

Music Camp Director/Teacher – Donna Dahm

From an interview printed in The Women's Magazine, February 2009:



Briefly describe your career in music: Like many musicians, I have varied skills that take me in different directions. I started with a bachelor's degree in music education because I love to teach. As a full-time mom with four children, I was able to work select hours teaching group lessons in the Yamaha Music Education System as a teacher at Heid Music.

That job expanded into my becoming a specialist for the Yamaha Corporation of America and the chance to travel worldwide, train teachers and work on curriculum development projects.

I have students ages 6-16 who are invited to perform their own compositions on local, national and international stages. For four years, I was involved in Dr. Frances Rauscher's research project teaching piano to 3-year-olds in local Head Start programs. Her study has furthered our understanding of how music affects the brain. Along the way, I've also spent hours accompanying, working as a church musician, teaching privately, directing music camps, composing music and performing with the Fox Valley Symphony.

Why did you choose a career in music? The act of making music brings joy into people's lives and improves the quality of their lives. I want to be a part of that.

What has been your most exciting musical accomplishment so far? When I see the joy in someone's eyes, young or old, as they are able to do something they hadn't been able to do before, I'm happiest. Whether it's the 4-year-old playing his first solo for a proud grandparent, an adult on the Crystal Cruise Line playing keyboard ensembles with their peers or my composition student performing in Tokyo, it's the same emotion. When you participate in making music it makes you feel good!

What advice do you have for aspiring musicians? Carefully consider the pros and cons of whether you want to work hard at the business side of a musical career or just to enjoy music as a lifelong hobby. A career demands an additional skill set if you want to be successful. Find professional musicians to talk with before you go to college.

What is the fun side of being a musician? Having a music career allows me flexibility to be who I want to be in all the seasons of my life. When our kids were young I could pick and choose opportunities that fit in with our family needs. As the kids grew and needed me in a different way, I could easily expand my hours and job types as opportunities abound. Music making is always interesting, is constantly evolving and is a full-filling and satisfying career.