

First Strings

A Program of the Chesapeake Chamber Music

The mission of **First Strings** is to introduce a beginning string music experience to elementary school children. Every child in this hands-on program has the opportunity to learn the basic skills needed to play the violin. In a series of classes, they learn to hold the violin and bow, play a basic rhythm, and put it all together in a “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” variation. Each class is divided into teams that take turns being performers/violinists and audience, allowing the children to learn by watching, listening, imitating, and most importantly, performing.

First Strings is designed for third (and/or fourth) graders to take place during school hours at the convenience of the instructor and school staff. The classes run from 30 to 40 minutes over a period of ten consecutive school days (some variation in this format can be accommodated). This format allows for the maximum benefit and retention of skills for each student. **First Strings** provides instruments to accommodate the number of students in each team. The school provides a suitable space and one staff member per class.

The short-term goals of **First Strings** are to improve children's skills in listening, gain self confidence by performing, exhibit cooperation and self control, and to have fun while learning the multiple skills needed to play a musical instrument. The longer-term goal is to awaken young people's interest in, and ultimately their love for, the classical musical art form.

The cost of **First Strings** is \$500 per classroom for the ten session program, based on 30 - 45 minute sessions.

Merideth Buxton, Director for **First Strings**, earned her Bachelors of Music at the State University of New York at Potsdam, and her Masters of Music at Ithaca College. She has performed and taught on the Eastern Shore since 1982 and has appeared as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player in area symphonies. She offers private lessons in her home in Royal Oak, and is currently on staff at Washington College, Chestertown, MD.

Further information about **First Strings** can be obtained by contacting Chesapeake Chamber Music - P.O. Box 461, Easton, MD 21601 / 410-819-0380 / don@musicontheshore.org. Questions about the program may also be addressed directly to Merideth Buxton, P.O. Box 102, Royal Oak, MD 21662 / 410-745-3324 / buxtons@atlanticbb.net