

A Student's Love of Music Inspired Her to Give Back

Musicopia is fortunate to have a passionate community of supporters who help us make playing an instrument accessible to all young people. We are especially honored to have the support of musician and piano teacher Ishika Vaidya, who recently made a generous donation to our organization. What makes Ishika even more impressive? She's a student herself!



For this 10th grader, music plays an important role in her life and has for as long as she can remember. Ishika plays piano — and has been playing since age five — and teaches lessons to children in grades two to five. She also plays the violin and the ukulele and plays clarinet in her high school's marching band. Yet, the piano remains her favorite.

Over the years, music has become so much more to Ishika than a hobby or afterschool activity. She started experiencing higher stress levels, particularly from school, and discovered how much playing music benefited her well-being. "It's such a good way for you to get your emotions out when you want to destress, especially after a tough week. It gives you something to focus on, so you can take your mind away from everything else," Ishika explained. "It's a great tool for combating stress."

She recognized that this tool is not one everyone has in their arsenal. "I wanted to give that tool to other people," she decided.

Ishika and her older sister, Saniya, came up with a plan to pass on the gift of music to other students. They knew that they were fortunate to grow up around music and that not all children have access to the same opportunity. When the girls decided to teach piano to young children, they were mindful of those who could not afford lessons.

Saniya, who is three years Ishika's senior, started teaching piano lessons to children first. She donated a generous portion of her earnings to Musicopia to help provide all students with the opportunity to experience music. (We covered [Saniya's story](#) back in 2019.)

Now that Saniya has moved away to attend Cornell University, Ishika continues the work they both set out to do. Ishika has been teaching students (some of whom were Saniya's students and some who are new students she recruited) for nearly a year now. She discovered her passion for teaching and felt the weight of the importance of her role. "As a teacher, you shape a kid's love for music. I try to let them build their love of music themselves. I play different songs for them and let them choose to play the songs that they like." Her philosophy is that if they like what they're doing, they will want to stick with it and, therefore, will have an effective coping method to rely on in the future.

Giving back to our organization was something Ishika felt strongly about continuing. "Saniya and I both really admire the charitable work Musicopia does. We feel that Musicopia's mission is aligned with our own beliefs," Ishika said. "What Musicopia is doing is so important. With my students, I'm trying to give

them the tool to cope with stress and anxiety, but everybody needs that tool. We need to spread music to everybody, including those that don't have access to it."

Just as her sister did, Ishika plans to continue teaching students until she graduates high school. Throughout that time, she will continue supporting Musicopia through future donations. Wherever Ishika's future may take her, she knows that music and teaching will always play a part in it.

We applaud her for taking action to help others by providing an experience so near and dear to her heart: playing music. We know that she is an inspiration to many and are grateful for her generosity. Thank you, Ishika, for your continued support of Musicopia!