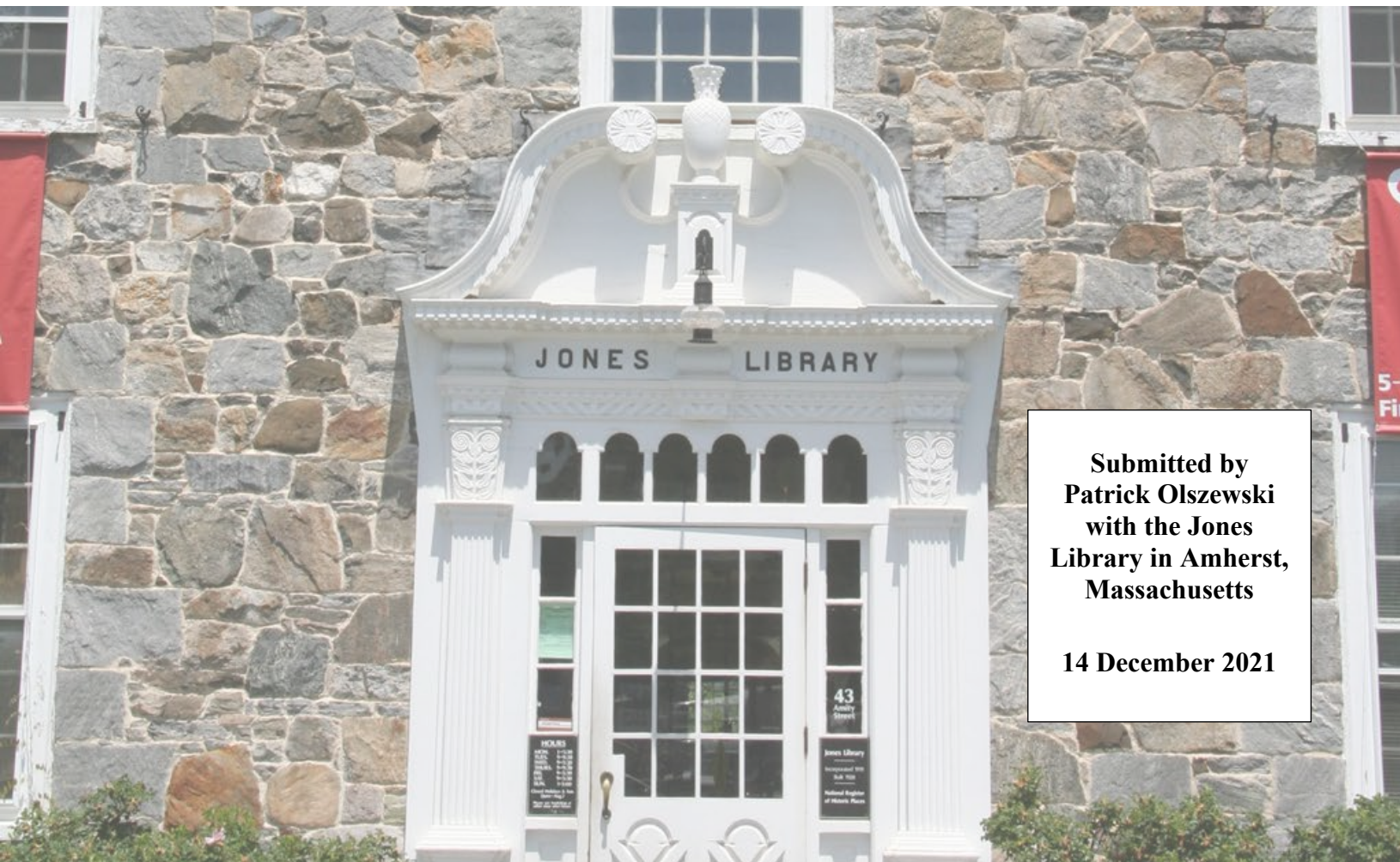




Music for the Community:

A grant proposal seeking funding from the Amherst Cultural Council for a free community driven music class for parents and children at the Jones Library



**Submitted by
Patrick Olszewski
with the Jones
Library in Amherst,
Massachusetts**

14 December 2021

Cyndi Harbeson
Amherst Cultural Council
Jones Library
43 Amity St.
Amherst, MA 01002

14 December 2021

Dear Ms. Harbeson,

I am very excited to share with you my grant proposal for a community-based music class for parents and children at the Jones Library, local to Amherst Massachusetts.

The purpose of this proposal is to present a summer-based program that will bring the Amherst community together after the isolation and fear brought to our town from the Covid-19 pandemic. This program is recommended for parents raising children around the kindergarten level and functions like a music class setting. The instructor for these classes will teach introductory music to parents and children alike, enforcing bonds between parents and their children while bringing the community together in the same learning environment. This program asks for \$6,438 to cover the cost of hiring a 15 hour a week part-time music instructor and the cost of purchasing musical equipment. Thankfully, finding a space to work is not necessary, as the program will use acoustic instruments and will be taught outside of the library, creating a perfect opportunity for the community to witness and join the class's fun.

As a fellow musician myself and a local to the Amherst area, I believe I have the experience required to helm and present such a project to your council. I grew up in Amherst, having been raised in Shutesbury and gone to school at the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School. I was taught jazz piano and vocals, alongside music production and music teaching experience in collegiate A cappella groups. I know how great the Pioneer Valley's community is firsthand, and this program is designed to bring the Amherst community together first and foremost. The Covid-19 pandemic has separated many children from being able to grow up together and meet new friends, and getting involved with one's community has been made extra difficult due to restrictions in socializing and the fear of getting loved ones sick. With the help of this program, the community will be able to find one another again, from parents meeting other parents, to children making new and first friends. Through learning music, this program will help families learn music while coming together as a community.

Thank you for reading this proposal. If you have any further questions about the program or the contents of this proposal, please feel free to contact me by phone, at 413-461-6471, or by email at polszewski@umass.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Patrick Olszewski

Patrick Olszewski

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Statement of Problem

Libraries are the pinnacle of many small-town communities, with families of all socio-economic levels relying on library services for both community engagement and enrichment of family life (American Library Association). The Jones Library especially is one of the most influential places in all of Amherst, due to the plethora of quality library services offered to the bustling Amherst community. The library fosters many localized events and clubs for the Amherst public, and many of these events are hosted frequently every week. Book clubs, teen-nights, Dungeons & Dragon sessions, stuffed-baby storytime and parent-baby sing alongs; many community-focused events hosted by the Jones library bring the community together for free and for all (Jones Library).



Figure 1: An event hosted by the Jones Library, Amherst MA. Photo from the Jones Library's Events page found on their website.

These programs hosted by the Jones Library are vital for small-town communities, as community engagement with library services, especially with parent-child relationships, directly correlate to strengthened reading, vocab, literature concepts, and math scores with kindergarten age children (Samiei, Bush and Sell). Imagination Library, a program that mailed books to parents to read with their kindergarten age children, proved that students who participated in library organized programs receive higher KRI Language and Math scales (Samiei, Bush and Sell). The more small-town libraries help to engage with their communities, the better.

Sadly, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, public services such as libraries have had to either close down completely or greatly restrict their access to the community (American Library Association). Even though the Jones Library remained open for most of the pandemic, people all

over town have had to worry about their safety for almost all of 2020, making many families, especially families with young children, struggle to socialize with new friends and virtual classmates online. Many homeless populations in small communities rely on the Jones Library's services as well, with access to fast internet and good computers often being a luxury for many (American Library Association).

The pandemic also brought budget restraints to many libraries, with some libraries experiencing layoffs of important staff members to simply stay afloat (Todorinova). Even though the CARES Act did indeed provide \$50 million for the government Institute of Museum and Library Services (American Library Association), only \$36,125 was offered to the Jones Library for the 2021 budget, which is five times smaller than the total gross budget raised for the Jones Library through fundraising (Jones Library Budget Committee). Despite a rise in traffic in library services, the resources required to continue providing high-quality community services is in trouble if fundraising starts to falter as the pandemic subsides (American Library Association).

To try and support more involvement in the community during such dire circumstances, many events hosted by libraries moved entirely online, through Zoom meetings or many other creative means (American Library Association). One library in Charleston County South Carolina encouraged its patrons to play a virtual game called Animal Crossing, to socialize and meet new people online. Another library in Madison County Kentucky transformed their regular senior karaoke event into an online zoom meeting, open for all (American Library Association). Libraries are known for finding creative solutions to difficult problems, and the Jones Library followed many of these libraries' practices, by transforming their in-person events to virtual environments and meetings (Jones Library).



Figure 2: A student-parent program organized by the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Photo from UMass's Student Parent Program's website.

However, as incredible as these virtual changes are, they are not inclusive of everyone in a small-town community, as families are often left completely in the dark from the community if they lack stable internet connection (Nichols). Furthermore, many of the new and revised virtual services the Jones Library now offers are not managed or designed by the library itself; many of these services are third-party organizations, instead of community led or library organized events (Jones Library). Despite how convenient these external services provided by the Jones Library are, they do not engage with the community as meaningfully as they could. With the past Covid-19 state of emergency lifted, and the pandemic becoming more manageable over time with vaccines and mask mandates, in-person activities are starting to be an option for community engagement once more.



Figure 3: The community run Amherst flea market. Photo from Amherst.gov photo gallery

The best solution for solving this problem is to provide the community with a recurring event that will bring families and their children together. Libraries across the nation have been known to host a plethora of unique experiences for patrons, such as social distanced escape rooms, kayaking book clubs (American Library Association), and even free online ticket passes to public New York Museums (Davis). The Jones Library needs to safely reengage with its community in-person instead of virtually, and one of the best ways to accomplish this task is to host a community-led music class directed for parents and kindergarten age children.

Statement of Request

The Jones Library seeks \$6,438 in funding from the Amherst Cultural Council to create a community-led and organized music class hosted by the Jones Library for the summer of 2022. This program focuses on bringing the diverse Amherst community together through musical learning, which supports the Amherst Cultural Council's goal for uplifting community engagement and encouraging diversity involvement within the local town. This program requests these funds to afford a 15 hour a week, part-time music instructor to lead and organize the program, alongside purchasing music equipment for class and for rental by patrons of the Jones Library.

The project will be hosted outside the Jones Library's front lawn, twice a week by the part-time music instructor, with the hiring process and lesson structure being described in further detail in the Project Description of the proposal. Finding an instructor that focuses more on community engagement rather than musical competency is key. Because this project does not create any type of quantifiable or profitable deliverable, the best way to manage the project's success is with weekly reports written to the Jones Library Board of Trustees. These memos will detail the type of engagement occurring within the class, whether they be positive or negative. In addition, even though it is not required that the program acquires many participants, as is mentioned in the guidelines for the Amherst Cultural Council's proposal process, taking note of how many people attend will be helpful for deciding the success of the class.

Ultimately, this program provides a safe space for community members and their children to engage in fun musical learning, after a time of isolation and fear brought to our local town from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Project Description

Objectives & Goals

This project is designed to focus on cognitive growth for children through community-learning and community focused bonding. With the proper funding, the class detailed within this proposal will create a fun, safe, and welcoming place for parents and their young children to meet other family members in the Amherst community, which is something that has been lacking since the start of the pandemic.

Normally, arts-based classes and programs focus on concrete accomplishments, arts comprehension, and an increase in technical skills. While these feats are great and effective for technical proficiency, focusing on concrete, quantitative growth makes it difficult to prove the success of a community and family-centered program. The reasoning behind this comes from critiques of the No Child Left Behind Act, and how this law for public schools solely relies on academic tests scores to prove the worth of arts programs (Zill). It is unproductive to judge the worth of an arts program on academic and technical results, because of course, the arts focus on creative learning, rather than academic proficiencies (Colley). Instead, the goal of my proposed program helps parents bond with their kids through learning music together, while the children learn important social skills they have previously missed out on due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Figure 4: Mother and child sitting on a sofa playing a xylophone. Photo by Karolina Grabowska from Pexels.

Time & Location

In order to sway any worry of Covid-19 restrictions, this class will be held outside during the summer of 2022, from June 8th to August 24th, approximately the times public schools have their summer breaks. To accommodate

many families, the class will be held twice a week after 5 pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays, perfect for families who work mainly weekdays or weekends.

The space that will be used for this class will be directly outside of the Jones Library, keeping the building quiet for patrons that desire silence inside the building. Additionally, people walking and driving by the library will see the community class learn and perform together, which will encourage more people to participate in the program by spreading awareness of the program's free involvement, and displaying the progress made by the students in a performative format (Zill). With the warm weather of the summer, poor conditions in climate will not be of much concern, and if it starts to rain or thunder, the program could be supplemented to move inside the library just in case.

Class Structure & Equipment

This program is loosely based on key principles founded by the Boston based ACT arts education curriculum and the practiced education theory of Community-Based Arts Education (Colley)(Lau). ACT has been such a successful program due to its integration into academic education within the Lynn school district of Boston; but most importantly, ACT structures its curriculum to use art as a vehicle for student's own interests and cognitive development (Colley). ACT cares more about the greater impacts art has on creative thinking, problem-solving, and community-building rather than technical proficiency (Colley).

To supplement ACT's design philosophy into my proposed music program would mean fostering a fun, welcoming, and stress-free environment for musical learning. Of course, there would be no deadlines, homework, or any take-home instruction the teacher would give out to parents or children, unless the participants specifically ask for it. The lessons would be led by a paid music instructor, alongside passionate volunteers. Although the lesson-plans will be designed by the music instructor, the class is structured to teach basic levels of music theory to cohesively orchestrate a song by the end of each lesson. This structure supports engagement with the teacher and with the other participants first and foremost as a community, rather than your traditional and rigid teacher-student relationship.

To accomplish this structure, the class requires musical instruments. Thankfully, the library provides a plethora of sheet music and learning tools that will be useful to the music

instructor, so there is no need to provide any supplemental materials that the library does not already offer. The main problem is supplying those who wish to participate in the program instruments. Because this program is outside, providing electricity for equipment that requires power is challenging. To solve this problem, all the instruments that will be bought and paid for with the grant money will be acoustic. The plan is to purchase percussion, rhythm, and melodic instruments for students. To accommodate many and all community members musical interests, this program will purchase glockenspiels, box drum cajóns, tambourines, eggshells, recorders, and acoustic guitars. This equipment will belong to the Jones Library for the library's patrons to freely rent, although at least half of the purchased equipment will be reserved for the participants of this class.

Determining the Success of the Program

This project is intended to start as a one-time summer class for 2022. Ideally however, this program will reoccur for future summers after 2022, with future funding being acquired from grants and fundraising done by the Friends of the Jones Library System fundraising group (although most of the fundraising is already prioritized for other Amherst programs). Because the program will already have bought all its equipment, the budget will be smaller and only require funding to pay the program's music instructor. Many arts education programs disappear after their first year due to their inability to prove sustainable results to grantors, (Colley), so to make this music program appear as successful as possible for future funding, steps must be taken to prove how useful this program is to the Amherst community.

The best way to prove the programs usefulness is by keeping track of the community engagement occurring within the class and its participants. To accomplish this task, the program's music instructor will write weekly, in-depth memos to the Jones Library Board of Trustees explaining the progress being made with the class's participants. Progress and success looks like parents, children, and other community members collaborating with one another in effective and fun practices, while failure with the program looks like disengagement and lack of participation. The memos will also detail whether participants engage with the music instructor outside of class.

By providing evidence and in-depth documentation of the program's progress and success, the class will be viewed as sustainable enough to acquire further funding for future summer sessions.

Hiring Personnel

Paid Music Instructor

Hiring the lead organizer and instructor for this program will require a very detailed and careful hiring process. We need to make sure that we hire a musician that knows how to teach to a variety of ages, is knowledgeable of various musical instruments, is interested and open to teaching all genres of music (as might be requested by the community) and is available

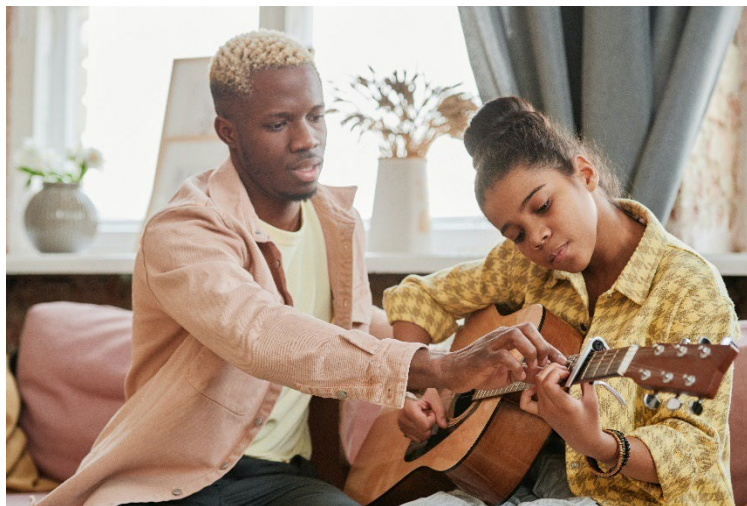


Figure 5: A man teaching a girl how to play an acoustic guitar. Photo by Boris Pavlikovsky from Pexels

outside of class times to answer emails and hold office hours at the Jones Library. This instructor will be a personal director of music services for the Jones Library, managing the class and overseeing the music equipment required for the program.

The music instructor will oversee creating and teaching the lessons during each class session. However, these lessons must be inclusive for all ages and for all community members, meaning that the lessons be family-friendly and inclusive of many different musical and cultural backgrounds. This program is especially geared toward parents and their kindergarten age children, so a music instructor who is comfortable working with parents and children at the same time is essential. A few requirements for this position include:

- B.A. in Music, Music Education, or Arts Education. Other experience may stand in for these degrees, but they must be supplemental of at least four years of music teaching experience.

- Proficiency in percussion, rhythm, melodic, wind, and bass instruments. This class will encompass a wide range of musical involvement, and the instructor must be able to teach these instruments on a basic, fundamental level.
- Preferably local to the Amherst community, or has experience in close community involvement, such as volunteering or local leadership roles.
- Culturally adept and experienced in many different genres of music. This will be essential for ensuring that everyone in the Amherst community is represented in the class, with diversity in musical expression and appreciation being the center of instruction.

Because this program will be giving so much freedom to the instructor, it is essential that we hire someone who is more than capable to lead community members efficiently and in a fun, welcoming manner. The hiring process will take place in March, a few months prior to the start of the program, to give the instructor a head start on lesson planning and organizing once they are hired. I will be a part of the hiring committee, alongside librarians of the Jones Library and community members who are interested in being involved in the process. Giving a large amount of freedom to the instructor allows for an easy flow of information and control in the program. Of course, the Jones Library will be in charge of the program as a whole, and will receive weekly memo updates from the music instructor on the progress of the class and how much engagement occurs with the class's participants.

Volunteer Staff

To make this program as efficient as possible, hiring volunteer staff to assist the part-time music instructor will involve the Amherst community further into the program. So far, two volunteer positions are sought for but not required, and more could be created along the way.

The first is a music assistant to work closely with the music instructor. This assistant might help teach lessons plans, work closer with families as a teacher's assistant, assist in answering emails and talking to parents, or simply learn from the instructor's educational practices. This assistant is meant to help the teacher of the program but is not required for the class to run efficiently. It is desired to hire a music student for the role, particularly one working

toward a Music Education degree at UMass, since this program will get the student more involved in the local Amherst area and will give them experience for their bachelor's degree (University of Massachusetts Amherst).

The other volunteer that will be helpful is a social media assistant. A social media assistant would help publicizing the class and spreading awareness of its existence to the Amherst community by managing Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok pages for the class. This will engage the community to comment and respond on posts made by the class, while spreading the word around Amherst that the program is open and free for all to attend. A student in Marketing, English, or IT would be helpful but not essential. Anyone that can prove their experience or strong work ethic for social media and local community building is desirable.

Community Involvement

Since this program focuses on the Amherst community first, making sure the community is involved is essential. To ensure the public has a say in this program, those who participate will be able to reach out to the music instructor and make requests for what will be taught in the class and how the class will be run. Participants could ask the instructor to focus on particular songs or genres of music, ask for practice materials outside of class, or simply communicate back and forth with how the class is going and what will be coming next. The idea is to create a very equal



Figure 6: Two friends playing music together. Photo by @GESPHOTOSS from Unsplash.

relationship between the teacher and students who attend, so no one feels unwelcomed or intimidated to play and practice music in front of others. Giving the community a say in what will be taught gives this program the necessary push to be seen as fun and welcoming for all.

Budget

Affording a Music Instructor

According to the University of Florida, an average salary for a full-time private music instructor equals \$46,744 (University of Florida). Thankfully, this program only needs a 15 hour a week music instructor for three months of work. Dividing a 40-hour a week working musician's wage to 15-hours a week brings the cost down to \$17,529. Because this program is only during the summer, we can bring this full-year salary down to three months to accommodate the summertime position, which will total the paid music instructor's budget to \$4,383 rounded to the nearest dollar.

It is very important to make sure that there is at least one paid instructor helming this project to ensure its effectiveness and professionalism. By paying the instructor, we will be able to go through an in-depth and careful hiring process to obtain the most qualified teacher for the program.

Paying for Musical Equipment

The prices and budgeting presented in this section are estimates taken from an actual music retail store called Reverb, with examples of real, purchasable equipment found on the website. Only one of the pieces of equipment could not be found on Reverb, which was instead referenced from Amazon. All the following equipment is acoustic, requiring no electric power to function. They will be kept within the Jones Library for rental, with half of each stock being reserved for the music class.



Figure 7: A box drum cajón, found and advertised on Reverb for \$200 each.

A 25-note glockenspiel, useful for children who may come to the classes, are priced at an average of approximately \$35 (Reverb). Purchasing 20 of these will cost \$700. It is a great introductory instrument for many who wish to play melodic motions. However, recorders are also a great instrument for this very same purpose, and cost \$6 each (Amazon). Purchasing another 10 of these will suffice, totaling to \$60.

For percussion, box drums, tambourines, and egg shakers are very simple, easy to teach instruments for rhythm. A box drum, traditionally called a cajón, costs \$200 (Reverb). Buying 2 for \$400 would be appropriate due to how well they resonate in volume as well as their expensive cost. A tambourine is \$15, and buying 5 would suffice, totaling to be \$75 (Reverb). Last in the percussion section are egg shakers, with 36 costing \$70 (Reverb).

The final piece of music equipment, for more advanced players or those looking for more of a challenge, are acoustic nylon string guitars. While these instruments will mainly be for the adults in the class, anyone is welcome to try to learn how to play. The guitars will provide the rhythm section for the class. At Reverb, one decent 39-inch guitar with picks, nylon strings, and a well-made case cost \$75 (Reverb). Buying ten of these would be great for keeping a good storage of introductory guitars for rental, while also allowing a plethora available for the class. The total cost for all the guitars is \$750.



Figure 8: A 39-inch nylon string guitar set, found and advertised for \$75 each on Reverb.

<i>Requested items</i>	<i>Budget</i>
Music Instructor & Organizer	\$4,383
20 Glockenspiels	\$700
10 Recorders	\$60
2 Cajóns	\$400
5 Tambourines	\$75
36 Egg Shakers	\$70
10 Acoustic Guitars	\$750
	Total: \$6,438

All the requested funds for the paid music instructor and the complete list of purchasable equipment totals to \$6,438. With this money, the class can provide its participants with a variety of music instruments to learn from, as well as a highly qualified and motivated individual to helm the class.

Summary

If this program sees fruition, the Amherst community will regain many lost hours of family engagement between neighbor and neighbor. The Covid-19 pandemic has taken a lot from libraries' ability to provide safe and fun spaces for small towns across the nation, and the Jones Library is among many of these libraries left on their own. To regain the community engagement the Jones Library is known for, going back to in-person events and classes is essential for some type of return to the library's status quo.

Creating a music-based learning environment, helmed by a professional music instructor will allow the library to open its doors to the community even further. With many of the library's events moved to zoom and online means, going back to in-person events is important, and what better way to start going back to normal than with a fun and free music class? With the help from this grant, the library will host twice a week music classes for all of Amherst – especially for parents and their younger children looking to socialize and bond together within the community.

It is with great confidence that I present this proposal to you, as I believe it will help heal a hole in the Amherst community that has needed repair since Covid struck the nation. With the help from your grant and the Amherst community, this music program will make Amherst a better, more welcoming and community centered place.

End Matter

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Images Cited

The background photo used in the title page is of the Jones Library, which was found on the Amherst government's website in their photo gallery section.

<<https://amherstma.gov/gallery.aspx?PID=37>>.

The top left photo used in the title page is by cottonbro from Pexels.

<<https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-in-white-crew-neck-t-shirt-holding-black-flute-4709857/>>.

The top center photo used in the title page is by Greta Hoffman from Pexels.

<<https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-happy-family-having-fun-9705728/>>.

The top right photo used in the title page is by Rachel Claire from Pexels.

<<https://www.pexels.com/photo/boy-in-blue-t-shirt-playing-piano-7263545/>>.

Figure 1: Photo of a group event hosted by the Jones Library was found on the Jones Library's website, under the Special Collections section in the Events & Exhibits subsection.

<<https://www.joneslibrary.org/477/Events-Exhibits>>.

Figure 2: Photo of a student-parent program was found on the University of Massachusetts Amherst's website, under the Student Parent Programs section in Resources.

<<https://www.umass.edu/ofr/resources>>.

Figure 3: Photo of the Amherst flea market was found on the Amherst government's website in their photo gallery section. <<https://amherstma.gov/gallery.aspx?PID=58>>.

Figure 4: Photo of a mother and child sitting on a sofa playing the xylophone is by Karolina Grabowska from Pexels. <<https://www.pexels.com/photo/mother-and-child-sitting-on-sofa-playing-xylophone-8909671/>>.

Figure 5: Photo of a man teaching a girl how to play an acoustic guitar is by Boris Pavlikovsky from Pexels. <<https://www.pexels.com/photo/photo-of-a-man-teaching-a-girl-how-to-play-an-acoustic-guitar-7715537/>>.

Figure 6: Photo of two friends playing music together is by @GESPHOTOSS from Unsplash. <<https://unsplash.com/photos/PRVvL8bfcTA>>.

Figure 7: Photo of a box drum cajón for sale was found on Reverb. <<https://reverb.com/p/meinl-subcaj5-wn-jumbo-bass-subwoofer-cajon-w-slash-walnut-frontplate>>.

Figure 8: Photo of a 39-inch classical acoustic guitar with nylon strings was found on Reverb. <<https://reverb.com/item/39138872-39-inch-classical-acoustic-guitar-with-nylon-strings?bk=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJqdGkiOiJhN2Q4ZDAxYi01ODM1LTQ4OWItYmY0MC0xOGMzZDZjZTc0ODUiLCJpYXQiOiJlMzgwMzY4NTAsInVzZXJfaWQiOiJlLCJzZXNzaW9uX2lkIjoia1NjZkMGQtNjlkNC00ZmI3L>>.