

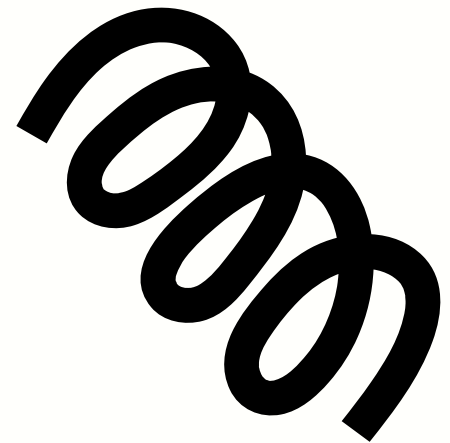
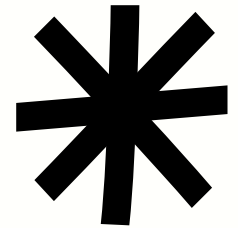
2024-2025 Impact Report

The Decade Edition



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A Note from the Founder & CEO

When SOUNDS Academy started in the back of Buchanan Music in 2014, I did not truly know the incredible journey that began. I did not envision the partnerships, plans, and possibilities that would develop to get us to where we are today. Now, sitting here in Year 10, I am grateful for everything that has happened and everyone that has contributed to this amazing story.

Year 10 was everything that I imagined and more. This graduating class is a testament to what is possible when students, families, schools, and communities invest in music education and character development. **This year's graduating class represents creativity, leadership, perseverance, resilience, and teamwork at the highest level.** I saw many "firsts" with this class. I saw our Soul Revue Band transform in real time while working with the Good Times Brass Band. I saw Abraham perform in another city and the audience completely fall in a trance while watching him perform. I saw two of our students get accepted into Ivy League schools for college, with Daniel and Jae going to Yale and Princeton, respectively.

The icing on the cake was the opportunity to come back to Orpheum Theatre to have our **10 Year Anniversary Benefit Concert** since it was here that I pitched the idea of starting SOUNDS Academy 10 years earlier. I am grateful to everyone who has supported us throughout the years, so that we can support **Today's Musicians**, developing them into **Tomorrow's Leaders**.

Sincerely,

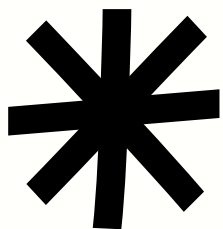
Kirk Johnson



(Founder & CEO)



SOUNDS Academy Timeline



2014 - Becoming a Nonprofit

Established as a 501(c)(3), won the Mayor's Arts Award, and celebrated our first graduate, Reina.

2016 - First Office

Moved into our first official office at the Phoenix Center for the Arts, expanding capacity for programs.

2018 - Piano Program Launch

Started our Piano Program with Ms. Janie, increasing access to foundational music education.

2013 - The Beginning

Won SEED SPOT Audience Favorite Award and seed funding to launch SOUNDS Academy.

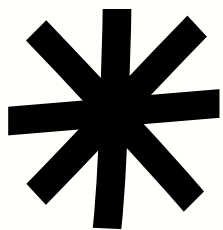
2015 - Early Recognition & Growth

Received the SVP Mentor's Choice Award and USA Characters Unite Award; hired our first teachers, Ms. Cindy and Ms. Vivi.

2017 - New Programs & Staff

Launched The Collective Program with the Motown Band and hired our first employee, Ms. Lara.

SOUNDS Academy Timeline



2021 - National Stage

Students performed at the Disney Concert Hall with YOLA under the direction of Gustavo Dudamel.

2024 - Continued Excellence

Justin Kang debuted with The Phoenix Symphony, further highlighting student achievement.

2020 - Innovation During the Pandemic

Created the Composition Class and launched the Student Internship Program to keep students learning and creating.

2023 - Rising Talent

Abraham Kim debuted with The Phoenix Symphony; Kirk Johnson recognized as a Piper Fellow.

2025 - A Milestone Year

Celebrating our 10-year anniversary with our largest graduating class; received the SVP Full Time Investee Award; first Ivy League acceptances (Daniel & Jae).

Our Impact

Since 2014

Students impacted
through the SOLO
Program

36,414

Students impacted
through the During
and After School
Programs

56,691

Scholarship Dollars
Awarded

\$648,318

Students impacted
through the Musical
Access Program

21,887

Students impacted
through the
Collective Program

13,648

Graduation &
College Acceptance
Rate

100%



The Musical Access Program

exposes children to musical experiences through live performances and Instrument Petting Zoos. In an Instrument Petting Zoo, SOUNDS Academy brings instruments to schools and community centers so that children can try instruments such as the violin, viola, cello, and guitar. Through this program, children are inspired to explore music and play instruments. SOUNDS Academy also brings performers and music professionals to schools.

The SOLO (Students Optimizing Leadership Opportunities) Program

provides one-on-one lessons to students. Students receive mentorship to prepare them for auditions and high-level performances. While in the SOLO Program, students receive instruments, music books, and other supplementary materials. It is out of this program that students have received scholarships to play with orchestras and attend college. Students in this program also lead Instrument Petting Zoos throughout the valley.

The School Programs

provide instrumental instruction in a group setting at schools and community centers. Students learn the character values of **creativity, leadership, perseverance, resilience, and teamwork** through music education. While in the School Program, students receive instruments, music books, and other supplementary materials. The classes teach note reading and the fundamentals of instrument performance in bi-weekly hour-long classes.

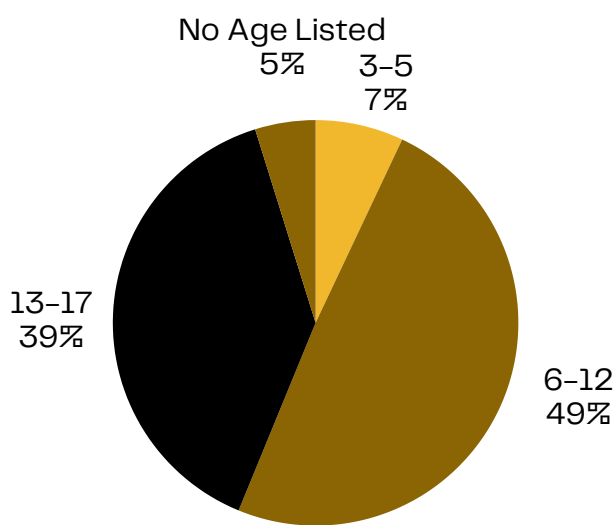
The Collective

consists of 30 hardworking students who exemplify the character values of **creativity, leadership, perseverance, resilience, and teamwork**. Students in this program attend concerts, take lessons, play in a chamber ensemble, and take theory classes for 6 hours a week. Additionally, these students perform throughout the valley, using the community as their stage. This program gives children the opportunity to impact the lives of others through their community outreach while gaining a deeper understanding of their instrument and themselves.

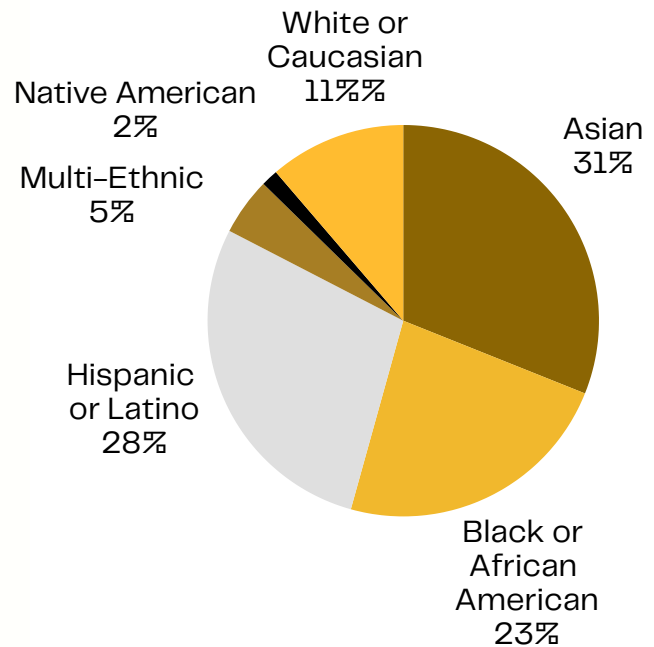
In 2024-2025

<h2 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">2,729</h2> <p style="font-size: 24px; margin: 0;">Students Participated in SOUNDS Academy Programs</p>	<h2 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">50</h2> <p style="font-size: 24px; margin: 0;">ZIP Codes Served</p>	<h2 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">82%</h2> <p style="font-size: 24px; margin: 0;">Of Our Students Come from Lower Income Neighborhoods and Schools</p>
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Age



Ethnicity



Who We Are

Mission: SOUNDS Academy transforms lives by empowering youth through teaching music and character values, with a commitment to reaching underserved communities.

Vision: One day, every child, regardless of their zip code, will have access to the transformative impact of music education and character development, in order to foster personal growth and strengthen communities.



Culture: The SOUNDS Academy Family is a collective of inclusive, personable, and progressive individuals committed to passionately creating and building relationships to support and inspire our young leaders.

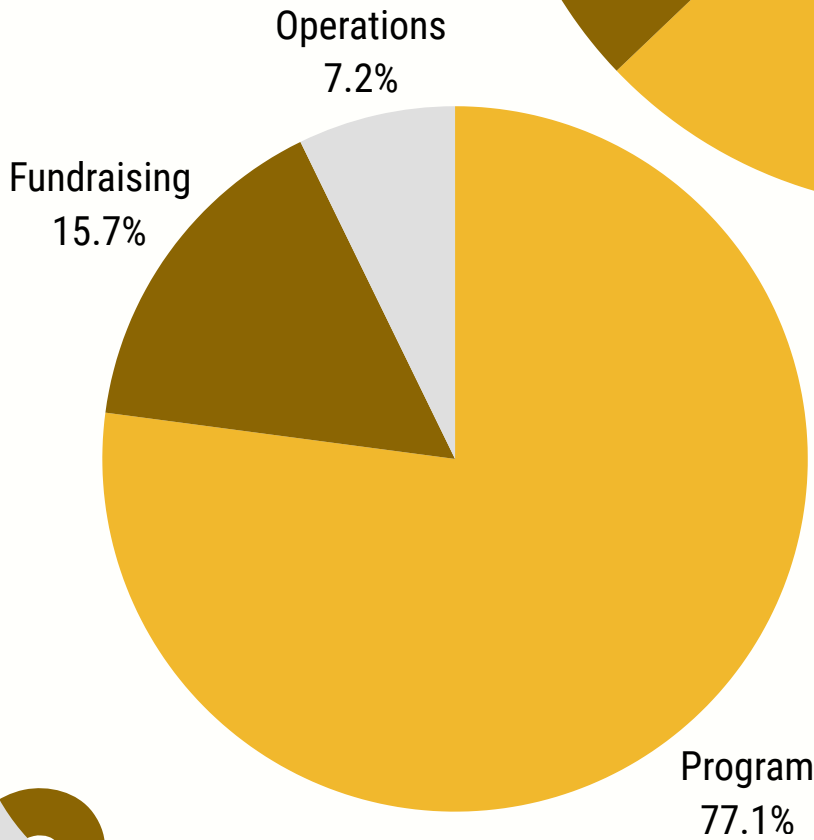
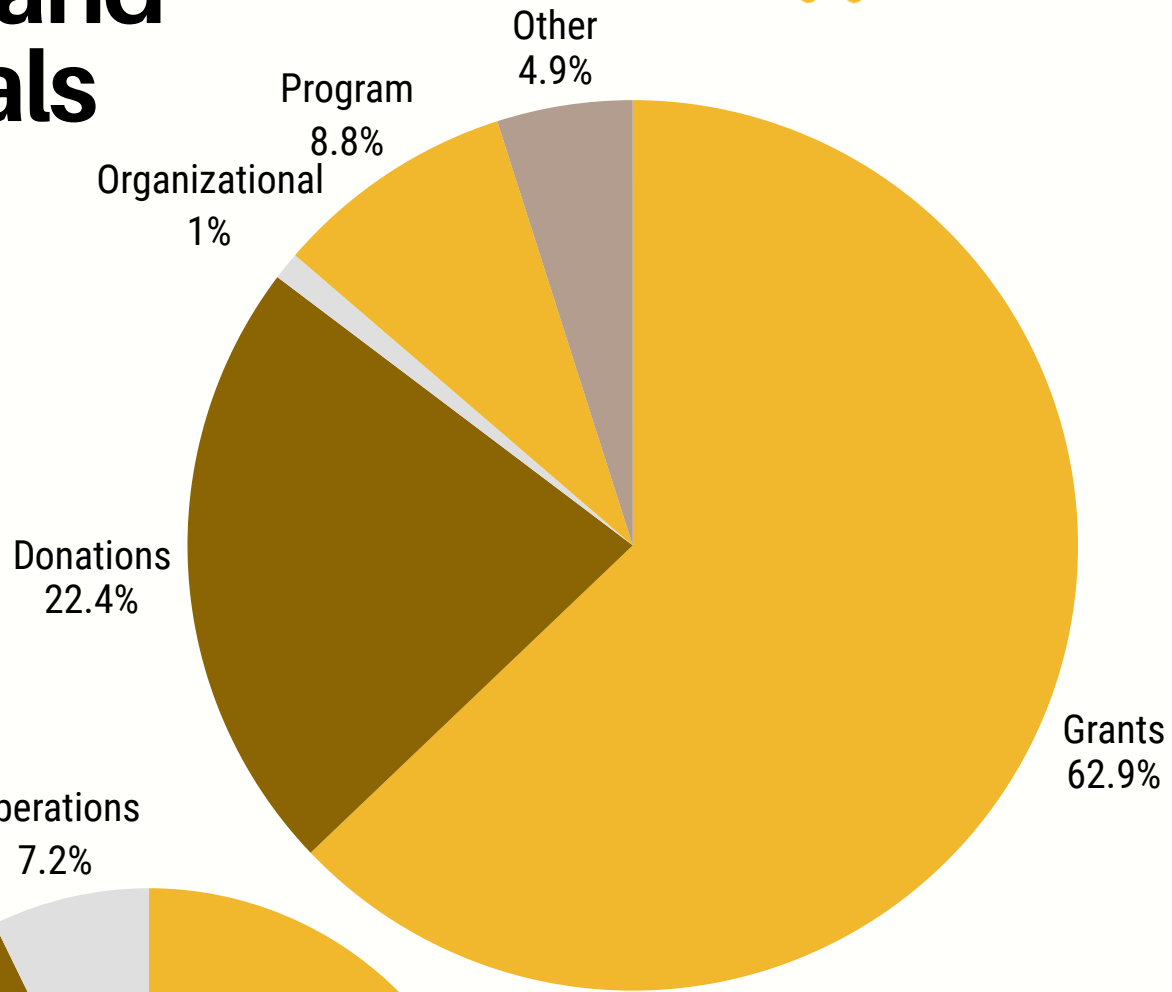
Values: We teach the Character Values of Creativity, Leadership, Perseverance, Resilience, and Teamwork through Music Education

At SOUNDS Academy, students receive individual lessons and group classes on all instruments and voice. Instruments are provided to those who cannot afford one.



Budget and Financials

**Support &
Revenues:
\$696,017**



**Expenses:
\$723,900**

Highlights - Graduating Seniors!

Alessandra Aroz: Grand Canyon University
— Graphic Design

Daniel Kang: Yale — Cellular and Molecular
Developmental Biology, Pre-Med

Natalee Barrett: Mesa Community College
— General Studies

Abraham Kim: Vanderbilt — Cello
Performance

Kirsten Brown: Brigham Young University
— Dietetics

Jena Lee: ASU — Business

Cayla Fitzgerald: Mesa Community College
— Sonography

Jae-hyeok Moon: Princeton — Mathematics

Carter Henderson-Cole: University of
Arizona — Nursing, Minor in Spanish and
Music

Leonardo Pineda: Bowling Green State
University — Piano Performance, Minor in
Business

Evan Hernandez: Grand Canyon University
— Music Composition and Video Game
Production/Design

Cassandra Rojas: Northern Arizona University
— Dental Hygiene

Callie Worthen: Arizona State University —
Communications

TODAY'S *Musicians.*
TOMORROW'S *Leaders.*

To see the "Class of 2025 Tribute Video", click the
image above or visit:

["soundsacademy.org/classof2025"](https://soundsacademy.org/classof2025)

Highlights

Our students had the opportunity to work with world-class musicians both at home and at Symphony Hall!

In March, students were visited by the **Good Times Brass Band** while they were on tour with Usher. They led a **Master Class with the Soul Revue and Jazz Band**. Musicians told real-life stories about **teamwork, perseverance, resilience**, and students had the opportunity perform and jam with these accomplished musicians. The lives of our students were illuminated by their kindness, talent, authenticity, and **community-minded spirit!**



In March, **Justin Kang** achieved an incredible milestone by winning the **PYSO Young Musician's Competition** and performing *Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 1*, accompanied by **The Phoenix Symphony**. This marks Justin's second consecutive win in this prestigious competition, as well as the third year in a row that a SOUNDS Academy student has earned this top honor! Justin's performance demonstrated remarkable **leadership, perseverance, and creativity**, captivating an audience and leaving a lasting impression on everyone in attendance!

Sponsors & Supporters



LEGACY SPONSOR: \$25,000 >

City of Phoenix Office of Arts + Culture
Robert Donat
Ellis Center for Educational Excellence
Kiita Foundation
Valley of the Sun United Way (VSUW)
Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust

SCHOOL SPONSOR: \$10,000 - \$24,999

Arizona Commission on the Arts
Jaburg & Wilk - Gary Jaburg
Los Angeles Philharmonic (YOLA)
Salt River Project (SRP)

QUARTET SPONSORS: \$5,000 - \$9,999

Ian and Liz Fischer
Innovating Worthy Projects
Foundation
Penny and Steve Papadopoulos
Christy Strauch

STUDENT SPONSOR: \$2,500 - \$4,999

Patrick and Amy Armstrong
Catholic Community Foundation
Dickinson Wright, PLLC
Forrest Valora
Chris and Kate Vine
Nancy Vine
William and Ruth T. Pendleton
Memorial Fund

FRIENDS OF SOUNDS ACADEMY: \$300 - \$2,499

Layla Alalawi	Felix Brownell	John Draftz
Linda Alexander	Aaron & Gioia Bufkin	John Edwards
Whitney Alli	Charles "Charlie" Bullen	Annie Eldon
Julio Rodriguez & Rebeca Garcia	Charles Schwab Foundation	Raquel Ellis & Ricky Livoni
Arizona Center for African	Perri Chase	Tim Ernst
American Resources	Matthew Clyde	Alfredo Estrada Garcia
Selma Babic	Connected Clearings	Heather & Tim Eyerman
Jessica Baker	Therapy PLLC	Jon & Holly Finch
Sandra Bassett	Jessica Cottrell	Eric Folland
Jeff Becker	D'Addario Foundation	Colleen Gautam
Clayton Bedoya	Susan Swaim Daicoff	GFWC Paradise Valley Jr.
Tony & Rebecca Bell	Davonte Davis	Woman's Club
Boeing	Carlian Dawson	Sammy Glassman
Winston Borrero	Lance & Jeanine Decker	Ceceliaann Green
Stefanie Brichta	Andres Diaz Martell	Jamie Halavais

Sponsors & Supporters

FRIENDS OF SOUNDS ACADEMY: \$300 - \$2,499

Louise Hardman	Carol S McKenzie	Scottsdale Arts
Herberger Theater Center	Brian McNair	Sarah Selzer & Art Hinshaw
Justin Hockemeyer	Forest Melton	Amish Shah
HP Inc.	Sentari Minor	Richard Shea
Tanice Hughes	Anna Montalbo	Sandra Shrader
Julie & Bruce Iacobelli	Terry Mullane	Stuart Siefer
Maha Iyer	Nina Mullins	Maria Simiz
Constance Jahrmarkt	Patricia & Philip Mundle	Ronald & Christine Stoffle
Annette Johnson	Carlos Munoz	Sunshine Foundation
Kirk Johnson	National Bank of Arizona	Elizabeth Thompson
Virginia Johnson	Tweetie Ngo	Tom Tischer
Bridget Jones	Blair and Peggy Nuccio	Angela & Bob Tucker
Verity Kang	Hector Ramirez	James Tucker
Amanda Kaye	Jennifer Randle	Unity Spiritual Center
Chuck Kelly	Raytheon Technologies	Valley of the Sun
Beverley Kerr	Stephen Richman	Camelback Kiwanis
Jiwan Kim	Amanda Riske	Mat Weddle
Kroger / Fry's	Illya Riske	Theodore "Ted" Wimsatt
Lynne Larson	Marc & Vicki Riske	Joshua Wright
Mary & Doug Larson	Bonnie Roesch	Jeff Young
Elizabeth Lyons	Jessica Sanchez	Carrie Zoulek
Richard Marx	Robbie Schwartz	

10 Year Donor Club!

Patrick & Amy Armstrong	Virginia Johnson
Tony & Rebecca Bell	David & Val Kelly
Perri Chase	Kiita Foundation
Victor & Meryl Fischer	Mary & Doug Larson
Ian & Liz Fischer	Elizabeth Lyons
Sammy Glassman	Christopher O'Mard
Tanice Hughes	SRP
Annette Johnson	Christy Strauch
Kirk Johnson	Chris & Kate Vine

Superlatives

Most Inspiring Alumni Performers of the Decade:



*Abraham Kim
(2025 Graduate)*



*Christine Kowalski
(2017 Graduate)*



*Leonardo Pineda
(2025 Graduate)*

Most Influential Alumni of the Decade:



*Reina Montalbo
(2014 Graduate)*



*Lily Moreno
(2022 Graduate)*



*Raymond Zou
(2021 Graduate)*

Great Minds of the Decade:



*Daniel Kang
(2025 Graduate)*



*Erin Larson
(2024 Graduate)*



*Jae Moon
(2025 Graduate)*

Superlatives

Teachers of the Decade:



Cindy Baker



Janie Dailey



Jamie Kellogg



*Parent Volunteer of the Decade:
Jiyoung Kim*



*Board Member of the Decade:
Virginia Johnson*



*Most Likely to be the SOUNDS Academy CEO:
Callie Worthen (2025)*



*Most Likely to be the SOUNDS Academy Board Chair:
Cameron Henderson-Cole (2020)*







*Most Likely to Score the SOUNDS Academy Film:
Nathaniel Lucio Garcia (2024)*



*Most Likely to Lead The SOUNDS Academy Orchestra:
Ezra Calvino (2016)*

Instruments for Change

Instruments for Change is SOUNDS Academy's 10-Year Anniversary Campaign focused on making a significant **community** impact to radically and permanently transform the story of music education in Phoenix, Arizona. We are raising additional funds for us to focus on supporting:

-  **Scholarships for Graduating Seniors:** Providing support for students to excel in colleges and universities so that they are able to return to impact their communities
-  **Scholarships for Advanced Students:** Funding high-level opportunities like competitions and national camps in a variety of fields to help students succeed after high school
-  **Overnight Music Camp:** Ensuring continued access and scholarships to Arizona's only immersive overnight music summer camp experience
-  **Sustainable Growth:** Laying the foundation for a bright future of SOUNDS Academy, which includes a permanent home with a Performing Arts Center

Campaign Goal: \$500,000

Why It Matters

This campaign is not just about instruments. It's about access, equity, and follow-through, making sure opportunities keep pace with potential. Instruments for Change turns talent into possibility, and possibility into futures as we continue to support **Today's Musicians**, and **Tomorrow's Leaders**.



An Update From Our Alumni



Janae Pierce

My experience with SOUNDS Academy taught me the power of discipline through the hours I spent practicing my cello. **Learning to stay focused, set goals, and push through challenges sparked a motivation in me to accomplish things I once thought were out of reach.** Those same skills have carried into my work today as a behavioral technician for kids, where patience, consistency, and **perseverance** are essential. The discipline I developed as a musician now helps me support children through their own challenges, teaching them to celebrate progress, build confidence, and believe in what they can achieve.



Aaron Barrett

After graduating high school in 2023, I served a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (also known as the LDS or Mormon church). My goal was to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone. I was called to the Anchorage, Alaska mission, where I served for about 5 months. It was a mix of fun, cold, and hard work.

When I returned home, I took about 8 months to recover. In 2025, I returned to the mission field as a service missionary in the Mesa, Arizona mission. I served throughout the **community** at various service sites, including a living/care home where I played my cello and cheered up residents. I'm grateful to SOUNDS Academy for the lessons and classes, which have shaped me into the musician and person I am today.

I'm so grateful for the foundation SOUNDS Academy provided me, and I'm excited to continue sharing my music with others. If you're considering joining SOUNDS Academy, I highly encourage you to take the leap! It's been a game-changer for me, and I know it can be for you too!

Ways To Support



DONATE

COLLAB

SHARE

Donate

- As a federal 501(c)3 charitable organization, your donation, may qualify for a tax deduction.
- As a Qualifying Charitable Organization, Arizona residents can claim a dollar-for-dollar Arizona state tax credit.
- Donate long-term appreciated investments such as stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.

Engage

- Serve on the SOUNDS Academy Board or a Committee
- Teach with SOUNDS Academy
- Volunteer with SOUNDS Academy
- Learn more by meeting with our Founder & CEO

Sponsor an Event

There are opportunities to sponsor

- A student in the SOLO Program
- A School Program
- A SpeakEasy
- The Benefit Concert

Contact us for specific details

Contact Us!



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www.soundsacademy.org



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