



December, 2020

Dear Friends:

I think we have all run out of words to describe 2020. For *Friends of Watertown Music*, early 2020 found us working hard to organize our 9th Annual Watertown MusicFest only to have it cancelled. Through the creative leadership of the Music Department Coordinator, Magen Slesinger, and all the faculty, we were able to pull together a **Virtual MusicFest** in June showcasing the efforts of many of our public school students as well as alums and friends of the program. It was a great celebration to end the 2019-20 school year!

We will not be able to hold our traditional MusicFest in Spring 2021, but stay tuned to see what we are able to conjure up to celebrate music in the coming year!

In 2020-21, we look forward to working with the new curriculum coordinator, Rick Saunders, (sending good wishes to Ms. Slesinger in her next endeavor!) along with several new teachers. As we find our way through the challenges of teaching voice, instruments, and appreciation of music – live and recorded – everyone can count on the dedication of members of *Friends of Watertown Music* to support the teachers and students of the Watertown Public Schools however we can.

A highlight from calendar year 2020 was a **\$2500** *Watertown Community Foundation* School-Based Grant to support the growing percussion program. While some of our recent initiatives to bring performers into the schools and allow older students to play for younger will need to wait until it is safe, that money is earmarked and waiting for requests from the teachers.

Since forming in 2011, *Friends of Watertown Music*, through the generosity of our donors, has awarded almost **\$21,000** in four major **grants** to increase teaching staff and more than **\$21,000** in direct **grants** to teachers and students and for initiatives and instruments. Additionally, we have acquired just over **\$22,000** in support and **grants** from outside foundations, bringing in a total of **\$64,790** for the benefit of all students in Watertown's public schools.

As a local organization with the freedom to set our own priorities, *Friends of Watertown Music* has traditionally focused on using donations to expand teaching staff, thereby supporting vital teacher-student interaction and a breadth of inclusive offerings. Each of the positions we supported through seed grants has been incorporated into the school budget. Watertown Public Schools now have 9.2 full-time equivalent teaching positions, including a curriculum coordinator, far above the low point in 2011 of 5.7 positions with no coordinator. We continue to respond flexibly to the needs of the program. We also seek grants from outside sources to provide instruments to expand opportunities for students to learn to play them.

As this year comes to a close, we would be grateful if you are able to join us in our efforts to sustain, enrich, and develop the music program in the Watertown Public Schools. We have six donor levels: **Soprano (up to \$25), Alto (\$50), Tenor (\$75), Bass (\$100), Conductor (\$250) or Maestro (\$500 and up)**. All contributions will be acknowledged at our next event, whenever that will be ... sooner than later, we hope!

Checks may be sent to *Friends of Watertown Music*, 43 Paul St., Watertown, MA 02472, or you can donate online at: <https://watertownmusic.org/donate/>

Thank you all for your support,

*Chris Lowry, President, and the entire Friends of Watertown Music Board:
Alice Holt, Laura Stokes, Yolynn Hohmann, Yasmin Daikh, Heidi Greisch, and Sarah Ryan*

Friends of Watertown Music, Inc., incorporated in 2014, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
All donations are fully tax deductible within the limits of the law.