

# SONGWORKS

Educators Association

## From the President

Dear SongWorks Educators,

Hello from Minnesota! I hope this finds you healthy, happy, and perhaps embracing the slow-paced life that has been forced upon us these past months.

It seems like an understatement to say that we've all been through a lot this year. In March our busy lives came to a sudden halt. For the first time in our organization's history, we were unable to gather for our annual conference. Our jobs changed overnight. We suffered through isolation and faced challenges we would have never imagined.

However, during the chaos of last spring, so many of us rose to the occasion and created inspiring online lessons for our students using our beloved SongWorks techniques and principles. We learned more than we ever cared to learn about technology, but are now so much the stronger and wiser for it. And through all of it, we fostered connections with our students, families, and fellow teachers and friends in spite of the distance between us.

In response to increasing social unrest, outrage, and protests across the United States, our organization came together to create a [Statement on Racial Injustice](#). Thank you to the incredible writers Max Mellman, Alice Nordquist, Danielle Solan, Vicky Suárez, Jake Harkins, and Aimee Newman, as well as the many dedicated SWEA past presidents and stakeholders who helped mold this statement. Although it was not an easy task, I am very thankful for the many people who gave of their time, energy, and wisdom to create a caring, thoughtful message that communicates our desire to help, to learn, and to grow as an organization.



Lisa Schoen  
2020-2021 President  
lisa@songworkseducators.com

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In the upcoming weeks, some of us will be going back into our classrooms, some will be teaching online or doing some combination of the two, and others are considering retirement or taking a leave of absence. I don't have answers to the crashing waves of questions that wake me up at night. However, I am trying to remain calm and patient, make the best choices I can for my family, and continually remind myself that this is not forever. We will someday return to normal. In the meantime, it is a great comfort to know that I have my SongWorks community to encourage and inspire me.

Your SWEA Presidential Team and committees are continuing to seek creative ways to support you. Aimee Newman, our 2021 Conference Chair, is already in the midst of planning our annual conference! As much as we are aching to see each other again in person, the planning committee is trying to be proactive in light of the current state of affairs, and are considering the possibility of hosting a virtual conference. Please contact Aimee Newman at [aimee@songworkseducators.com](mailto:aimee@songworkseducators.com) if you have ideas, would like to help, or are interested in presenting,

Ruthanne Parker and Taylor Crevola are working diligently to procure inspiring newsletter articles that will encourage and enrich your teaching. If you would like to write an article or are willing to help in any way, contact them at [ruthanne.fisher@gmail.com](mailto:ruthanne.fisher@gmail.com) or [taylor.crevola@gmail.com](mailto:taylor.crevola@gmail.com).

Natalie Neugent, Molly Feigal, and Vicky Suárez are leading our social media committee, and are promoting our work on Facebook and Twitter. Be sure to "like" our public Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/SongWorksEducators>, and follow us on Twitter (@SongWorksEd). We also have a [Facebook sharing group](#) we welcome you to join!

Jake Harkins will continue to lead "SongWorks in Practice" virtual workshops again this fall! I guarantee you will be inspired to utilize SongWorks strategies in your teaching, whether it be over Zoom, on a YouTube video, or in a socially distanced classroom. If you are interested in attending these workshops, please contact him at [jeharkins@fcps.edu](mailto:jeharkins@fcps.edu).

The SongWorks Certification faculty members are already busy working on their curriculum and lesson plans for the 2021 summer courses. Plan to join us for a week of vibrant and joyful learning! Details to come on our website, [www.songworkseducators.com](http://www.songworkseducators.com), but in the meantime, contact Executive Director Betty Phillips at [betty@songworkseducators.com](mailto:betty@songworkseducators.com) for information.

We are grateful for the engagement and support of our members! If you are interested in joining SWEA or haven't renewed your membership in a while and are ready to do so, visit our [membership page](#). If you are uncertain about the status of your membership, contact Registrar Alice Nordquist at [registrar@songworkseducators.com](mailto:registrar@songworkseducators.com).

It is our goal to encourage, inspire, and enliven your teaching, but we need your help! There are many ways to get involved and contribute to our treasured SongWorks organization. Reach out, and we will help you find a place to serve. I miss you all dearly, and I hope we can sing and learn together again soon.

Health and peace to you!

*Lisa Schoen*

# Back to School...Virtual Style

As we head back to school, many teachers are being asked "What is the most useful resource for virtual teaching?" It may come as no surprise that our SongWorks teachers' answers did not focus on things, but rather on *the thing - connection!*

## What is the one thing that helped make virtual teaching in the spring a success?

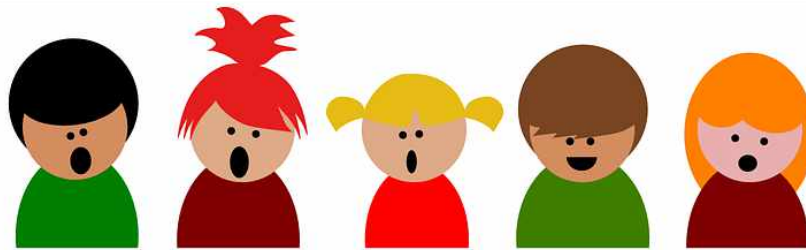


Aimee Newman, CO

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Laying down your perfectionism and allowing yourself to be ok with figuring it out as you go!

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My biggest concern is making connections with students. It's difficult to feel connected over the internet.

My district is focusing on getting to know the students and making personal connections for the first two weeks. We are not sending out any content except Social-Emotional Learning lessons. I will spend my first week or two just getting to know my students via live interactions. I'm especially concerned about the new students in fifth grade. Entering a new school your last year of elementary school has got to be super tough! I've already started trying to learn their names so that it will be easier to put a name to a face when I see them online. I might even try playing the name game version of "Darby Town" and see how that works to help them learn each other's names. It's a lot of singing for me, but I'm up to the challenge!

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Natalie Neugent, TX



*Lisa Schoen, MN*

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We all had so many students and families struggling to connect last spring. Knowing how my own children are always thrilled to get mail, I decided to send letters to my students. I ended up writing to over 300 kids. I didn't get to them all, but I tried! Though it wasn't about teaching music, I was thankful to have a way to pour myself into a project that could make connections and hopefully send a ray of sunshine during a very lonely, scary time.

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I really valued the time I was able to guest participate in grade-level virtual classrooms during Distance Teaching in the Spring. I emailed all classroom teachers ahead of time, asking permission to 'hop-in' their virtual learning time. When it could happen, the classroom teachers and their students were very excited—some grade levels started hosting "mystery guests." A slide was projected with pictures and three facts about the guest (me). Students would practice reading the clues, and type a guess into the chat of who was visiting their "room."

I especially valued time spent with homerooms during "morning meetings." I was able to be a joyful participant during virtual community-nurturing activities. Being able to join students in an 'environment' outside the music 'classroom' provided additional opportunities to have deeper and meaningful interactions and conversations with my students. That time, even just a few minutes, was invaluable to me.

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*Jake Harkins, VA*

# Back to School Virtually

Vicky Suarez



What was an uncomfortable learning curve last spring has become the norm for many of us as we begin a new school year using virtual, remote, asynchronous, and synchronous teaching. Back in the spring we quickly learned to connect with our students using live virtual teaching or recording videos, or both.

While I have mourned the loss of in-person interaction with both my students and my fellow music teachers at workshops and conferences, I have noticed some wonderful things that came out of this challenging time.

I was thrilled to be involved in the start-up of *The Singing Space*, a Facebook group created by Meg Tietz, for teachers to share videos of themselves singing songs that would bring comfort to children through music. Without witnessing this heartfelt outpouring of videos from teachers from all over the world, I doubt I would have been brave enough to share my own videos. But I jumped right in during Spring Break, with simple videos of my favorite songs to share with students.

This is a vulnerable time for us, putting our teaching out there for others to see. I might feel comfortable picking up a ukulele and strumming along as I sing to children, but having to do this in a video for other teachers to see is a different story. This gives me compassion for my fellow teachers. I know that what comes easily for me may not be the same for another, and vice versa. Making a goof in class in front of children is a daily occurrence, but when it happens on a video it becomes a different thing---do I let it go or do I re-do or edit out that goof? How polished does this video teaching need to be, since other teachers--and administrators-- are watching? I think many of you might be nodding your head in recognition of these feelings! As I began to make more videos for use with my students and as the time away from school stretched to nine weeks, I came up with some ideas:

**Be engaging, but be yourself.** I decided that what I wanted for my students is for their teacher to talk to them the same way I would talk to them in class. I want to engage them, but I still want to talk to them in a conversational way. I choose not to add much besides just me talking to them, singing, playing an instrument, following song dots, following other notation like a map, movement to music... the same things I would do in class with them.

**Plan ways for the students to be actively involved.** This can be as simple as asking a question and waiting as if you're listening to the students respond. It can be saying, "Raise your hand if you know this song." It can be inviting the students to antiphon while you sing a song, asking students to stand up and act out a song, or do a folk dance. I am aware of how difficult it must be for our students to sit in front of a screen and not interact with other children and teachers. We can bring activity into our students' lives through music class.

**Hand-drawn and homemade can be preferable.** I know that I have tech literally at my fingertips, and I marvel at all of the beautiful and polished creations I see out there. But in my classroom I've always valued hand-drawn materials, have always preferred their homemade look. So I've continued that with my teaching videos. Holding up something I've drawn and asking students to follow it, to track song dots or solfege or bridge notation, seems more like what I would do in class with them. It seems more intimate to me to have hand-drawn materials. It's just another way for my personality to come through the screen to connect to my students.

I'd love to hear your thoughts! Please reach out if you want to share.

Vicky Suarez  
[vicky@songworkseducators.com](mailto:vicky@songworkseducators.com)

My teaching videos: [Ms. Suarez's Music Room](#)

## **Join us for a trio of fall SIPs, SongWorks in Practice sessions, with a focus on SongWorks: Return to School**

**Virtual opportunities to support, encourage,  
and empower each other as the school year begins**

**Ideas to use in virtual, hybrid, and face to face teaching  
that focus on creating ways to build community  
through SongWorks Principles and Practices**

Interested in attending? Have a colleague who might like to attend? Reach out to Jake Harkins at [jeharkins@fcps.edu](mailto:jeharkins@fcps.edu) ASAP. The first SIP session is on August 27th!

# Back to School In Person

## So, You're Teaching Face to Face

Danielle Solan



*Editor's Note: Danielle Solan is a SongWorks Educator teaching in Hong Kong. The rate of COVID-19 infections is much lower there than it is in the United States, so she has been given the go ahead to do singing and active movement in person. The reflections she shares here can be adapted to your context.*

1) **The goal is for kids to not know what they're missing even when everything is different.** After our first class back, a kid said this was the best music class of my life, even though we were wearing masks and socially distanced.

2) **Think about the balance of activities.** Speaking and singing and moving are all more exhausting with a mask -- you will feel more winded than usual and so will your kids. The BALANCE of activities has never been more important. Alternate between gross motor, fine motor, song-based, and listening activities with mapping or dotting. This rhythm of alternating types of participation really helps.

3) **Think about taking care of your voice.** It's vocally exhausting to speak and sing while wearing a mask. Insist on no talking while you're talking. In general, I found that the kids understand the difficulty and are respectful with just a slight reminder. If singing is allowed: consider making a recording of yourself singing to play during lessons, so everyone can very lightly sing or hum along. Consider getting a voice amplifier like chattervox to wear along with your mask.

4) **Kids need to move!** I found that movement is especially important now. Movement gives kids motivation to participate when they are at desks, socially distanced, without their usual level of social interaction. Plan lots of activities with recordings for movement. Try body percussion! Do choreography to pop music. Try exploring creative movement in your personal space. Whereas I would usually do games with more social contact or freeform locomotor movement in a room, I ended up planning activities with movement where the kids stayed in their own personal space, or moved through space but always in the same direction with choreography to keep social distancing intact, and the kids LOVED it.

5) **Be flexible, think flexibly.** SongWorks has much to offer right now, and certain of our favorite activities will shine in this moment. Think fingerplays with nursery rhymes, mapping, and story plopping and movement with masterworks. But now is also the time to be flexible and think out of the box. Reach down deep into your memory of all the workshops you've ever done in various approaches to think about what might work in your new context.

# 1<sup>st</sup> Generation Contributors to ETM-MEI-Song Works

Rev. August 1, 20 20



You know about Mary Helen Richards. You know Dr. Fleurette Sweeney, Dr. Marty Stover, Dr. Anna Langness, Dr. Doug Bartholomew, and me, Dr. Peggy Bennett.

I felt a strong incentive to introduce you to the wonderful contributors from the 1970s & 1980s, our **First Generation Contributors**. They each played important roles in shaping our understandings of learners, learning, and teaching. Each is a precious part of our SongWorks legacy.

**Margaret Wharram** (Deceased) from Wheatley, Ontario taught in a residential facility that housed all ages with special-needs. Margaret was a quiet soul with great strength, compassion, practicality, and ingenuity. By example, she taught her often-disfigured and severely disabled teens how to be kind to each other and how to acknowledge even simple successes. Though not trained as a music teacher, Margaret used ETM songs, games, and graphics to engage her students and guide their sense of accomplishment. Margaret was a marvel at using an economy of words, comfortable silence, and simple gestures with her students. She said only what students needed for them to respond to her request. Margaret was a “fan favorite” in ETM summer courses, teaching all of us how to interact with children: to recognize and celebrate their successes and learn appropriate boundaries with others. She was one of 10 ETM Trustees named in 1984 by Mary Helen Richards to lead and shape the development of ETM.



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“Time allowed for growth is never wasted. Allow the child time to make decisions-all kinds of decisions: choosing a picture or an instrument; deciding upon an activity or a partner.”

*P. 55 In Experience Games Through Music: I. For The Very, Very Young By Sister Fleurette Sweeney, II. For The Very Young  
By Margaret Wharram.*

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**Mariam Allen Brownson** (deceased) from San Mateo, CA taught hearing-impaired children how to speak. Because Mariam did not use sign language as a primary teaching tool, her classroom was quite unique. When Mary Helen & Fleurette began working with Mariam and her students, they experimented with how to make students' utterances more fluent, understandable. The shift from a beat-based to a flow-based emphasis transformed students' communications. It also launched a decades-long evolution of "clustering" in speech and music. A polio survivor, Mariam lived life with a wheelchair, eager smile, and charming giggle, as she engaged each child. She often slid off her chair to be eye-to-eye with her students, including those in ETM Observation Classes. She helped us understand brain-body connections and the needs of hearing-impaired children. She helped us learn about speaking, hearing, and our bodies' reactions to sight, sound, and movement. In 1974, Mariam wrote **The Dance of Language** to share her experiences in working with ETM and her students.



Mariam Allen Brownson, Marilyn Winter and Peggy Bennett



**Mike Wagner** (deceased) was the District Supervisor for Physical Education in South Washington County, MN. Mike was drawn to ETM after listening and watching as ETM teachers led singing games. A **Movement Education** specialist, Mike's educational aim was to engage as many movements and students as possible.

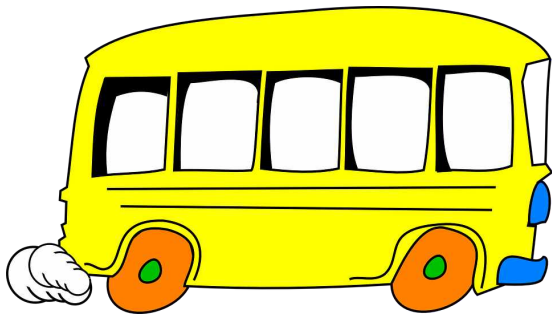
Mike's zest for the importance of movement and how to manage it in classrooms shaped all of us. Changing directions frequently and having all students move in random directions without colliding are two ways students (including us!) learned to control bodies in motion.

A neighbor once complained that Mike's son left skid marks on the sidewalk when he rode as fast as possible . . . then slammed on the brakes! Mike replied, "I'm glad my son has these skills." "Skills? What skills?" asked the neighbor. Mike answered, "When children are riding on the street and a speeding vehicle approaches, I want them to be able to slam on the brakes *and* manage the bike. Then no one gets hurt."

# From Previous Newsletters

Remember: You can easily access years of ideas from past newsletters on our website.  
Here are a few to check out first!

Check out these [YouTube channels](#) run by SongWorks Educators, May 2020, p. 14



Alice Nordquist [shares ways to make Bumpity Bumpity Yellow Bus](#) a meaningful activity for the start of the school year, September 2016

[Tips to kick off the school year](#) from Betty Phillips, September 2014



**We're Social!**

Follow us on Facebook [@SongWorksEducators](#)

and Twitter [@SongWorksEd](#)

# SongWorks Certification

Even though we had to cancel all SWC Courses in 2020, we are planning a very exciting 2021 for you! Mark your calendar for these in depth experiences in SongWorks principles and practices.

June 2021 marks our first invitations from two universities to provide SongWorks endorsed courses. Level 1, SongWorks in Action, will be offered at the following locations.

- June 21-25 BYU (Brigham Young University) Provo, UT
- June 28 -July 2 SMU (Southern Methodist University) Dallas, TX

In July, we will sponsor Level 1 SongWorks in Action and Level 2 SongWorks for Musicality at River Falls, WI. River Falls is a lovely setting with air conditioned dormitory lodging and the dining hall has tasty selections. This is the only site where we will have most of the SongWorks faculty present.

- July 12 - 16 UWRF (University of Wisconsin, River Falls) River Falls, WI

SWC Level 3 Teaching Practicum begins September, 2021. Successful completion of this third and final course will result in the designation of SongWorks Certified Educator.

Ever wonder how to list your SW level of experience? Here's the answer!

Completed SWiA  
Ruthanne Parker  
SongWorks Level 1

Completed SWfM  
Taylor Crevola  
SongWorks Level 2

Completed 2015 SW Certification Course  
Betty Phillips  
SongWorks Certified Educator

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## Conference

And now a word from our 2021 Conference Chair, Aimee Newman: <https://flipgrid.com/s/d29eff044b29>

During our annual membership meeting on August 5th, 2020 several changes were voted on unanimously. Our Presidential Team will shift in their roles, welcoming Nan Wilkins-Fitzpatrick as the new President-Elect Apprentice. Aimee Newman will serve as President Elect, Lisa Schoen as President, and Vicky Suarez as Past President with Max Mellman transitioning into the role of secretary. We also welcome Natalie Neugent (US) and Bethany Beaudry (CAN) as the newest board members.

The Purpose of SongWorks Educators Association is to search for and practice ways of making music and interacting with people that preserve and celebrate the dignity of both. As a guiding principle, this purpose will focus our work on:

- 1) Practices that foster interactive, facilitative learning environments.
- 2) Strategies that empower the learner within the context of music experience and study.
- 3) Networks that encourage collaboration between diverse disciplines, professionals, and interest groups.

## SWEA Board of Directors

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**President:** Lisa Schoen, MN  
**President-Elect:** Aimee Newman, CO  
**Past- President:** Vicky Suarez, TX  
**President- Elect Apprentice:** Nan Wilkins-Fitzpatrick, CA  
**Secretary:** Max Mellman, NJ  
**Treasurer:** Anna Langness, CO  
**Registrar:** Alice Nordquist, MD  
**Director- USA:** Natalie Neugent, TX  
**Director - Japan:** Yoshie Kaneko, Japan  
**Director - Canada:** Bethany Beaudry, MB  
**Director - USA:** Mary Stockum, CO

## SWEA

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**Support the mission of SWEA with membership dues or donations!**

\$45 Regular \$75 Sustaining  
\$100 Patron \$20 Student

Join or donate online at:

[www.songworkseducatorsassociation.com](http://www.songworkseducatorsassociation.com)

Would you like to submit something to be considered for the SWEA Newsletter or Happenings?

Email [ruthanne.fisher@gmail.com](mailto:ruthanne.fisher@gmail.com)

## SWEA Committees

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**Website Chair:** Pam Vellutini, OR  
**Newsletter Chair:** Ruthanne Parker, PA  
**Newsletter formatter:** Taylor Crevola, OR  
**Academic Coordinator:** Taryn Raschdorf, VA  
**Grants Administrator:** Emilee Knell, UT  
**Emerging Pioneers Advisor:** Samantha Smith, PA  
**Visiting Scholars Chair:** Peggy Bennett, MT

The password for the secure Members Access area of the SWEA website was updated on July 10, 2020 and emailed to current members. If you are ready to renew your membership, please visit our [Membership page](#). If you are uncertain about the date of your last dues payment, or if you have any other questions about your membership, please contact Registrar Alice Nordquist:  
[registrar@songworkseducators.com](mailto:registrar@songworkseducators.com).  
Thank you for your support of the SongWorks Educators Association!