



**MUSIC HEALS**  
★ INTERNATIONAL ★

# *Looking for the Light*

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2019/2020 IMPACT REPORT

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# Our Mission

*Music Heals International brings music and musicians to the children of Haiti and globally to inspire achievement, resilience and creativity.*

# Our Vision

*A world where children engage, achieve and thrive through the power of music.*



# MHI 2019/2020 in Review



1 IN 5



Students Access Music Education  
Through our Summer Music Camp

School and Community Partners

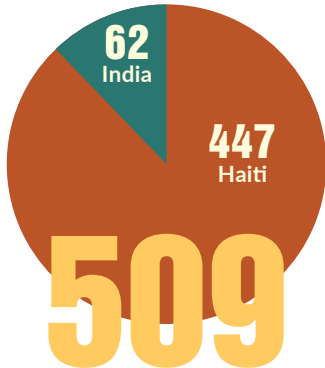
8

Haiti



2

India



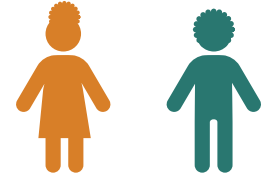
Students Served

18

Teach to Reach  
Music Mentors



49% 51%



Girls and Boys Enrolled

23  
Haiti



12  
India



MUSIC TEACHERS



PAPJAZZ  
Festival  
-HAITI-



## Letter from Sara

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Dear Friends,

It is my sincerest hope that you and your loved ones are healthy and safe as you read this. The past year has shown me how strong and resilient all of us are, and our organization is no exception. Even before the pandemic, Haiti was in the throes of a political crisis causing curfews and school closures that we're all too familiar with today.

Throughout this challenging situation in 2019, our advanced students met for daily practice, using music as an outlet and an inspiration. Their perseverance culminated in a performance of original songs at Haiti's international jazz festival, PAPJAZZ. **This proved to me once again how music is truly a lifeline for our kids.**

At the start of 2020, MHI achieved a major strategic goal by launching our program in a second country. With partners CORE (formerly J/P HRO) and Little Kids Rock, we joined forces with the OSCAR Foundation in Mumbai, India, where our Haitian team trained 12 teachers and worked with 62 students from two new schools.

When COVID-19 shut the world down, staff pivoted to support CORE's pandemic response in Haiti. At the same time we continued to work virtually with the teachers in Mumbai and designed *Teach to Reach*, a new neighborhood approach to delivering music education outside of school.

Because of your support, MHI not only helps kids create a vision for their future, we set them on the path to realizing it. Every day, you enable them to forge ahead despite unprecedented adversity. **This is your work in action.** Thank you!

Sara Wasserman, Executive Director/Founder

# A Dynamic Model for Music Education

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In 2014, MHI first brought together the local operations and expertise of CORE and the nationally recognized curriculum and methodology of U.S.-based Little Kids Rock to offer a free, innovative and culturally-relevant approach to music education in Haiti.



We empower partners embedded in local communities to adopt and adapt our program. Students receive roughly 200 hours of music training per year learning guitar, bass, keyboard, drums and vocals. In addition to curriculum, teacher training and instruments, our program in Haiti includes inclusive classes for children with disabilities, support for community concerts and summer music camp.



With the tools and techniques learned from Little Kids Rock, in early 2020 MHI and CORE broke new ground in India. Partnering with the OSCAR Foundation, our Haitian team trained 12 local teachers. While traditional rhythms and instruments differ, the power of music remains a common thread. With regular coaching via Skype, the new teachers in India are integrating beats and songs to make this dynamic program their own.



# Our Program

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In early 2020, our advanced students took the stage at the international PAPJAZZ Festival in Port-au-Prince. This remarkable achievement was a testament to their hard work and our program, which builds music skills and the confidence to use them.



## Self-confidence

I will never forget this moment because I never thought that I would play, myself, in an international event.

- Olsen (age 17, guitar)



## Discipline

To play in this festival, we had to practice more and raise our level of playing.

- Michelson (age 16, vocals)



## Leadership

It was a huge experience for me to see how the audience really had a good time listening and interacting with us.

- Esther (age 15, keyboard)

# Composing Futures: Jose Abigaëlle's Story

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In 2019, a Belgian film crew called Noxville traveled the world seeking stories of how music changes lives. One of the most moving testimonials\* came from Jose Abigaëlle, who joined our program six years ago when MHI started work in Haiti. Her story exemplifies the power of music education in children's lives.

Jose and her family lost their home to the devastating 2010 earthquake. For the next three years they lived on a golf course converted into a tent city of nearly 45,000 people. After rebuilding their home another tragedy struck, just as life began to return to normal. Jose's mother suffered a sudden heart attack and died.

Amidst a fog of grief, Jose learned about our after-school music program and signed up. She was immediately enchanted by the piano-like sound of the electric keyboard. For Jose, music lessons were life-changing. Slowly but surely, she regained her smile.

*"At school I did learn geography and history, but what I learned during the music lessons was far more important. I am optimistic again, and I have a lust for life."*

MHI helped Jose find inspiration. Now 17 and thriving, she says music creates positivity and takes sadness away. Jose dreams of attending a conservatory and running her own music school one day. As one of our *Teach to Reach* Music Mentors, she's well on her way.

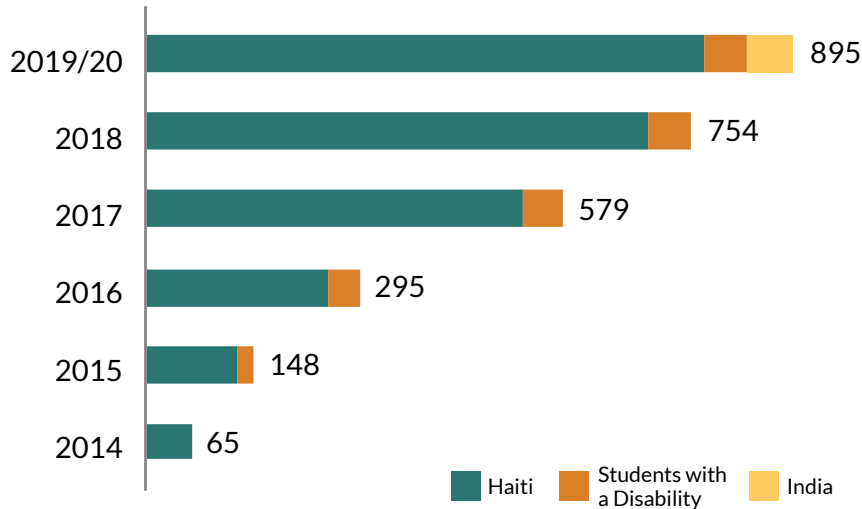


\*Goossens, M., & Van Mileghem, K. (2020). Port-au-Prince. Paradise City: Healing Cities Through Music (pp. 26-30). Tielt, Belgium: Lannoo.

# Our Impact

## Music Students

Running Total by Year



The study of music is a transformative journey, particularly for students who continue year after year. The social-emotional development that occurs alongside musical skills is an important outcome of MHI's work.

Meet Junior. He was just seven when he joined our program. "When I started, I was very shy and didn't think I could play an instrument. The bass felt so big for my hand. In the neighborhood I didn't have many friends, so seeing a lot of people made me anxious. I told myself that I would do my best to learn and not get discouraged."

For children like Junior, MHI provides a trajectory for growth in a safe and stable environment that nurtures confidence, creativity, connection and self-esteem.

*"Now I am 13. I'm not shy anymore. I can play in front of a large audience without being afraid and express myself without shaking. I have teachers at school who talk to me, give me advice. I can't say that I've mastered the bass perfectly, I still have a lot to learn. But, if I listen to a song, I can identify the chords and play them, too."*



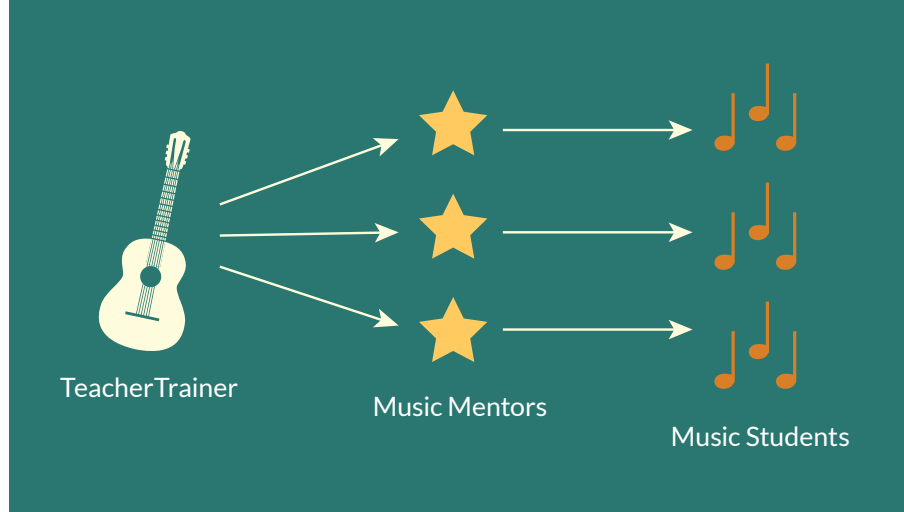


## Looking Forward

From political unrest to pandemic lockdown, 2019 and 2020 have been difficult years in Haiti. For MHI, this has brought into focus the incredible asset that youth in our program represent as they step up as leaders in music and their communities.

Guided by their ambition and commitment, we're launching a new initiative called *Teach to Reach* that trains advanced students to become Little Kids Rock-certified instructors. This will create a sustainable, gender-diverse pipeline that grows music teachers from within our program and provides marketable vocational skills to young people facing a challenging future. Through a neighborhood approach using social distancing protocols, our "Music Mentors" will lead one-on-one and small group classes outside of school settings. This will enable us to deliver lessons despite school closures and will build our capacity to extend music education to out-of-school youth in the community.

Thanks to you, we continue to strengthen our program and build a model for composing futures in Haiti and beyond.



# Our Financials

## 2019

### INCOME



**\$171,108**

**57%**

Grants  
\$98,000

**35%**

Events/Other  
\$59,581

**8%**

Individual/Business Donors  
\$13,527

### EXPENSES



**\$181,636**

**86%**

Programs  
\$155,260

**10%**

Fundraising  
\$18,890

**4%**

Administration  
\$7,486

**\*End-of-Year Net Assets: \$160,103**

## 2020

### INCOME



**\$75,417**

**73%**

Grants  
\$55,000

**3%**

Events/Other  
\$2,588

**24%**

Individual/Business Donors  
\$17,829

### EXPENSES



**\$122,448**

**83%**

Programs  
\$101,289

**11%**

Fundraising  
\$13,172

**6%**

Administration  
\$7,987

**\*End-of-Year Net Assets: \$113,072**

*\*Includes the Rob Wasserman Memorial Fund. In the absence of live benefit concerts in 2020, the Rob Wasserman Memorial Fund was put to great use maintaining MHI's momentum through the COVID-19 pandemic.*

# 2019/2020 Leadership

## Board of Directors

Sara Wasserman – President  
Stephanie Clarke – Treasurer  
Michele Waldman – Secretary

## Advisory Board

Owsley Brown  
Pete Fisher  
Isabelle Fox  
Richard Habib  
Shannon O’Leary Joy  
Larry “The Hat” Lautzker  
Lukas Nelson  
Gardly Philoctete  
Douglas Rosenberg  
Art Smith  
Clare Wasserman  
Natascha & Bob Weir  
Dave Wish

## In Memoriam

Dan Hicks  
Lou Reed  
Rob Wasserman



From top left: James Donatin, Jean Marc Didis  
& Emmanuel Piervil

## Programs and Operations

Sara Wasserman – Executive Director/Founder  
Jean Marc Didis – Program Manager  
Emmanuel Piervil – Program Officer  
James Joseph Donatin – Field Agent  
Ashley Orton – Strategy and Impact Advisor

## Impact Report

Content: Tyler McBrien, Ashley Orton  
Photography: Liam Storrings for CORE,  
Stephanie Balmir, Fabrice Debatty,  
Keziah Jean, Arvind Premanand  
Design: Megan Acio at WIGT.com

# Implementing Partners



# Supporting Partners

Owsley Brown III  
PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATION



Reverb gives

EARTHSENSE FOUNDATION

DENNIS & PAM FISCO

PETE FISHER

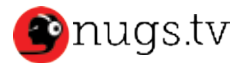
GEORGE GUND &  
GLORIANA MEJIA GUND

WILLIAM HOBI

MATTHEW KELLY  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

DOUGLAS ROSENBERG

BRAD SWABACK





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MHI is a registered U.S. 501(c)(3)  
public charity: EIN 46-4627905.

*"It's not that we forget...  
[but] we are always  
looking for the light."*

*That's how Haitian physician,  
Dr. Marie-Marcelle Deschamps,  
explains the resilience of her people.\**



## *Join Music Heals International*

*Help MHI inspire children through the power of  
music to hope and heal as we all look for the  
light. We are deeply grateful for your support.*

- \$10,000** Sponsor a year of music at a partner school.
- \$5,000** Give to the Rob Wasserman Memorial Fund.
- \$1,500** Support youth-led, community-based music lessons.
- \$500** Fund remote training for new music teachers in India.
- \$100** Provide supplies to help keep teachers and students safe.

\*Bazelle, Robert. "This physician has battled epidemics, quakes, and poverty in Haiti. Now, she's taking on COVID-19." Science, 13 Aug. 2020. AAAS, doi:10.1126/science.abe3197. Accessed 15 Oct. 2020.