

# Developing a Plan of Community Outreach for collegiate and local chapters

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When I became president of the Liberty University collegiate MTNA chapter in the fall of 2017, I wanted to find creative ways to get people involved with the chapter. I found meetings to be largely ineffective for recruiting new members and giving existing members practical experience in teaching. During my first semester as president, I recruited music students of all instrument types to be on a freelance private teachers list which I advertised to the local community. The students on this list did not necessarily have to be MTNA members, but they were on our email list and ready to give lessons. As more students became involved in teaching, I was inspired to initiate community music clinics, which now occur once per semester and offer free private lessons, classes, and an instrument petting zoo to children from the community. These events have been mutually beneficial for the students in attendance, the collegiate volunteers, and local teachers and businesses. This presentation will describe how I planned, advertised, and funded the community music clinics; I will also offer action steps for collegiate chapters, local chapters, or even independent music studios to facilitate similar community outreach events.

## Two Clinic Models

The first clinic was inaugurated in the fall of 2018 in partnership with the collegiate chapter of National Association for Music Education (NAfME). It was held on a Saturday from 9:00am-12:00pm and offered to students ranging from age 5 to 18. The schedule was a day-camp format, with each student having their own unique schedule including a private lesson, group games differentiated by age, and studio classes by instrument. Since parents dropped off their kids for three hours, we had to make sure the students had something to do at all times. This created a challenge especially for the group leaders; activities had to appeal to a wide age range and be varied to keep some students engaged for an hour (see Clinic #1 Schedule below).

Clinic #1 Schedule:  
Each student was given a personalized schedule of activities for the day.

Student	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00-11:45	11:45
Gavin	Group warm-ups (160)	Note-reading game (160)	Group activities (210)	Lesson (Burrows)	studio class (059 or 212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Laya C	Group warm-ups (160)	Note-reading game (160)	Group activities (210)	Violin Lesson (Dunmire)	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Rebek	Group warm-ups (160)	Note-reading game (160)	Group activities (210)	Cello Lesson (Kiser)	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Nathan					Piano studio class (059)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Emma	Group warm-ups (160)	Note-reading game (160)	Violin Lesson (Dunmire)	Group activities (210)	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Ethan	Group warm-ups (160)	Piano Lesson (Lockhart)	Group activities (210)	Group activities (210)	Piano studio class (059)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Katy C	Group warm-ups (160)	Note-reading game (160)	Violin Lesson (Lauck)	Group activities (210)	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Kenzie	Group warm-ups (160)	Piano Lesson (Cho)	Group activities (210)	Group activities (210)	Piano studio class (059)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Joel N	Group warm-ups (160)	Violin Lesson (Kahle)	Group activities (210)	Group activities (210)	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Benjar	Group warm-ups (160)	Violin Lesson (Hasker)	Group activities (210)	Group activities (210)	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Cariss	Group warm-ups (160)	Violin Lesson (Dunmire)	Group activities (210)	Group activities (210)	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Dean C	Group warm-ups (160)	Group activities (210)	Cello Lesson (Kiser)	Group activities (210)	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Micah	Group warm-ups (160)	Group activities (210)	Group activities (210)	Piano Lesson (Lockhart)	Piano studio class (059)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Maure	Group warm-ups (160)	Group activities (210)	Violin Lesson (Hasker)	Group activities (210 or 212)	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Sage E	Group warm-ups (160)	Group activities (210)	Piano Lesson (Cho)	Group activities (210) or 212	Piano studio class (059)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Serene	Group warm-ups (160)	Group activities (210)	Violin Lesson (Kahle)	Group activities (210) or 212	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Kristia	Group warm-ups (160)	Group activities (210)	Piano Lesson (Lockhart)	Composition activity (212)	Piano studio class (059)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Elaine	Group warm-ups (160)	Group activities (210)	Composition activity (212)	Violin Lesson (Hasker)	Strings studio class (212)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Abigail	Group warm-ups (160)	vocal warm ups (180)	Composition activity (212)	Violin Lesson (Kahle)	vocal studio class (180)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Shane	Group warm-ups (160)	vocal warm ups (180)	Voice Lesson (Robinson)	Composition activity (212)	vocal studio class (180)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)
Trinity	Group warm-ups (160)	vocal warm ups (180)	Composition activity (212)	Group activities (210) or 212	vocal studio class (180)	Boomwhakers/pickup (160)

For our first try, this clinic was a considerable success. The students enjoyed getting feedback in private lessons, meeting new friends in group activities, and having a low-pressure environment to perform in studio classes. The volunteers included both MTNA and NAFME members, each gaining valuable teaching experience, and some connections led to weekly private lesson opportunities. However, there were many lessons that we learned which helped us improve future clinics. The first major outcome was the challenge of differentiated activities with such a wide age range. Secondly, the private lessons were open for students who wanted to try a new instrument or receive feedback on their current instrument; but, many students had to rent an instrument and bring it to the clinic, which defeated the purpose of having a free event. Lastly, it was unclear what exactly the clinic was offering because we did signups over email and did not have a centralized online presence.

For the spring of 2019, we considered what we learned from the first clinic to devise a similar event with a more flexible format. While we managed to pull off the first clinic completely without funding, the second clinic was funded by the MTNA Collegiate Enrichment Grant, which allowed us to pay outside clinicians to teach masterclasses. We also partnered with Hill City Music, a local music store in Lynchburg, VA, to provide free instrument rentals for lessons and an instrument petting zoo. Signups were on Google Forms, and students could sign up for lesson time slots on SignUp Genius. This alleviated the burden of creating each student's individual schedule, and it allowed families to pick times that worked best for them. The LU collegiate chapter has been using this flexible model each semester since 2019. In addition to the lessons and masterclasses, other classes have been offered including harmonica, film scoring, Alexander Technique, and Orff ensemble. These classes have been engaging for young students and their families to attend together.



Gina DiCarlo, an orchestra teacher in Lynchburg, VA, teaches a violin masterclass.

### **Action Steps**

When planning an event such as a community music clinic, it can be intimidating to know where to start. The following action steps are designed for chapters and individuals to have a clear path of planning, advertising, and executing an outreach event. The LU clinics are not the only model; hopefully they have sparked some creative ideas of your own. The most important thing is to follow through on your ideas and make them happen!

**Step 1: Brainstorm Your Event.** Think through possible dates, times, and locations. Decide on your age range, which will help determine what you will offer. Brainstorm your budget and decide where you will spend potential grant money.

**Step 2: Apply for Funding.** Do this as soon as possible, because deadlines vary. MTNA offers enrichment grants for community events. Universities may have student government funding if your chapter is recognized as a club. Exhaust all of your options, but also realize that it is possible to host an event with little to no funding.

Step 3: Plan your Finances. Decide on a specific budget with any money you receive. Make sure you know all of the procedures for handling it, especially if you are at a university. Talk with people in the accounting department to make sure you know their policies so that you're able to access the money when needed.

Step 4: Recruit Volunteers & Hire Outside Clinicians. Do this as soon as you have secured your funding. You may want to delegate tasks to your volunteers, but you can also ask them if they have any creative ideas for the event.

Step 5: Set Up your Sign Up. I recommend Google Forms and/or SignUp Genius. You should also set a registration deadline (no less than one week prior to the event).

Step 6: Advertise. This is definitely the hardest part! If this is a new event and no one knows about it, you'll need at least three weeks to get the word out. The best methods are social media and word-of-mouth. You may want to dedicate a portion of your budget to paid social media advertising. Contact local private teachers and ask them to invite their students. Since you're not selling anything, most teachers and organizations will appreciate this type of event. Utilize any connections you have with music educators, churches, homeschool organizations, and schools.

Step 7: Logistics. About one week before the event, send a reminder email to your volunteers to communicate your expectations (dress code, time of arrival, etc.). Send another email to parents/attendees with directions, parking, and any other pertinent details. Create schedules for each room and post them on the doors. Make sure you have things like tables, chairs, instruments, and keys to unlock rooms.

Step 8: Let it Happen! Smile through the stress. Enjoy the fruits of your labor. Take lots of pictures. Send surveys afterward to learn how you can improve for next time.

I hope you found these action steps practical and inspiring. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at [rkedmiston@liberty.edu](mailto:rkedmiston@liberty.edu).

