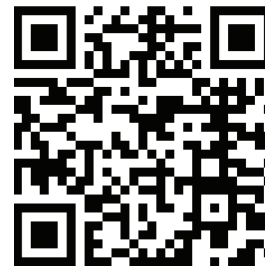
**88%** of students qualified for  
free or reduced-price lunch



## Charting Our Growth



SCAN ME!



Advanced guitar at PUC eCALS High School in Los Angeles shows the depth to which students are exploring teamwork and creativity in their rendition of La Llorona

# Impacts

## What Changed for the Students Who Participated?

In the 2022-23 school year, teachers reported that their partnership with Lead Guitar contributed to the growth of their students in the following areas:

**89% saw growth in students' resilience in overcoming obstacles or challenges.**

**68% saw a reduction in incidents of adverse behavior.**

**93% agreed that they witnessed growth in students' ability to collaborate and work as a team; 52% "strongly agreed."**

**88% saw an improved attitude towards accountability.**

Teachers witnessed students adopting collaborative behaviors through Lead Guitar classes. Responding with frequently, sometimes, rarely or never:

**70% of teachers reported students "frequently" volunteering to answer questions or share ideas.**

**68% reported students "frequently" offering to help a struggling classmate.**

**71.5% "frequently" or "sometimes" witnessed students teaching others guitar outside of class.**

**62.5% "frequently" or "sometimes" learned of students teaching family members at home.**

Other meaningful impacts:

**Only 34% of teachers at schools in major U.S. urban areas stay as long as five years [NYU Steinhardt]. 78% of Lead Guitar school programs last five years or longer.**

**93% of participating School Teachers saw improvement in student focus and engagement that they believe is attributable to collaboration with Lead Guitar.**



# New Region: Detroit

## Inspired Giving: Three Donors' Vision of Lead Guitar in Detroit

When Board Member **Dan Bueschel** proposed Detroit as a Lead Guitar hub just over a year ago, Brad Richter knew it was a perfect fit in terms of mission. It was also strategically located just four hours by car from Chicago, already a major operations hub. But what Dan was bringing to the table was more than a good idea in terms of strategic growth, he had been collaborating with his friends **Peter Mogk** and **Brian Demkowicz** to put together a gift that would cover the cost of setting up Lead Guitar programming in Detroit and the first two years of services to schools.

Dan is CEO of Pueblo (a Modigent Company) and a professional bass player. He said of his gift for Detroit: “playing music has been my lifelong friend. The opportunity to share the gift with others is why Lead Guitar inspired the contribution.” Brian and Peter, colleagues at Huron Capital in Detroit, saw an opportunity to make a positive impact in some of their city’s most under-resourced schools. Brian is a life-long guitarist and guitar collector, and, like Dan, sees parallels between the skills music develops in young people and key life and career skills. Peter serves his community through a dizzying variety of board appointments, from his alma mater university, to local youth sports, and a community hunger program.

Lead Guitar is also grateful to our partners at Detroit Public Schools Community District and leaders like **Andrew McGuire** who are an essential part of pinpointing and giving access to the kids who can benefit most from our services, like those at Casimir Pulaski Elementary/Middle School which will receive double service hours from Lead Guitar to cover 100 students in five guitar classes. Pulaski is in an area of the city particularly hard hit by Detroit’s socioeconomic and population decline in the decades leading up to the city’s bankruptcy in 2013. Lead Guitar is honored to be a part of their effort to create a great learning environment for neighborhood kids.

Our work in Pulaski and other DPSCD schools in 2023-24 is led by **Dr. Onur Alakavuklar**. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Guitar Performance with a Jazz-emphasized minor in Music Education from Indiana University.



*Dr. Onur Alakavuklar performs for students at Cass Tech High School in Detroit and discusses the goals and scope of the Lead Guitar program.*

## Lead Guitar Four Pillars of Service

Lead Guitar engages students, teachers and families through Four Pillars of Service:

**Pillar 1 | Classroom Instruction and Curriculum**

**Pillar 2 | Professional Development**

**Pillar 3 | In-school Assemblies and We Are Guitar**

**Pillar 4 | Showcase Concerts**



“Several students seem to have found a personal connection with the guitar, music, and even composing that I would not have previously thought possible given their behavior in core academic classes.”

– Middle School Teacher, Tucson

# Pillar 1: Classroom Instruction and Curriculum

Lead Guitar has assembled an international team of Teaching Artists: global concert musicians, Fulbright Scholars, and professors with a passion for mentorship. They collaborate with certified K-12 teachers to co-teach in-school guitar ensemble classes using Lead Guitar's proprietary curriculum and Lead Guitar Digital: a library of instructional videos, lesson plans, and extension activities accessible from any device.



Lead Guitar Teaching Artist Rubén Portillo engaging with students during classtime at Bronzeville Classical Elementary School in Chicago.

“This program has been a blessing. My students now have exposure to the music world they would not have otherwise had. The introduction to guitar and reading music has opened up their minds. They are excelling in math and science and I think it is in part due to this guitar program.”

– Elementary School Teacher, Los Angeles





## Teacher Feature

**LAUREN GRIFFIN**  
Chicago, IL

*Lauren started a Lead Guitar program at Ambrose Plamondon Elementary School and recently brought the program to her new position at Foster Park Elementary School*

---

### **What inspired you to partner with Lead Guitar?**

Luckily, the Regional Director (Denis) reached out to me. Unfortunately, it was during the 2021 school year and because of the aftermath of Covid, the principal did not add Lead Guitar on her priority list. However, Denis kept in touch in hopes we could establish a partnership for the next school year and I made it my business to push for Lead Guitar.

### **When you changed schools, why did you bring the Lead Guitar program?**

I witnessed firsthand all of the hard work pay off in one year of working with Lead Guitar. I have been working as a music teacher since 2009 in Chicago and many schools don't even have a space for a music class, let alone instruments. All students deserve access to quality instruction and the fact that Lead Guitar is providing this at no cost to students was a no brainer. The principal at my new school has a desire to really put emphasis on performing arts and I have no doubt that Lead Guitar will bring out the performers in the students.

### **How has working with Lead Guitar impacted you as an educator?**

This was my first time learning how to play guitar. Going to PD's and having these professional guitar players be patient and offer feedback was pretty cool. My favorite was when all the teachers brought guitars and got to jam together. Even though I played the beginners version of every song, I still played!

### **How has participation in the Lead Guitar program impacted your students?**

I have seen students who previously showed little interest in music try their hardest to master guitar. I also believe having an additional arts teacher emphasizes the effect music can have on lives. Sara had a completely different path than I did and the students enjoyed looking at music through both of our professional lenses.

### **How has your partnership with Lead Guitar helped build community?**

Our partnership strengthened the community inside and outside of Plamondon. During free time or recess, students would ask to come up to the music room and play. Parents would email me and share that their child(ren) would be looking forward to the next assembly because they were more confident playing instruments in an ensemble.

### **Any last thoughts you'd like to share?**

I am just really appreciative of Lead Guitar and their commitment to enriching the lives of children. Not only has this partnership made me a better educator, but now I can add playing guitar under my list of superpowers!



*Ms. Griffin and her students "Sound Off"  
about their favorite part of playing guitar  
as part of We Are Guitar 9.*

## Pillar 2: Professional Development

In addition to co-teaching with our content experts, planning sessions, and private lessons, our Teachers' Workshops offer K-12 teachers formal Professional Development towards promotion and recertification as they master the Lead Guitar curriculum and improve their own playing. This work is the key to making our programs sustainable.



*Denis Azabagic, Regional Director for Chicago, leading a Teachers' Workshop.*

**“I love this program. Not only is it incredibly organized it is also improving constantly with the reflection of those in charge of curriculum. Lead Guitar has a bright future here!”**

**– Middle School Teacher, Los Angeles**



## Teacher Feature

**BAMBI NEAL**  
Denver, CO

*Bambi is currently teaching  
at Federal Heights Elementary School*

---

### **What inspired you to partner with Lead Guitar?**

After my first year teaching, I met with a group of parents to talk about what they liked about the music program and what they might like to see in the future. Their big ask was wanting their children to learn how to play the guitar. The following year I received an email from Nick Lenio introducing Lead Guitar and the rest is history.

### **What are some of the challenges you face that partnership with Lead Guitar helps to address?**

In my school, 90% of my students are learning English as a second language, so they are tasked with processing two languages for 8 hours a day. They often struggle from a social emotional perspective: thinking they are not learning fast enough, that they are slower than their English-speaking peers or “not smart.” Having two teachers in the room providing different levels of instruction, and options for parts with different levels of difficulty, has been a game changer. We have observed that the sooner students feel successful and confident in their playing the more willing they are to be challenged and open to trying new things.

### **How has working with Lead Guitar impacted you as an educator?**

Having the opportunity to work, plan and collaborate with another musician on a weekly basis has had a tremendous impact on me as an educator. Because we have different relationships with students, we are able to give each other different insight and perspective when challenges arise. My co-teacher is a professional guitar player and has helped me improve both my playing and teaching skills. I am able to help my co-teacher with thoughts on sequencing, pacing, and classroom management, and most of it is occurring in real time, I am not having to take time out of my day to go to a training session.

### **How has participation in the Lead Guitar program impacted your students?**

If I had to give a one-word answer, I would say confidence. Having two teachers available to support them from the start has been like fire. We hear comments like “come hear this sound I just figured out, listen to this, I just wrote this, can we try this next, I think we can do this better.” They are jumping from knowledge and comprehension to synthesis and evaluation at the speed of light. Light bulbs are going off, their eyes are as big as saucers and you know that they know... No matter what else happens that day, they nailed it in music.

### **How has your partnership with Lead Guitar helped build community?**

Lead Guitar was able to fill a need in our community. Most of our families have someone who plays the guitar, and they have been very excited and supportive of their students learning to play classical guitar. This year we had our first Guitar Showcase which featured our 5th grade students playing for their families for the first time, which was super exciting. The community support for this event was humbling and beautiful.

### **Any last thoughts you'd like to share?**

I love having Lead Guitar as another tool for my students. What I most appreciate is that they [Lead Guitar] were willing to come in and teach me and my students. I did not have to figure out on my own how I was going to learn how to play guitar well enough so I could teach my students.



## Pillar 3: In-School Assemblies and We Are Guitar

Global touring guitarists perform for, dialogue with, and inspire students in person, right at their own school, while our interactive We Are Guitar broadcast (in partnership with Guitar Salon International) provides an online forum for students nationwide to learn from, interview, and perform with guitar celebrities.


D


Man thank you SO MUCH for bringing Bo to Alhambra today. My kids were going nuts about it in my classes afterward. Blew their minds. Please pass on my sincere thanks to Bo for taking the time to inspire our kids!


4:16 PM

4:22 PM


Absolutely, I'm glad we could make that happen!



 Enter message



SEND



An appreciative text exchange after an In-School Assembly by Dr. Bokyung Byun at Alhambra High School in Phoenix.



Duo Noire performs for students at an In-School Assembly in Chicago.



Lead Guitar's interactive YouTube broadcast **We Are Guitar** connects students with guitar luminaries to talk, learn, and jam together before a worldwide audience of enthusiasts. It is an inclusive show in every sense, welcoming music and musicians of all traditions, and celebrating hard-working students of all abilities.

The show is recorded on location at Guitar Salon International in Santa Monica, CA and features student soloists and commentators, classroom ensembles and a virtual guitar orchestra with as many as 250 students playing alongside celebrity guest artists like two-time Emmy-winning composer Carlos Rafael Rivera (*The Queen's Gambit*) and Curt Chambers, Grammy-winning singer/songwriter and guitarist for Alicia Keys, Dr. Dre and Eminem. Episodes are produced twice a year.

### **We Are Guitar** Ep. 8 with Debbii Dawson



*The Circle of Soloists segment showcases students who have chosen, learned, composed, and/or arranged advanced solos.*

### **We Are Guitar** Ep. 9 with Sergio Assad



*Maryvale High School Touring Guitar is one of three classroom ensembles featured on We Are Guitar 9.*

**“Picking up the guitar was the best decision I have ever made, if I didn’t, I wouldn’t be who I am today. I was able to express my emotions through music and I couldn’t think of another more beautiful way you can do that. I’m extremely forever grateful to this box with strings, the guitar.”**

**– Yuritza, High School Student**

## Pillar 4: Showcase Concerts

Middle and High school students perform and are celebrated in front of family and friends at annual Showcase Concerts at their local college campus. Our elementary school families come together at school to perform, celebrate, and share food in an atmosphere that supports community building.







# Finances

## ASSETS

Total Bank Accounts	\$	360,406.37
Accounts Receivable	\$	3,902.87
Other Current Assets	\$	950.67
Fixed Assets	\$	3,490.13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>368,750.04</b>

## EQUITY

Restricted Net Assets	\$	0.00
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$	80,550.21
Board Designated Assets	\$	259,937.92
Net Revenue	\$	4,561.59
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>345,049.72</b>

## LIABILITIES

Payroll Liabilities	\$	21,471.19
Payroll Taxes Payable	\$	2,229.13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>23,700.32</b>

## INCOME

Fundraising Events	\$	203,942.92
Foundation	\$	406,788.50
Board	\$	82,351.59
Federal Government	\$	20,000.00
Individual and Business	\$	81,245.23
City/County/State Government	\$	58,607.00
Collaborative School-based Grants	\$	43,680.00
Corporate	\$	26,058.00
School Service Fees	\$	9,440.50
Curriculum Sales	\$	5,372.95
Interest Income	\$	2,999.51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>940,486.20</b>

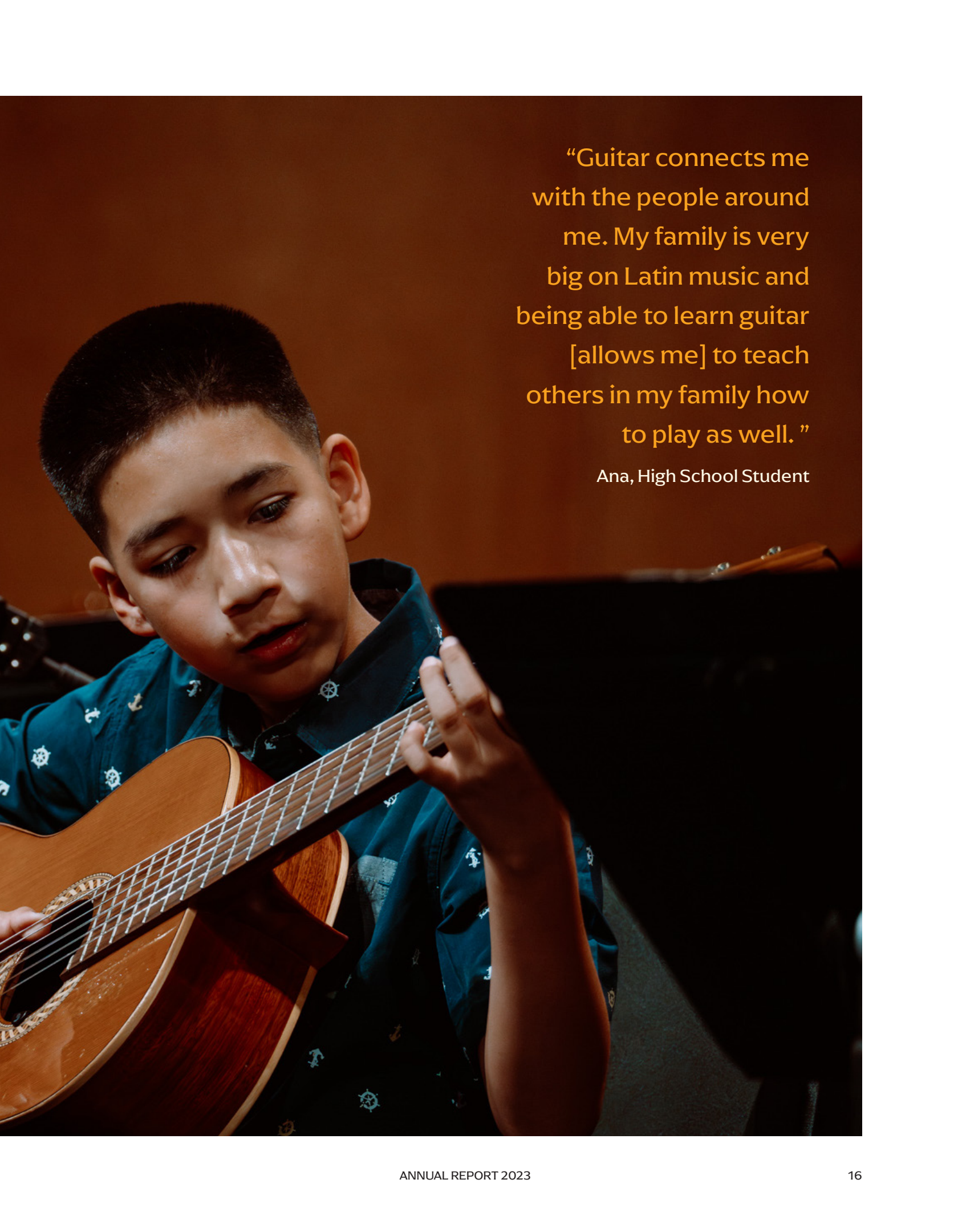
## EXPENSES

Personnel	\$	772,984.05
Fundraising	\$	65,982.70
Facilities and Equip.	\$	11,461.25
Operations	\$	29,557.37
Production and Events	\$	16,073.66
Travel and Meetings	\$	7,455.17
Curriculum Sales	\$	16,486.70
Other	\$	15,923.71
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>935,924.61</b>

<b>NET REVENUE</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>4,561.59</b>
--------------------	-----------	-----------------





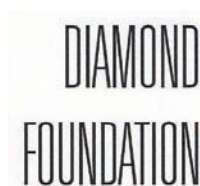
A young boy with short dark hair is playing an acoustic guitar. He is wearing a dark green shirt with small white anchor and ship wheel patterns. He is looking down at the guitar with a focused expression. The background is a warm, brownish-orange color.

“Guitar connects me  
with the people around  
me. My family is very  
big on Latin music and  
being able to learn guitar  
[allows me] to teach  
others in my family how  
to play as well. ”

Ana, High School Student

# Our Team: Donors, Supporters and Partners

---



---

Marc & Deborah Sandroff

Jeff Sater

Rossman Family Foundation

Susan Jacklin

Carol & Ray Cunningham

Ron & Lisa Brill Charitable Trust

David & Nicolle Bornstein

J. Clinton Mabie, The Reading RR Fund

John D. Fujii Trust

Joseph & Michelle Millstone Family Trust

Ken & Kelley Abrahams Charitable Fund

Peter & Claire Ewing

Daniel T Bueschel

Stephen Schmitz

Peter & Betsy Mogk

Lex & Carol Sears Philanthropic Fund

The Brian & Connie Demkowicz Charitable Fund

Michael & Laurie Jaffe

Doug DeClusin

Terry & Jane Klipp

Tim Miklaucic

RDO Equipment Co.

Junior Hero

Josh Hartman, Young President's Association

Shan Ahdoot	Mike Evans	Brian Kabat	Diane Quevedo
Renie Alverson	Dave & Sharon Farabaugh	John Kaite	Greg & Deb Quilici
Chiara Amoroso	Kevin Fechtmeyer	Bryan Kalbfleisch	Czeslaw Razowski
Christian Amoroso	Isaac Figueroa	Kyle Kelly	Colin Reilly
John Amoroso	Jim Fijan	Mark & Janet Kizziar	Ken Rhinewise
Stephen Basila	Brett Fischer	Dan Klein	Thomas & Tara Rhoads
Because We Care Philanthropy	James Fletcher	Robert Koleas	Brad Richter
Karen Oliver-Behee	Tim Hovik, SanTan Ford	Katina Koller	Karl Richter
Lee Benson	Diane Foster	Leonard Kortekaas	Judith Riley
Neil & Dawn Bloomberg	Nick Franks	Gordon Lackenbauer	Sean Riley
Bill & Terri Bluechel	Gary Franks	Eric Lamb	Lewis Roca
Michael J. Boland	Tim Freese	Thomas Lawless	Diane Ross
Tom & Dana Bollinger	Deborah Ginger	Chris & Terry Liesmaki	Christina Rossetti
Wayne & Claudette Bonney	Allen Goldman	John Linton	Steven Rushefsky
Dave Boon	Andy Goodson	Scott Lobel	Lane Samuels
Kim Bourn	Jeffrey Gould	Ryan Mackey	Ignacio Sangronis
Robert & Wanda Bowen	Mike Grams	Bert H Mackie	Kenneth Sawyer
Van Brandon	Andrew Griffo	Steven Mackie	James Schumann
David Brass	Kay Grimmett	Liz Mannix	Theresa Seifert, Law Offices of Vescio & Seifert, P.C.
Daniel Brooks	Justin Grimmett	Laurence Marsteller	Evelio & Elizabeth Sevillano
Rachel J Burrows	Anne Handels	Harry Matthews	Barbara Shill
Thomas Campbell	Edward Hansen	Greg McClendon	Jeff & Gerri Siegel
Walt & Molly Cardinet	David Hardy	Regina McClure	Robert Smith
Donald & Barbara Carrig	Josh Hartmann	Maurice McCormick	Tanner Spross
Jose Ceja	Jennifer Alice Heglin	Rita Meis	Dale Stamp
John Clements	Todd Heiner	Omar Mireles	Teresa & Michael Stewart
Stephen Cohen	Gayla Heinrichs	Paul & Lesley Monfardini	Jennifer Szoltysik
Andrea Cox in honor of blues guitarist Mark E Bevel	Molly Helm	Faye Morse	Threads Worldwide, LLC
Dav & Kris Craigo	Duane & Debbie Henderson	Robert Murray	Sonia Trejo
Patricia Cumming	James Hodge	Igor Noriega	David Trockman
Milford & Kelly Cunningham	Wilson Hogan	Patrick O'Malley	Yvette Villamana
Timothy Delaney	Holly Holmes	David Paul	Danny Vo
Zachary Dellheim	Janice E Hopton	Kat Perkins	Matthew Warnock
Timothy Dickey	Glenn Howell	Randy & Rose Persson	John S Webster
Dolores & George Didiot	Vicki Howell	Andrew Peshek	Jay Weight
Lydia Dorsey	Duane Huff	Robert M Piecuch	Quinn Williams
Robert Draper	Jeff Huff	Billy Pikula	Phaedra Wilson
Abe & Ingrid Dye	Matt & Becky Jaffe	Ben Polley	Jesse Wilson
Tony Edwards	Michael Jasumback	Charlie & Marcia Pooley	Michael & MaryBeth Wiskirchen
Howard Ellis	Adrienne Johns	Paul Kirschner & Nancy Powell	Joe Wittmann
Ron Erickson	Matt Johnson	Aaron Prisock	John & Ginger Wohrman
Jennifer Escarcega	Mike & Karen Jordan	Gloria Pruzan	
	Stuart Jung	Clint Pulley	



# Our Team: Staff Members

## **Dr. Onur Alakavuklar** (Regional Director – Detroit)

holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Guitar Performance with a Jazz-emphasized minor in Music Education from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Onur has claimed prizes in chamber music competitions and has performed with The Atlanta Opera, Indiana University Philharmonic Orchestra, and various chamber music groups internationally. Onur holds a Master of Music from Texas State University and a Bachelor of Music from Yasar University in Izmir, Turkey. Onur also composes and arranges novel classical and jazz guitar works for his upcoming solo recording album for Naxos in 2024.



## **Dror Arussi** (Teaching Artist – Atlanta/Athens)

is a committed and devoted music educator, working with diverse students of all ages and levels. As a versatile guitar player, Dror has performed extensively in Israel and in the U.S. In addition to guitar, he plays the piano and other various string instruments, such as the dobro, mandolin, and bass. Dror holds a B.Ed in music education, M.M. and is currently completing a doctoral degree in guitar performance.



## **Denis Azabagic** (Regional Director – Chicago, he/his)

performs concerts around the world, maintaining a balance between his solo recitals, chamber music with the Cavatina Duo and Fandango quartet, and engagements as a soloist with orchestras. Azabagic's love for performing extends to sharing with others his knowledge of music making. He frequently offers master classes on tour, teaches at the University of Illinois-Chicago and is the Program Director for Guitar, Percussion and Harp at Roosevelt University in Chicago.



## **Dr. Keith Barnhart** (Teaching Artist – Denver,

he/his) was a self-starter at age 13 when he began playing rock and roll, but fell in love with classical/finger-style guitar in high school. Keith is very actively teaching guitar, mandolin and ukulele through private lessons and multiple organizations. He also performs on early plucked instruments with local chamber groups, and works part time as a Certified Music Practitioner (therapeutic music) in a local hospital.



## **Dr. Daniel Bolshoy** (Regional Director – Atlanta/

Athens, he/his) is an Assistant Professor in the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia, where he directs the guitar program. An Israeli-Canadian guitarist, he has performed as a soloist with over sixty orchestras internationally, and has appeared on seven commercial recordings and two documentary films on the Bravo! TV network. As a teacher, he frequently presents masterclasses for guitar societies, schools, and music festivals.



## **Isaac Brady** (Teaching Artist – Phoenix) is a soloist,

chamber musician, arranger, and educator. He believes in preserving the music of diverse cultures and implementing them into his performing and teaching repertoire. Isaac has performed in a range of ensembles including jazz combos, classical guitar ensembles, pit orchestras for musicals, and old-time bands. Isaac is working towards his Doctorate of Musical Arts, and has completed his Masters in guitar performance at Shenandoah Conservatory and his Bachelors at West Virginia University.



## **Russ Callison** (Teaching Artist – Denver) sold a pig to

buy his first guitar at the tender age of 16. Russ has performed extensively through the US & abroad, including as soloist at the soundON Festival in San Diego, off-Broadway in New York, a residency in France with his duo Solazur, tour of Scotland with duo Derelict Hands, and at the Bali Arts Festival (PKB) in 2019 as member of Gamelan Tunas Mekar. He has released two albums, first by guitar duo Derelict Hands, 'Eyes to the Future', and the second by guitar/cello duo Solazur, 'Mercurial.'



## **Michel Chatara-Morse** (Teaching Artist – Chicago)

has taught in Chicago and internationally, while maintaining an active performance schedule and small business. Michel's true interest lies in guiding students, helping them thrive, and being a part of their musical and emotional journeys. As a performer Michel has performed extensively across Chicago, Illinois, and the Midwest. He holds an Undergraduate Degree in Guitar Performance from The University of Puget Sound and a Master's Degree from Roosevelt University.





**Doris Ćosić** (Teaching Artist – Los Angeles) is a Slovenian guitarist, arranger, and educator. She is passionate about creating music outreach opportunities in her community, and frequently performs at the chemotherapy clinic at the LA General Medical Center. She also works at Virtual Guitar Orchestra as an assistant editor, where she created the very first all-women Virtual Guitar Orchestra in collaboration with Grammy-nominated Clarice Assad. She received her Bachelor of Music at University of Southern California and is currently pursuing a master's degree at USC.



**Christian Cruz** (Regional Director – Los Angeles) is a Mexican-American classical guitarist and composer. Among other awards, he received the 2020 Volterra Project Composers Award for his guitar trio Suite Homenajes, and has been awarded a Composer Teaching Artist Fellowship with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra for three consecutive seasons. Christian holds a MM from USC's Thornton School of Music in classical guitar performance and a MA in Music Composition from Fresno State.



**Sara D'Ippolito** (Teaching Artist – Atlanta/Athens) is an active performing artist, composer, and educator. She graduated in Classical Guitar Performance from the "Santa Cecilia" Conservatory of Music in Rome under Arturo Tallini, after studying with Marco Rossetti in Vibo Valentia. She is currently pursuing a DMA in Classical Guitar Performance at University of Georgia Athens. Her intention is to conduct research in Women & Gender studies related to Classical Guitar and bring attention to a more diverse repertoire, with a focus on women composers of the past, present, and future. Sara plays a guitar by Noemi Schembri.



**Nicholas Epple** (Teaching Artist – Tucson) is pursuing his DMA in classical guitar at the University of Arizona. He has performed in France, Italy, Canada, and the United States in workshops, festivals, and competitions. Nicholas received first prize at the David Russell Bach competition in 2017 and was awarded second place at the Domaine Forget International Competition in Quebec in 2018.



**Pablo Gonzalez** (Teaching Artist – Tucson) started studying classical guitar at the age of 14. In 2010, he was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue his Master's in guitar performance, being the first classical guitar performer ever in his native country to receive such an award. Pablo is also an active participant in the Tucson classical guitar scene and was recently a finalist in the prestigious Third Annual David Russell Bach Prize.



**Álvaro Henrique** (Teaching Artist – Atlanta/Athens) engages audiences with a world of emotions and story-telling through music. As a soloist, Henrique has performed with Brazilian and Finnish orchestras. With an interest in social activism, Álvaro's projects have included commissioning works like Jorge Antunes' Brasília 50 or his Guitar Concerto "What Do We Do?" Álvaro is completing his DMA at the University of Georgia.



**Whitney Herr-Buchholz** (Director of Development & External Relations, she/her) lives in Tucson, AZ and joined Lead Guitar in 2023. She has experience as a professional ballet dancer, arts educator, and has worked in the field of arts administration & development for more than a decade. Whitney holds a Master of Nonprofit Leadership and Management from Arizona State University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art and Visual Culture Education for Community and Museums from the University of Arizona. She is dedicated to advancing the arts as integral to people and communities, and is delighted to contribute to the mission of Lead Guitar.



**Dr. Bin Hu** (Teaching Artist – Tucson) earned a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Arizona and has performed as a soloist, chamber musician, and with orchestras worldwide. His expertise as a Bach interpreter earned him the prestigious David Russell Bach Prize in 2016. Dr. Hu has shared his knowledge on Baroque performance practices at conservatories and conferences. His all-Bach CD, Ciaccona, released by Eudora Records in Spain, has received global acclaim. Recently, the debut album of his ensemble (Duo Chinoiserie) presents new works by renowned composers.



# Our Team: Staff Members (cont.)

**Marina Jarrette** (Program & Events Manager, she/hers)

is an active performing artist and director who believes strongly in arts accessibility and the transformative power of music. Alongside her BM in Vocal Performance, she also holds certifications in State, Foundational, and Federal Grant Writing. She has debuted original content as a singer-songwriter in New York City, and has performed with multiple regional companies, including The Phoenix Theatre Company, Arizona Broadway Theatre, and The Phoenix Symphony.



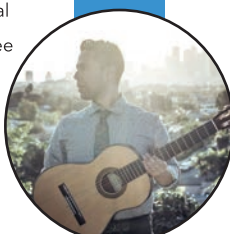
**Nick Lenio** (Director of Instruction, Regional Director

– Colorado, he/his) taught instrumental music in public schools in Pennsylvania and Colorado for 13 years and has been teaching with Lead Guitar since 2013. In that time, he has witnessed first-hand the transformative power that music can have on young people and firmly believes that every young person should be exposed to arts education. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education and a Master's Degree in Instrumental Conducting. In 2016, he was a semi-finalist for the GRAMMY Foundation's Music Educator Award. He performs regularly as a solo guitarist and multi-instrumentalist.



**Adrian Martinez** (Teaching Artist – Los Angeles) is

a highly accomplished Mexican-American classical guitarist, earning a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Classical Guitar Performance at California State University of Northridge. During his time in Yokohama, Japan, he achieved notable recognition as a finalist in prestigious classical guitar competitions and further enriched his career as a guitarist and teacher.



**Zhivko Nikolov** (Teaching Artist – Chicago) moved to the US in 2007. He studied at the CCPA with Denis Azabagic. Zhivko performed at Make Music Chicago's events, and has been broadcasted on WFMT.

He appeared as a soloist, judge, and ensemble coordinator at the Chicago Guitar Festival. Zhivko established his own music studio - 6VibeZ Music Inc. in 2017. His private students have won prizes at the Chicago Guitar Festival, SAM Competition, Latino Arts Guitar Competition, Indiana International Guitar Festival. At present, Zhivko teaches and participates in music events and multi-art projects both as a soloist and in a duet with the flute-guitar Duo Eutopia.



**Rubén Portillo** (Teaching Artist – Chicago) is

renowned for his dedication and sincere love for guitar music. He has won many competitions in his native Paraguay and is frequently invited to perform for different organizations in Paraguay and the United States. Rubén has been teaching private lessons since 2019 and has a great passion to share the knowledge and expertise with aspiring musicians. In addition to his private studio, he also presents masterclasses, private/group lessons, and ensemble coachings.



**Brad Richter** (Executive Director, he/his) is co-founder

& executive director of Lead Guitar. As a touring artist he played nearly 1,000 concerts in North America and Europe and made innumerable appearances on NPR's Performance Today. An avid collaborator, his performance and project partners included Grammy-winners David Finckel, The Phoenix Chorale and Pacifica Quartet; Broadway legend Ben Vereen and guitarist Carlos Bonell, his teacher at the Royal College of Music.



**Jennifer Roberts** (Director of Operations, she/hers)

taught public high school for over 10 years, starting as a Theatre teacher, then shifting to U.S. History and Mock Trial (a competitive legal program). She earned multiple teaching awards during her decade in the classroom. Jennifer found teaching later in life after working for America Online as a supervisor and recruiter, and as the director of a local non-profit. She started her teaching journey after earning a Bachelor in Theatre Arts Education. While she eventually shifted to her other content passion of history, she appreciates the power of arts education and knows first-hand how impactful the arts can be in the lives of students and their communities.



**Ryan Roubison** (Teaching Artist – Phoenix, he/his)

is a classical guitarist and an active musician in the Phoenix valley, specializing in a range of musical styles from classical, to folk, and contemporary art music. He is also the music director for the Irish Arts Summer Camp at the Irish Cultural center of Phoenix, and runs a guitar and ukulele program for children at Keybox Studios.

As a passionate music educator, Ryan believes that the impact of the teacher reaches far beyond technical instruction.



**Dr. David Sewell** (Teaching Artist – Phoenix, he/his)  
As a guitarist, arranger, and educator he is devoted to arranging unique repertoire and teaching his students a wide variety of styles and techniques on both classical and electric guitar. He is also head of the guitar department at Grand Canyon University.



**Justin Sheppard** (Teaching Artist – Atlanta/Athens) finished a BS in Classical Guitar Performance from UGA while studying under international performer and Professor of Guitar, Dr. Daniel Bolshoy. He served over a decade in the US Navy as Officer and Enlisted, and holds degrees in Criminal Justice from FSU, Nuclear Engineering Technologies from Thomas Edison State University and studied in the master's program International Business and Change Management at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration in Moscow. Justin enjoys a full schedule of private students at Vivo Music and Arts Academy in Cumming, GA.



**Andrew Smith** (Regional Director – Phoenix, he/his) is a founding member of the Augustine Strings sponsored ensemble Petrichor Duo, and was regularly hired to play for organizations like NPR, MLB, the NCAA, and Intel. In 2018, Andrew was honored to perform for US Senator John McCain's funeral service, and the Governor of Arizona has invited him to perform on multiple occasions for other U.S. governors and foreign dignitaries. Andrew's interest in guitar eventually led him to study classical guitar construction under Canadian luthier Sergei de Jonge. In addition to performing and teaching, Andrew now builds and repairs concert classical guitars.



**Fabrício Lock Sotomayor** (Teaching Artist – Chicago) is a classical guitar performer from Peru. With a solid foundation in music education, Fabricio completed his undergraduate studies at the National Conservatory of Peru, majoring in Classical Guitar Performance. His passion for the instrument led him to pursue a master's degree in Classical Guitar Performance at Northwestern University, where he honed his skills. Fabricio has performed on numerous stages around Peru. Having previously served as a dedicated teacher at the National Conservatory of Peru, he is committed to sharing his knowledge and love for classical guitar music.



**James Terrell** (Teaching Artist – Atlanta/Athens) is a guitarist, composer, and music educator. He is an active performer both as a soloist and in chamber ensembles, and his repertoire spans the history of the guitar, from the Renaissance to premieres of new music. As a composer, Mr. Terrell has written concert music for all manner of ensembles and soloists as well as orchestral music and works for fixed media.



**Alfredo "Freddy" Vazquez** (Regional Director – Tucson, he/his) is a dedicated music educator. Mr. Vazquez has a bachelor's degree in music from the University of Arizona and master's degree from Oklahoma City University. Mr. Vázquez is active recording artist releasing "Latin American Soundscapes" with Tucson Guitar Quartet (2020) and "Appunti" with Puerta- Vázquez Duo (2022) under Contrastes Records. Mr. Vázquez has premiered pieces by renowned composers such as Sergio Assad, Stephen Goss, Brad Richter, and Edwin Gueverra. Alfredo Vazquez currently resides in Tucson, Arizona and is an associate faculty of music at Cochise Community College and Lead Guitar's Regional Director for Southern Arizona.



**Erin Young** (Teaching Artist – Los Angeles) is a Los Angeles based musician and educator. She works as a Teaching Artist for Lead Guitar, a member of the Guitar Faculty at Colburn Community School of Performing Arts, and Director of Elemental Guitar in Santa Monica. She earned both her Bachelor of Music and Master's of Music in Classical Guitar Performance at USC where she studied with Scott Tennant, Brian Head, William Kanengiser, and early plucked instruments with Jason Yoshida. Erin has a passion for early music and performs frequently with various early music ensembles around Los Angeles.



**Juri Yun** (Teaching Artist – Los Angeles) has risen as one of Canada's top upcoming guitarists, recently debuting at Carnegie Hall. He completed his Bachelor of Music at University of Toronto, his Master of Music at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and is currently a doctoral candidate at the USC Thornton School of Music.





## Our Team: Board Members



**Dan Bueschel** is currently CEO of Pueblo Mechanical, a mechanical contracting and services firm. Previous to his role at Pueblo Mechanical, Dan held the position of CEO North American Healthcare at Sodexo, a leading global healthcare services provider, and VPGM West at Johnson Controls. Dan credits music education with teaching him that teamwork, commitment, and a sense of accomplishment could be just as meaningful in his professional life. That said, Dan also maintains an active musical life as a gigging musician playing bass for the band Ankh Alien.



**Carol H. Cunningham** retired in 2014 after 40 years of experience as a civil engineer specializing in planning, licensing, and developing hydroelectric projects internationally. Carol holds a BS and MS in Civil Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The last 14 years of her career, Carol lived and worked in the Philippines, where she founded and continues to operate Dam Good Stuff, Inc, a Fair Trade-certified company, which makes high-end fashion jewelry while providing livelihood opportunities for women and relocated families in the Philippines.



**Doug DeClusin** is the founder and CEO of Sunland Asphalt & Construction, Inc., and has been awarded the Construction Executive of the Year (Construction Financial Management Association) and CEO of the Year (Phoenix Business Journal). Active in the construction and philanthropic worlds, Doug has been a member of the Associated General Contractors of America-Arizona Chapter since 2007 and supports the Boys and Girls Club, Horses Help, the Ronald McDonald charities, and ASU's Del E. Webb School of Construction in addition to Lead Guitar.



**Glenn Howell** is the owner of Howell Athletics where he uses his 28 years of experience to train athletes of all ages, from middle- and high- school athletes, to national champions and professional athletes, as well as general fitness clients. A University of Arizona Football Honorable Mention All-Pac-10 tight end, Glenn graduated with a BA. He currently co-hosts the UA Football pre- and post-game radio broadcasts on Wildcats Radio 1290am, and also served as the Strength and Conditioning Coach for the Tucson Sugar Skulls of the Indoor Football League (2019-2022). Active in service and philanthropy, Glenn supports youth access to arts and athletics in Southern Arizona.





**Haley Howell** is a Software Engineer employed in the financial industry. She boasts a background as a former Division 1 collegiate athlete, having been named Setter of the Year in the MAAC Conference, Freshman Female Athlete of the Year at Siena College, and a winner of a MAAC Volleyball Championship in 2014. Excelling in both indoor volleyball and pursuing a 5th year of eligibility for beach volleyball at the University of San Francisco, her educational achievements include an undergraduate degree in economics, complemented by minors in computer science and information systems at Siena College. Additionally, Haley holds a Master's Degree in Health Informatics from the University of San Francisco.



**Clint Mabie** is an innovative manager with nearly 30 years of experience in the not-for-profit field. A Chicago native, Clint earned his MBA from Northwestern University and had multiple roles during his decade at The Chicago Community Trust. He recently retired after serving 10 years as President and CEO of the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona that connects donors to causes they care about. Clint also holds a M.A. in Education from National Louis University and taught in Chicago Public Schools.



**Tim Miklaucic** is the CEO of Cordoba Music Group, Inc., a global guitar manufacturer, distributor, and retailer based in Santa Monica, CA. Divisions include Cordoba Guitars, Guild Guitars, and Guitar Salon International, which represents the best vintage and master-built contemporary nylon string guitars in the world. Tim has been a NAMM member since 2003 and is also a member of the Alliance of Independent Music Merchants. In 2010 Tim founded the GSI Foundation to promote music education in the public school system.



A native Tucsonan, **Joe Millstone** taught science and math in the gifted and talented middle school program in TUSD for six years. In the mid-1980s, he became a commercial real estate broker with CB Richard Ellis and Grubb and Ellis for ten years apiece before becoming a consultant. In 2001, Joe earned the coveted CCIM Designation for Commercial Investment Real Estate. Joe maintains an active role in the Avanim Rock Band at Temple Emanu El in Tucson. Joe is a competitive swimmer, triathlete, and dedicated grandfather, splitting his time between Tucson and Los Angeles.

## Our Team: Board Members (cont.)



**Diane Quevedo** served as a teacher, Title I Project Assistant, and Elementary Principal for a total of 38 years in Tucson Unified School District. Schools included Safford, Carrillo, Drachman Primary Magnet, Grijalva, and Bloom, where, as principal, she partnered with Lead Guitar to pioneer a new model for the program: training all K–5 classroom teachers in the school to play and teach guitar to their own classes. Seeing Lead Guitar “put a smile on students’ faces and hope in the hearts” inspired Diane to join the Lead Guitar board when she retired.



**Marc Sandroff** is co-founder & Chairman of the Board of Directors of Lead Guitar and Managing Director of Cadre Partners, LLC, an alternative investment and management services firm. Over the last 30 years, he has been involved with numerous entrepreneurial companies as President and a founding member of their management teams. Along the way, he has worked with over 70 operating companies, participated in more than 120 real estate ventures, and has consistently demonstrated his ability to fuel a company’s growth and optimal performance. Marc credits his mastery of the classical guitar in his late teens for building the determination and focus needed to become a successful businessman.



**Jeff Sater** graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Business and minors in Geology and Music. Jeff entered the family business in oil and gas, real estate, and stock market investments, ultimately taking over in 2008 and growing the business significantly. Jeff’s love of music started at a very early age. It lead to learning numerous instruments and, by his teen years, frequent gigs and performances. After success in the business world, Jeff invested in a recording studio in New York City and earned a master’s degree in music production from the Conservatory of Recording Arts and Sciences. Today, Jeff is a collector of vintage guitars and remains active in business and music.



**Theresa Seifert** graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education with a certification in Special Education from Minnesota State University - Moorhead and Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership from Northern Arizona University. After a decade of public school teaching, Theresa earned her law degree from the University of Arizona College of Law in 2005. In the past, she has represented Child Protective Services and clerked for the Arizona Court of Appeals. Currently, she is the managing partner at the Law Offices of Vescio & Seifert, P.C. which focuses on all aspects of family law including divorce, custody, third party rights, and appeals.



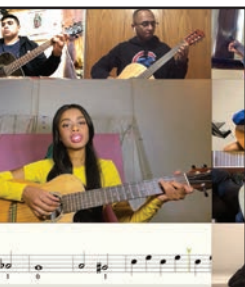
**Kimeia Vu** has 20 years' experience as an HR leader, currently holding the position of Chief People Officer at Octaura LLC, a fintech startup in New York City. In her role, Kimeia is the driving force behind the firm's people strategy and its alignment to key business objectives. In addition to overall workforce planning, leadership development and talent management strategies, she brings particular focus to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and provides executive oversight and support to drive the firm's DEI strategy and action plan. Kimeia sits on Lead Guitar's board of directors and provides human capital best practices and partners with board members to execute on LG's growth strategy.





Empower a child through music

visit [LEADGUITAR.ORG](https://LEADGUITAR.ORG)



**Photo credits:**

Graham Northrup (front, 3, 6, back)

Neil Schwartz (front, 1, 15-16, back)

Mary Sullivan (13)

Denis Azabagic (13-14)

Dalia Moya (13, 14)

Brad Richter (14)

**Design:**

Marina Jarrette

**Branding:**

Scott Lewis, Parts & Labor Strategy and Design



2100 E. Speedway Blvd, #40206  
Tucson, AZ 85719

(520) 329-2312