

Volunteer Spotlight: Bill Rhatican



Bill Rhatican (right) with Director of Student Development and Family Engagement Rasaq Lawal (left) and Board Member Scott Fast (center).

Meet dedicated Musicopia and Dancing Classrooms Philly (DCP) volunteer Bill Rhatican – a musician with experience in the non-profit sector. Despite his busy schedule, including working full-time and gigging with his band, he sees giving back to the community and making personal connections as a rewarding way to spend his free time. So far, Bill has made a significant impact by assisting at numerous events and co-creating Musicopia and DCP’s new Student Mentorship program.

When Bill moved back to Philadelphia three years ago, he was eager to continue advocating for music education, just as he had in Oregon. He discovered Musicopia and its orchestra program and knew it was the right fit. When he started volunteering, he was quickly introduced to Musicopia and partner organization DCP’s programs, their impact, and how he could contribute. “Musicopia helped me figure out how to make an impact in Philadelphia and how to

grow that impact,” Bill recalled. “It’s turned out way more exciting and fulfilling than I could have imagined.”

He started off helping out by setting up events, like the Musicopia String Orchestra concerts, and then began interacting with the public at community events. When the Musicopia-DCP team had the idea to create a program where its Board members could mentor students, Bill was interested in using his experience to help launch this program. He began working on this project alongside Rasaan Lawal, Musicopia and DCP’s Director of Student Development and Family Engagement, and three members of the organizations’ shared Board of Directors: James E. Cauley, Rhonda Moore, and Monica Wildes. Bill expressed that meeting and working alongside this team has been one of the most gratifying parts of his volunteer experience as he admires their dedication to the students and pragmatic approach to creating a sustainable, impact-focused program.

Thanks to Bill’s efforts, the Student Mentorship program successfully paired Musicopia String Orchestra violinist Aljavar with James E. Cauley in its pilot year (2022-2023). Aljavar shared, “It was really helpful because he gave me the steps I should take to give violin lessons to my younger cousin.” Bill was thrilled to see the growth and progress that Aljavar had made after a few meetings with James and looks forward to seeing that growth continue. The program will officially launch this year and include more students from both organizations. These students will be carefully matched with mentors whose guidance, expertise, and connections will help them achieve their personal, artistic, and academic goals.

For Bill, wherever he is, he wants to be a positive influence in his community, keep the arts alive, and meet people who share this passion – all of which volunteering with Musicopia and DCP made possible. Upon reflecting on his volunteer experience, he shared, “I feel like I can make more of an impact with Musicopia and DCP than with any other organization.” If Bill Rhatigan’s journey resonates with you, consider [signing up to volunteer](#). Your time, no matter how limited, can create a lasting impact on students’ lives, just as Bill has demonstrated.

Thank you, Bill and all of our volunteers, for making experiencing accessible arts education and enrichment programs a reality for our students!