

Independent Music Teachers Forum Meeting

Monday, March 20, 2017

2:15 pm

MTNA National Conference

Atlantic Room, Marriott Hotel Baltimore Maryland

Welcome: Sherry Frush, South Central Division Director

Geri Gibbs was not able to be here because she was giving another program at the same time. She is director-elect. She will serve effective the end of conference in 2018.

Announcements: This should be one of largest forums because largest percentage of members and attendees at conference are independent music teachers; but the diversity of topics prevents that. Also, some people think the meeting is only for chairs.

Get the word out about what "independent music teacher" means. One of the hardest things for an IMT to realize is that he or she is a business.

A new MTNA website is coming. Use your division portal on the website. Take advantage of links, sites, and minutes posted on the website.

A handout that lists member resources is posted online.

MTNA resources include credit card processing, insurance, debt collection, studio festivals and awards, e-festival kicking off in May (and more and more!), wellness, leadership, studio resources; Independent piano teacher's studio handbook, chamber music resources, discounts, and webinars (available online after they are presented).

When sent an email from MTNA, even if an ad, at least open it because it is tracked. Watch for an email concerning advocacy which will come out from the Board of Directors (projected Monday or Tuesday of this week).

Jan. 12 and 13: MTNA collegiate chapter symposium at UT Austin

Global Initiative started by MTNA. MTNA national conference: 39-50 Canadians are in attendance

For example, a young man from India, who is attending his 3rd MTNA conference, is initiating teachers in India to be involved in MTNA.

Communicate the value of membership, not the barriers. Be passionate about your profession, and share that passion – inviting others to join MTNA.

There is a misconception about how to join MTNA. It's very simple!

Explore creative ways that MTNA can address members' needs.

Excerpts from Karen Thickestun's session: presentation on trends

An IMT has to have vision, flexibility, passion, do what you want to do, good location, develop a plan, find good mentors, education, certification, and professionalism, diversify revenue stream, network. Your studio is you-- be great at what you do. Find fresh angles and unique area of expertise. Marketing: superior customer

service and good reputation. Focus on benefits, not features. Advertisement: join the most forward-thinking music studio. Is your child thriving in music lessons? Branding what you do. Online presence is essential.

Step out of the tunnel that you're in. New ideas can result in more productivity, and energy.

Discussion followed the sharing of responses to Frush's email to all IMT state chairs:

- Issues with people having unrealistic expectations because they go onto YouTube and wonder why their child isn't playing the same way as those students.
- Highlight 1 or 2 of the MTNA advantages every week with local chairs at state to get word out. Contact state chairs to do that.

Concerns and Questions – Open Discussion during Forum

One teacher requested more information about her responsibilities as an ITMF state chair.

Communication and networking are vital. Find out what members want to talk about. Encourage local chairs to have 1 or 2 sessions in local meetings about concerns for IMTs (business practice, local issues like zoning, time management, for example).

Other suggestions from attendees:

-send letter out to local presidents and find out about concerns of members. [Frush asked that they pass that info on to national level.]

-Host a webinar or go-to meeting. Could even do it at the convention.

-*The Gig Economy* is a good book. It addresses the generation that will be earning money from lots of different streams.

-Lack of professionalism: look, act, be on time, scheduling, billing—it brings down whole profession when some are unprofessional.

-We think we are competing against each other, but we should all be together and work together; that's the purpose of the associations.

-Send referrals if your studio is full and let the other teachers know you are referring them.

One teacher asked how to get emails if they don't have an IMTF chair in New Mexico. Response: give Frush your email address to send them to you.

Question: How does MTNA know that we are independent music teachers?

Answer: It is on the membership form. You can be both an IMT and collegiate teacher.

State and local IMT activities and concerns

In the channel of communications, is it accurate that emails from the national to state/local levels goes to the president, and the president or state chair is expected to disperse that information?

Answer: For most emails, yes. But there are often no directions for sending it on. The national level is starting to include the directives to forward emails.

What are the expectations for communication? Is there a standard or protocol or guideline for state presidents to know what criteria to follow (a job description)? The roles are defined by the state. Local and state chairs are appointed by the state. Communications from MTNA; some go to all of membership, others to chairs. Make sure new chairs report that information to the national level. MTNA doesn't want to dictate what states do, so an email might say "we encourage you to share this with your members." It is not often clear about who is getting the emails.

The Vice President on the Kansas board said that the state hasn't had an IMTF chair for years. The one there before resigned because of lack of understanding and no help from national office. She only knew that the IMTF chair did a lunch at the end of the year. Perhaps the national office can do more to help people understand what is expected of the IMTF chairs. Several agreed with this idea and added that there needs to be a standard from the top down.

Frush requested that each attending state chair send info about what they do and don't do at local and state levels – so a list could be generated.

Idea for a national Facebook page for IMTs:

-It would be nice to have way for everyone to communicate.

But someone argued that there already are Facebook groups for that.

Others said it would be a good way to connect to, for example, find roommates at MTNA conferences.

Ideas for IMTF to gather people and promote discussion.

Maybe put an easel up where people can put up Post-It notes with current issues and have breakout groups.

IMT shouldn't be limited to event-driven activities.

Referrals: When students get transferred to other states, we need connections.

Knowing how to match the right teacher with the child requires knowing teachers more on the national level.

Can there be more information on the directory?

The website could offer the same as the Suzuki teacher membership. It includes picture of the teacher, bio, history, etc. Someone said it was being considered at the national level, but don't know how close to Suzuki's info it will be.

Question: Has anyone had problems with parents not being honest about autistic kids or learning disabled kids?

Answers: Some parents don't want their child branded. Ask questions at interviews.

Can include question on enrollment form or have parents write a narrative of the child.

Suggestion for conference: could there be a track for the independent music teacher on Pedagogy Saturday or throughout the conference? This idea was very well received.

Question: What can we do as IMT's to connect with college students? Many don't plan on being IMTs, but how can we reach out?

Answers: In Cincinnati, the pedagogy department has a mentoring program with four local academies. Teachers oversee the teaching of students at a reduced cost to parents.

Local association has social events and invites collegiate students.

Appointed Note taker:

Lesley Sisterhen McAllister, D.M.A.

Associate Professor of Piano, Director of Piano Pedagogy

Baylor University