“[Lead Guitar shows] tangibly better student outcomes in terms of dropout rates, behavioral issues and academic achievement.”

– U.S. News & World Report

Mission

Music education improves grades, graduation rates and critical thinking, but it’s not available to five million American children. That’s why Lead Guitar builds free guitar ensemble classes in partnership with neighborhood schools nationwide. Daily mentorship, classroom connections with global artists and college campus experiences empower students to grow academically, socially and emotionally.

Lead Guitar’s Vision is to engage every learner with an instrument that appeals across genres and generations, using music from a broad range of traditions, and differentiated materials like Adaptive and Spanish-language curricula. We focus resources on children with the least access to arts education by collaborating with schools where 80% or more of students are eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch.

We Value equal access to education as the underpinning of a free society. At Lead Guitar we are expanding access to music learning while modeling excellence, inclusion and accountability.
Letter from the Director

One of my many privileges in leading Lead Guitar is putting together the content for this annual report. It is an opportunity to reflect on (and occasionally get misty-eyed about) the people, work, and even some of the specific moments that impacted the students, school teachers, and artists that are the Lead Guitar family. Thanks for taking a moment to let me share them with you.

The biggest news of the 2021-22 school year was the return to in-person instruction in most cities. It was an essential change for the well-being of students, and infinitely better for instrumental music education. But, it was also a formidable challenge for an organization like Lead Guitar that operates in 30 unique school districts, in five very different states, each with its own approach to COVID-related policies and procedures in terms of masking, testing, exposure reporting, and immunization. With that in mind, I want to begin by celebrating the work of our operations team led by Director of Operations Dr. Holly Holmes with Program and Events Manager Marina Jarrette. They navigated a complicated and ever-changing web of requirements and protocols to keep our Teaching Artists doing what they do best all year long: mentoring kids and supporting classroom teachers. Also worthy of celebration was the return, though limited, of touring artist assemblies, in-school student recitals, pizza parties, in-person Teacher Workshops and university showcase concerts – all of which are detailed later in this report.

FY22 was the first year of Lead Guitar’s five-year Strategic Plan, which has us on track to double the number of students we are serving through daily, in-school guitar classes while creating online learning opportunities for thousands of additional students who live outside the major urban areas where we offer live services. With 94 school partners slated for the 2022-23 school year, Lead Guitar anticipates working with 5,100 students in year-long classes and reaching 40-50,000 additional students through performances and livestreams. The two regions experiencing the most dramatic growth this year are Atlanta and Los Angeles, with the latter growing from 10 to 17 schools and pulling even with Tucson as our third largest operation behind Chicago with 20 schools and Phoenix with 21. You’ll read more about Atlanta, Chicago, Phoenix, Colorado, and Tucson in the pages that follow, but here I’d like to shine a light on Los Angeles as an example of the incredible Teaching Artists and Community Partners on our team in every city.

In Los Angeles, Lead Guitar collaborates with LAUSD (where we are a Preferred Arts Community Network Vendor) to identify schools of greatest need. We pair those schools with a member of our LA-based Teaching Artist team led by Regional Director Dr. Jaxon Williams and their guitars come from our partners at Guitar Salon International in Santa Monica. Jaxon and I work closely with USC Guitar Professors Bill Kanengiser, Scott Tennant, and Brian Head on a work/study initiative through which we identify USC graduate students with the skills Lead Guitar needs in the classroom. All five of our LA Teaching Artists are USC graduates or current USC graduate students. One example of the Teaching Artist team’s extraordinary talent came in October of 2021. Dr. Bokyung “Bo” Byun won the Guitar Foundation of America’s International Concert Artist Competition, which is widely considered the most prestigious classical guitar competition on the planet. Despite her pending international tour and her new faculty position at Cal State Fullerton, Bo has committed to remaining a Lead Guitar Teaching Artist because she believes deeply in the mission. Another source of pride in our LA operation is our staff’s ability to conduct bilingual classes, an effort that is supported by the release of Lead Guitar’s Spanish-language Curriculum and led by LA native Christian Cruz.

Lead Guitar is blessed with a nationwide network full of talented Teaching Artists, staff members, and community partners like those that spearhead our efforts in Los Angeles. I hope you enjoy seeing evidence and reading anecdotes of their tremendous impact in the pages that follow. Thank you for supporting their work!
Outcomes/Impacts

Lead Guitar is always on the lookout for new perspectives in terms of measuring impact. Here are two data points that are particularly relevant for students and families in 2022. They are from an Observational Assessment completed in June by Certified K-12 Teachers from Lead Guitar partner schools:

93% of participating School Teachers saw improvement in student focus and engagement that they believe is attributable to their collaboration with Lead Guitar.

This is significant because we know that focus and engagement in school has declined: first, as a result of dependence on electronic devices; and then, more dramatically, as a result of distance-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The decline is having a disturbing effect on learning, especially among kids on the lowest end of the economic spectrum. In schools demographically similar to those served by Lead Guitar, the number of students performing below grade level rose by 17% since the onset of COVID.

Lead Guitar requires focus, determination, and delayed gratification from student participants, which directly combat disengagement and the effects of screen dependence by teaching kids how to listen as a group, give each other constructive feedback, and create and achieve short- and long-term goals.

This second data point illuminates one of the reasons our proprietary curriculum is engaging more kids in music learning:

97% of participating School Teachers agreed that Lead Guitar shows respect for and gives space to the culture, community, and heritage of their students. 69% “Strongly Agreed”, 28% “Agreed” and the other 3% responded “Neutral”.

While our curriculum is rigorous, the program is inclusive and encouraging and has been shown to broadly increase music participation and access at our partner schools, exposing still more students to the academic and social-emotional benefits of music learning. That is reflected in 2016 enrollment data that showed a:

167% increase in music participation at schools after partnering with Lead Guitar.
Timely Impacts

4,374 students engaged in direct, daily to twice weekly in-school guitar classes throughout the 2021-22 school year.

86 School Teachers trained through professional development workshops co-teaching, curriculum support and private lessons.

35,000+ additional students and community members participated through in-school assemblies, showcase concerts at partner colleges and universities and the We Are Guitar livestream.

“And then it just clicked. I thought, if I can practice the guitar, I can do my homework.”

– Macario, Middle School Student

Impacts Over Time

In-depth/long-term learning opportunities are created with 78% of school partnerships lasting five years or longer.¹

80% of Lead Guitar students in five Phoenix Union High Schools improved their cumulative GPA after two years of participation.²

Lead Guitar students identified as in danger of drop out or expulsion reduced absences by 52% and days in detention by 45% during their first year of participation.²

Teachers and Student Aides reported general focus and behavior in school as ‘Greatly Improved’ (4.75 out of 5) among participants in Lead Guitar’s Adaptive Program.³

Teachers also give LG 4.72 out of 5 for increasing their value to their school and job security.³

¹. Lead Guitar Enrollment Data 2015-2020
². Lead Guitar: Report on Whole Child Outcomes; Dr. J. David Betts, 2019
³. Lead Guitar Teacher Workshop Survey, 2016
Lead Guitar engages students, teachers and families through Four Pillars of Service: Classroom Instruction and Curriculum, Professional Development, In-School Assemblies and We Are Guitar, and Showcase Concerts. You can see these learning and growth initiatives in action and meet some of the people whose lives they changed on the pages that follow.

Pillar 1: Classroom Instruction and Curriculum

Lead Guitar has assembled an international team of Teaching Artists: global concert musicians, Fulbright Scholars and professors with a passion for mentorship. They collaborate with certified K-12 teachers to co-teach in-school guitar ensemble classes using Lead Guitar’s proprietary curriculum and Lead Guitar Digital: a library of instructional videos, lesson plans, and extension activities accessible from any device.

"His teacher sent me a video [of him playing the guitar] and I said, are you sure that’s the same kid?... He was amazing! It wasn’t an avenue I would have pursued with him because I just didn’t think he would be interested. It turns out he’s really pretty good!"

— Lacey, Parent of a child in LG’s Adaptive Class
Student Profile

YURITZA GARAY
Senior, Maryvale High School

What music does your family listen to?
My family mainly listens to Spanish oldies, Latin music, and regional Mexican. I have influenced my family to try many different genres of music and today they listen to R&B, 80's oldies, salsa, jazz, and rock. I'm glad that I was able to introduce all kinds of music to those who surround me because there's so many types and each is beautiful.

Any expectations you had from guitar class when you began?
My first expectation when I started my guitar class was to have the skill to read and understand music notes and music theory. I never had any experience with the guitar and less with reading notes.

What was your experience with Lead Guitar?
My experience with Lead Guitar was great, I was able to learn so much and pick up many skills from them. I was able to show my talent of all I've learned over my high school years. I had an awesome time performing for them and I'm so grateful for all they have done for me and my guitar group.

Any memorable events with Lead Guitar?
My most memorable event with Lead Guitar was when we were broadcast all around social media, the thought of being watched by so many people was very incredible. I will also remember when Lead Guitar personally bought my Touring Guitar group new music stands, it was incredibly generous, and we were all excited and thankful.

How has playing the guitar impacted your life?
Picking up the guitar was the best decision I have ever made, if I didn't, I wouldn't be who I am today. Guitar has developed my thinking skills, communicating skills, and my everyday life skills significantly. I was able to express my emotions through music and I couldn’t think of another more beautiful way you can do that. I have met great people through my guitar experience, and I have been able to perform in places I never saw myself playing at. I'm extremely forever grateful to this box with strings, the guitar.

Who are your favorite musicians and guitarists?
Some of my favorite musicians are Bob Marley, Madonna, Mariah Carey, Tupac Shakur, and Freddie Mercury. Some of my favorite guitarists are Adina Andrei, Mark Houghton, and Ana Vidovic. Over the years I was able to expand my music taste and I'm very glad I have experience listening to many types of music around the world.

What are your current goals?
My current goals as a senior in high school is to graduate, to explore new things in life, explore everything the world is offering, take more time to identify who I am and what I want to do in life. One major current goal is to get accepted to my dream university school, I have applied and I'm currently waiting for the letter!

Do you plan to continue guitar after you graduate?
I plan to continue guitar after I graduate as a hobby, but I hope I can still perform for an audience again one day. I absolutely enjoy playing classical music and modern rock, playing guitar is something I will never give up. This instrument has significantly impacted my life and I'll continue to develop my playing skills.
Pillar 2: Professional Development

In addition to co-teaching with our content experts, planning sessions and private lessons, our Teachers’ Workshops offer K-12 teachers formal PD towards promotion and recertification as they master the Lead Guitar curriculum and improve their own playing. This work is the key to making our programs sustainable.

"Classroom teachers have commented on the way students have learned to focus better as a result of the guitar classes. Students have gained confidence in their ability to learn new things.”

— LuAnn, Elementary School Teacher
Tell us a little bit about your childhood and where you grew up. Did you have music in school as a child?
I’m from Miami, Florida and was exposed to a wide variety of music from an early age, both in school and at home. There were musicians on my mother’s side of the family and my dad and his brother would DJ at nightclubs and local parties.

Where did you go to school and college, and what did you study?
I am a product of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. It was during junior high school that I started playing the trumpet, which I continued during high school. My family was very supportive of my musical interests and my band directors influenced me greatly to pursue music at the collegiate level. I went on to Florida A&M University to study music education and to be a part of the world famous “Marching 100” band. As a member of the band program, I got to go to Paris, France and perform in the French Bicentennial parade. After graduation, I worked as a high school band director for 25 years.

What inspired you to start this program at MD Roberts Middle School for the Arts?
The program had already existed but the instructor left abruptly during the first year. I then had the opportunity to come to M.D. Roberts to move the program forward. The school’s other Fine Arts programs set the bar very high with superior-caliber performances, so I use that as inspiration to develop and grow the guitar program.

What were some of the biggest challenges in starting a guitar program at MD Roberts?
There’s a healthy competition between the Fine Arts programs to get as many students involved as possible. Plus, recruiting incoming 6th graders has been challenging after the pandemic.

How did partnering with Lead Guitar impact MD Roberts?
Lead Guitar has had a positive impact on our guitar program in many ways. The textbook provides structured lessons that enable students to build their playing and music reading skills. The weekly visits from the teaching artists provide expert instruction to both the students and myself. The presence of the teaching artists also makes possible the opportunity to team teach the students.

How has your guitar class impacted students who might not have been involved in more “traditional” ensembles like band or orchestra?
The guitar classes have helped to get more students at M.D. Roberts involved in music and provide a double dose of musical instruction to those students who may also participate in the school’s chorus, band orchestra or piano classes.

What advice do you have to students beginning the program?
Pay attention, do your best and have fun learning to play the guitar!
Pillar 3: In-School Assemblies and We Are Guitar

Global touring guitarists perform for, dialogue with, and inspire students in person, right at their own school, while our interactive We Are Guitar broadcast (in partnership with Guitar Salon International) provides an online forum for students nationwide to learn from, interview, and perform with guitar celebrities.
“What we observed as a school is the direct social emotional effect on the students.... they were calm and less impulsive. Thank you for helping us re-engage our students.”

– Jullanar, High School Principal

_We Are Guitar_ is the title of Lead Guitar’s broadcast on the Guitar Salon International YouTube channel. It’s also a fitting synopsis of our approach. We want to make great instrumental music education accessible to every child and meet children where they are by ensuring that they see themselves in the composers we choose for our books and the artists who lead our classrooms and concerts. We also seek to modify our approach to remove barriers in participation, an effort that has given rise to our Adaptive Curriculum and our Spanish-Language Edition Method Books.

Grammy-winning singer/songwriter Curt Chambers (Alicia Keys and Dr. Dre) is interviewed by Lead Guitar Chicago student Javon for _We Are Guitar_ Ep. 6.

Guitarist Emily Elbert (Esperanza Spalding, Jacob Collier and Gwen Stefani) jams with Lead Guitar students around the US.
Pillar 4: Showcase Concerts

Two Amazing Venues - Middle and High school students perform and are celebrated in front of family and friends at annual Showcase Concerts at their local college campus. Our elementary school families come together at school to perform, celebrate and share food in an atmosphere that supports community building.

Ganz Hall, Roosevelt University, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright when he was a student of Louis Sullivan, photos by Lucas Ewing
Harris Hall, Aspen Music Festival and School, photos by Graham Northrup
Aspen Music Festival and School
## Finances

### ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Bank Accounts</td>
<td>$298,984.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>$50,462.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Current Assets</td>
<td>$2,029.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Assets</td>
<td>$2,358.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$353,833.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EQUITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Net Assets</td>
<td>$25,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Net Assets</td>
<td>$60,834.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Designated Assets</td>
<td>$113,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Revenue</td>
<td>$138,099.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$336,933.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Payroll Taxes Payable</td>
<td>$4,515.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrued Payroll</td>
<td>$12,384.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$16,899.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Events</td>
<td>$218,428.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation</td>
<td>$355,983.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td>$64,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>$50,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual and Business</td>
<td>$49,982.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City/County/State Government</td>
<td>$24,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative School-based Grants</td>
<td>$32,450.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>$37,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Kind</td>
<td>$16,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Service Fees</td>
<td>$8,717.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$857,460.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Related</td>
<td>$509,710.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development/Marketing</td>
<td>$20,757.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Admin. Related</td>
<td>$59,040.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$65,979.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and Equip.</td>
<td>$16,572.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>$20,345.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production and Events</td>
<td>$12,472.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Meetings</td>
<td>$8,355.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$6,157.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$719,387.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NET OPERATING REVENUE**  
$138,073.00

*$113,000 of NET Revenue was earmarked as Reserve Operating Capital in support of a Board-Approved Initiative to build 180 days of ROC by FY26.
“There may be some tough times but we’re all working on something that we care about. It means a lot for us to work in a community of music-making together.”

Zuriel, High School Student
Our Team: Donors, Supporters and Partners
Marc and Deborah Sandroff
Rossman Family Foundation
Carol and Ray Cunningham
David and Nicolle Bornstein
John D. Fujii Trust
Ken and Kelley Abrahams Charitable Fund
Jane and Terry Klipp

Jeff Sater
Joseph and Michelle Millstone Family Trust
Peter and Claire Ewing
John and Joan D’Addario Foundation Inc.
The Reading RR Fund (J. Clinton Mabie)
Tankenoff Family Philanthropic Fund via Jewish Community Foundation of Southern Arizona

Glenn Howell
Tun and Wenyan Jie
Bert and Janice Mackie
John S. Webster
Wayne Wesala
Sonia Trejo
Andrea Cox (in honor of blues guitarist Mark E. Bevel
Anne Meyers
Bill Sherman
Kathleen Garner
Jeanne E. Bensema
Give Lively Foundation Inc.
Our Team: Staff Members

Denis Azabagic (Regional Director – Chicago, he/his) performs concerts around the world, maintaining a balance between his solo recitals, chamber music with the Cavatina Duo and Fandango quartet, and engagements as a soloist with orchestras. Azabagic’s love for performing extends to sharing with others his knowledge of music making. He frequently offers master classes on tour, teaches at the University of Illinois-Chicago, and is the Program Director for Guitar, Percussion & Harp at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

Dr. Keith Barnhart (Teaching Artist – Denver, he/his) is an active performer and teacher in Westminster, Colorado. Keith teaches at several local studios and has sought out opportunities to share music with those who may otherwise not have access. He also works as a Certified Music Practitioner, playing customized live therapeutic music at the bedside to create a healing environment for patients in hospitals, hospice and nurse care facilities.

Dr. Bokyung Byun (Teaching Artist – Los Angeles, she/hers) enjoys a reputation as one of the most sought-after guitarists of her generation. Ms. Byun holds the distinction of being the first female winner of the prestigious JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Concerto Competition, and a bevy of orchestras, festivals, workshops, and guitar societies look to Ms. Byun for solo performances and masterclasses.

Dr. Daniel Bolshoy (Regional Director – Georgia, he/his) is an Assistant Professor in the Hugh Hodgson School of Music at the University of Georgia, where he directs the guitar program. An Israeli-Canadian guitarist, he has performed as a soloist with over sixty orchestras internationally, and has appeared on seven commercial recordings and two documentary films on the Bravo! TV network. As a teacher, he frequently presents masterclasses for guitar societies, schools, and music festivals.

Isaac Brady (Teaching Artist – Phoenix) is a soloist, chamber musician, arranger, and educator. He believes in preserving the music of diverse cultures and implementing them into his performing repertoire and teaching repertoire for his students. Isaac has performed in a range of ensembles including jazz combos, classical guitar ensembles, pit orchestras for musicals, and old-time bands in his collegiate and professional career.

Russ Callison (Teaching Artist – Denver, he/his) sold a pig to buy his first guitar at the tender age of 16. A Texas native transplanted to Colorado, Russ actively performs and teaches in the Denver metro area, and has performed extensively in the US and internationally, most recently as one half of the Denver-based guitar and cello duo Solazur.

Doris Čosić (Teaching Artist – Los Angeles) started her music path at the age of 6 in Velenje, Slovenia. She is currently a volunteer at LAC+USC Medical Center’s music program and enjoys sharing her love for music with their patients and staff. She also works at Virtual Guitar Orchestra as an assistant editor, where she’s created the very first all-women Virtual Guitar Orchestra in collaboration with Grammy-nominated Clarice Assad.

Christian Cruz (Teaching Artist – Los Angeles) is a Mexican-American classical musician. As a native of Los Angeles, he grew up surrounded by the rock and hip hop scenes while simultaneously being influenced by the Latin American music of his own heritage. As a young guitarist, he played rock in Hollywood venues such as the Whiskey A Go Go and the Roxy, and continued his studies as a professional musician at Fullerton College, where he focused on classical guitar and composition.
Sara D’Ippolito (Teaching Artist – Chicago) was born into a multicultural and musical family, growing up in Calabria, Southern Italy, and starting to play guitar at age 9. Sara is now an active performing artist, composer and educator with musical influences that span many genres. Since 2015, Sara has led the musical project “Sara and Kenny” (www.saraandkenny.com), and a member of the Illinois Arts Council’s coveted ArtsTour roster for touring musicians.

Joseph Douglass (Teaching Artist – Los Angeles) is a guitarist and pedagogue who is best known for his chamber and solo performances and innovative music instruction. He is an active performer, collaborating in duos and mixed ensemble performances in New York City, Los Angeles, and other major metropolitan areas. As a pedagogue, he has held positions at University Nevada Reno, The Bronx Conservatory of Music, and Ezra Guitar.

Nicholas Epple (Teaching Artist – Tucson) is pursuing his DMA in classical guitar at the University of Arizona. He has performed in France, Italy, Canada, and the United States in workshops, festivals, and competitions. Nicholas received first prize at the David Russell Bach competition in 2017 and was awarded second place at the Domaine Forget International Competition in Quebec in 2018.

Pablo Gonzalez (Teaching Artist – Tucson) started studying classical guitar at the age of 14. In 2010, Pablo was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to pursue his Master’s Degree in guitar performance, being the first classical guitar performer ever in his native country to receive such an award. Pablo is also an active participant in the Tucson classical guitar scene and was recently a finalist in the prestigious Third Annual David Russell Bach

Dr. Holly Holmes (Director of Operations, she/her) is Lead Guitar’s primary administrator, managing everything from scheduling and communications with our partner schools to finance and grant-writing. She has worked as an administrator for both non-profit and for-profit arts organizations, including as a jazz programming intern for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Having benefited from excellent arts classes in the public schools of her native state of Wisconsin, Holly is impassioned to build upon Lead Guitar’s arts education programming for those students most in need.

Dr. Bin Hu (Teaching Artist – Tucson) has performed internationally as a soloist, chamber musician, and soloist with orchestra. As a scholar and educator, Hu has been invited to conservatories and conferences in China and South American countries to present a variety of topics on Baroque performance practices on guitar. Hu is also the founding member of Duo Chinoiserie, an award-winning ensemble combining the classical guitar with the Chinese guzheng (zhither).

Marina Jarrette (Program & Events Manager, she/hers) is an active performing artist, songwriter, and director who believes strongly in arts accessibility and the transformative power of music. Alongside her BM in Vocal Performance, Marina also holds certifications in State, Foundational, and Federal Grant Writing. She has debuted original content as a singer-songwriter in New York City, and has performed with multiple regional companies, including The Phoenix Theatre Company, Arizona Broadway Theatre, and The Phoenix Symphony.
Our Team: Staff Members (cont.)

Nick Lenio (Director of Instruction, Regional Director – Colorado, he/his) has dedicated the past 13 years to music education in public schools as a certified teacher and has been teaching with Lead Guitar since 2013. In 2015, Nick was named “Music Teacher of the Year” by Jazz Aspen Snowmass, and in 2016, he was a semi-finalist for the GRAMMY Music Educator Award. Nick aims to contribute to the Lead Guitar mission through sharing his experience from many years as a public school music teacher. As a local musician, Nick is in high demand performing on guitar and bass guitar.

Erdong Li (Teaching Artist – Atlanta/ Athens) is a very active virtuoso guitarist and currently teaching at William Pu Music Academy. He is also the Artistic Director for the CSU Guitar Symposium. Erdong has been touring in China during the summer to mostly sold-out concerts.

Zhivko Nikolov (Teaching Artist – Chicago) started playing classical guitar when he was 11. During his youth studies he performed as a soloist and with ensembles for various occasions, such as guitar seminars, festivals, and concerts. When Zhivko isn’t serving as a Teaching Artist for Lead Guitar, he is teaching at the Gasse School of Music. He also established his own music studio in 2017 under the name 6VibeZ Music Inc., and performs in the Chicago area as a soloist and in a duet with the flute-guitar duo “Eutopia.”

Rubén Portillo (Teaching Artist – Chicago) is renowned for his dedication and sincere love for guitar music. He has won many competitions in his native Paraguay and is frequently invited to perform for different organizations in Paraguay and the United States. Rubén has been teaching private lessons since 2019 and has a great passion to share the knowledge and expertise with aspiring musicians. In addition to his private studio, he also presents masterclasses, private/group lessons, and ensemble coachings.

Brad Richter (Executive Director, he/his) is co-founder & executive director of Lead Guitar. As a touring artist he played nearly 1,000 concerts in North America and Europe and made innumerable appearances on NPR’s Performance Today. An avid collaborator, his performance and project partners included Grammy-winner David Finckel, The Phoenix Chorale and Pacifica Quartet; Broadway legend Ben Vereen and guitarist Carlos Bonell, his teacher at the Royal College of Music.

Ryan Roubison (Teaching Artist – Phoenix, he/his) is a classical guitarist and an active musician in the Phoenix valley, specializing in a range of musical styles from classical, to folk, and contemporary art music. He is also the music director for the Irish Arts Summer Camp at the Irish Cultural center of Phoenix, and runs a guitar and ukulele program for children at Keybox Studios. As a passionate music educator, Ryan believes that the impact of the teacher reaches far beyond technical instruction.

Dr. David Sewell (Teaching Artist – Phoenix, he/his) As a guitarist, arranger, and educator he is devoted to arranging unique repertoire and teaching his students a wide variety of styles and techniques on both classical and electric guitar. David is also the head of the guitar department at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix.

Justin Sheppard (Teaching Artist – Atlanta/ Athens) studied music performance and education at UGA before serving over a decade in the US Navy. Justin now enjoys a full schedule of private students at both Vivo Music and Arts Academy in Cumming and Cambridge Academy of Music in Johns Creek. When not practicing, performing, or putting on students’ performance events, Justin enjoys opening students’ eyes to the full range of the guitar’s music, capabilities, and history.
Fabricio Lock Sotomayor (Teaching Artist – Chicago) is originally from Peru, and he enjoys performing and teaching. Fabricio has over 10 years of experience teaching all levels using a variety of methods and is a member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas. He has taught master classes and performed around Peru and the US. He is currently living in Chicago where he teaches in a private and group setting.

Andrew Smith (Regional Director – Phoenix, he/his) is a classical guitarist who performs both as a solo artist and a founding member of the Augustine Strings sponsored ensemble Petrichor Duo. Andrew works with hundreds of public-school students in Phoenix and throughout Arizona each week, often traveling to the Apache and Navajo reservations. In addition to playing and teaching guitar, Andrew also builds guitars in his spare time.

James Terrell (Teaching Artist – Atlanta/Athens) is a guitarist, composer, and music educator. He is an active performer both as a soloist and in chamber ensembles, and his repertoire spans the history of the guitar, from the Renaissance to premieres of new music. As a composer, Mr. Terrell has written concert music for all manner of ensembles and soloists as well as orchestral music and works for fixed media.

Alfredo “Freddy” Vazquez (Regional Director – Tucson, he/his) has been amazing the stage since the age of 17 after his solo debut in Salzburg, Austria, going on to win and place in numerous guitar competitions. Along with competing and performing, Mr. Vazquez has been a dedicated educator for many years. He is also an associate faculty of music at Cochise Community College and an active recording artist.

Mateo Vintimilla (Teaching Artist – Atlanta/Athens) is an Ecuadorian born Classical Guitarist who performs in venues across the globe and has given recitals in Iceland, New York, Dominican Republic and Ecuador. Mateo started his career as a guitar teacher at an early age and he believes in the understanding of the cultural and historical context of music as a core element of his student’s musical training.

Jaxon Williams (Regional Director – Los Angeles, he/his) is an acclaimed classical guitarist and pedagogue. A former Fulbright Scholar and prizewinner in various international competitions, Jaxon is a sought-after performer of both classical and flamenco guitar. He is also one half of the guitar/clarinet duo Jāca (www.jacamusic.com), which actively performs on the concert stage worldwide.

Erin Young (Teaching Artist – Los Angeles) is a musician and arts administrator. Erin worked in online music education as Head of Guitar at tonebase.co for over two years and is a certified Suzuki Guitar instructor. She currently works as Operations and Program Director for the international guitar education nonprofit Kithara Project, as Assistant Director of Elemental Guitar for nonprofit Elemental Music, and is actively involved with the Guitar Foundation of America, where she works as a Counselor for the annual GFA Guitar Summit.
Our Team: Board Members

Dan Bueschel is currently CEO of Pueblo Mechanical, a mechanical contracting and services firm. Previous to his role at Pueblo Mechanical, Dan held the position of CEO North American Healthcare at Sodexo, a leading global healthcare services provider, and VPGM West at Johnson Controls. Dan credits music education with teaching him that teamwork, commitment, and a sense of accomplishment could be just as meaningful in his professional life. That said, Dan also maintains an active musical life as a gigging musician playing bass for the band Ankh Alien.

Carol H. Cunningham retired in 2014 after 40 years of experience as a civil engineer specializing in planning, licensing, and developing hydroelectric projects internationally. Carol holds a BS and MS in Civil Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The last 14 years of her career, Carol lived and worked in the Philippines, where she founded and continues to operate Dam Good Stuff, Inc, a Fair Trade-certified company, which makes high-end fashion jewelry while providing livelihood opportunities for women and relocated families in the Philippines.

Doug DeClusin is the founder and CEO of Sunland Asphalt & Construction, Inc., and has been awarded the Construction Executive of the Year (Construction Financial Management Association) and CEO of the Year (Phoenix Business Journal). Active in the construction and philanthropic worlds, Doug has been a member of the Associated General Contractors of America-Arizona Chapter since 2007 and supports the Boys and Girls Club, Horses Help, the Ronald McDonald charities, and ASU’s Del E. Webb School of Construction in addition to Lead Guitar.

Glenn Howell is the owner of Howell Athletics where he uses his 28 years of experience to train athletes of all ages, from middle- and high-school athletes, to national champions and professional athletes, as well as general fitness clients. A University of Arizona Football Honorable Mention All-Pac-10 tight end, Glenn graduated with a BA. He currently co-hosts the UA Football pre- and post-game radio broadcasts on Wildcats Radio 1290am, and serves as the Strength and Conditioning Coach for the Tucson Sugar Skulls of the Indoor Football League (2019-Present). Active in service and philanthropy, Glenn supports youth access to arts and athletics in Southern Arizona.
Clint Mabie is an innovative manager with nearly 30 years of experience in the not-for-profit field. A Chicago native, Clint earned his MBA from Northwestern University and was the Executive Director at the Chicago Community Trust. He recently retired after serving 10 years as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona, which works with 42 nonprofits and responded to challenging times such as the mass shooting that involved Representative Gabby Giffords. Clint also holds a M.A. in Education from National Louis University and has taught in Chicago Public Schools.

Tim Miklaucic is the CEO of Cordoba Music Group, Inc., a global guitar manufacturer, distributor, and retailer based in Santa Monica, CA. Divisions include Cordoba Guitars, Guild Guitars, and Guitar Salon International, which represents the best vintage and master-built contemporary nylon string guitars in the world. Tim has been a NAMM member since 2003 and is also a member of the Alliance of Independent Music Merchants. In 2010 Tim founded the GSI Foundation to promote music education in the public school system.

A native Tucsonan, Joe Millstone taught science and math in the gifted and talented middle school program in TUSD for six years. In the mid-1980s, he became a commercial real estate broker with CB Richard Ellis and Grubb and Ellis for ten years apiece before becoming a consultant. In 2001, Joe earned the coveted CCIM Designation for Commercial Investment Real Estate. Joe maintains an active role in the Avarim Rock Band at Temple Emanu El in Tucson. Joe is a competitive swimmer, triathlete, and dedicated grandfather, splitting his time between Tucson and Los Angeles.

Diane Quevedo served as a teacher, Title I Project Assistant, and Elementary Principal for a total of 38 years in Tucson Unified School District. Schools included Safford, Carrillo, Drachman Primary Magnet, Grijalva, and Bloom, where, as principal, she partnered with Lead Guitar to pioneer a new model for the program: training all K-5 classroom teachers in the school to play and teach guitar to their own classes. Seeing Lead Guitar “put a smile on students’ faces and hope in the hearts” inspired Diane to join the Lead Guitar board when she retired.
Our Team: Board Members (cont.)

Marc Sandroff is co-founder of Lead Guitar and Managing Director of Cadre Partners, LLC, an alternative investment and management services firm. Over the last 30 years, he has been involved with numerous entrepreneurial companies as President and a founding member of their management teams. Along the way, he has worked with over 70 operating companies, participated in more than 120 real estate ventures, and has consistently demonstrated his ability to fuel a company’s growth and optimal performance. Marc credits his mastery of the classical guitar in his late teens for building the determination and focus needed to become a successful businessman.

Jeff Sater graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Business and minors in Geology and Music. Jeff entered the family business in oil and gas, real estate, and stock market investments, ultimately taking over in 2008 and growing the business significantly. Jeff's love of music started at a very early age. It lead to learning numerous instruments and, by his teen years, frequent gigs and performances. After success in the business world, Jeff invested in a recording studio in New York City and earned a master's degree in music production from the Conservatory of Recording Arts and Sciences. Today, Jeff is a collector of vintage guitars and remains active in business and music.

Theresa Seifert graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education with a certification in Special Education from Minnesota State University – Moorhead and Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership from Northern Arizona University. After a decade of public school teaching, Theresa earned her law degree from the University of Arizona College of Law in 2005 and has represented Child Protective Services, clerked for the Arizona Court of Appeals, and is a partner in the Vescio Seifert law firm specializing in family, juvenile, and employment law.

Kimeia Vu has over 15 years’ experience as an HR leader, most recently as the Head of HR for the GTM division at Symphony. At Symphony, she partnered closely with the Chief Revenue Officer and sales leadership to transform the GTM organization, focusing efforts on organizational development and design, employee engagement, and talent management. Kimeia is helping Lead Guitar establish best-practice based policies in the areas of hiring and team member benefits and retention during this phase of rapid growth.
Join Our Team

visit

LEADGUITAR.ORG

to learn how you can empower a child through music learning