



# Twinkling The Ivories

November 2019

## Introducing ... Keys in Our Community

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As we all know, the Suzuki approach is about more than simply learning to play the piano. We focus on the development of both character and ability. Suzuki said, "Teaching music is not my main purpose. I want to make good citizens. If children hear fine music from the day of their birth and learn to play it, they develop sensitivity, discipline and endurance. They get a beautiful heart."

In the fall of 2018, our Board of Directors and teachers met to develop a new strategic plan, and a resultant goal was to get more involved with the community around us – linking our goals of character and ability development. The idea of community outreach concerts was born!

**Keys in Our Community** focuses on the idea we can share music to serve our community and uplift those around us. We'll offer concerts that will take place in many settings – hospitals, nursing homes and more. Teachers will organize events for their studios or partner with others to offer the outreach concerts. Students will be able to perform pieces from the Suzuki repertoire, duets, or other music they've been working on. They'll share their talents with audiences that may not often have the opportunity to enjoy fine music.

Many of our teachers have already scheduled events, and they are coming up soon! Check with your teacher to find out when your studio takes part in the **Keys in Our Community** program and look for all of the event listings on the website.

## Get Ready for the 100-Day Practice Challenge!

Wikipedia tells us that a habit is a routine of behavior that is repeated regularly and tends to occur subconsciously. Habits - *brushing our teeth, taking the recycling to the curb, completing our homework* - are automatic and allow us to go about our day productively and efficiently.

Daily piano practice can soon be another good habit – and we've created the **100-Day Practice Challenge** to encourage this development for ESPS students. Beginning in January, students will earn stickers by reporting the numbers of days they practice each week. Students will have the chance to win prizes during the challenge, and if they complete 100 days of practice by April 30<sup>th</sup>, their names will be entered in a draw for prizes at the Group Concerts in May.

Let's grow and develop a real and lasting practice habit for each piano student!

**Congratulations to  
Summer Practice  
Challenge Winners!**

*Many of our ESPS students successfully completed the Summer Practice Challenge and they were all entered into a prize draw. Winners were selected at our Annual General Meeting. Congratulations to the prize winners: Ella S., Justin S., Emma A., Mattis C., Rahel M. and Anastasia M.*

## 40 Years: Celebrating a Special Milestone with Ruth Johnson

*This year ESPS celebrates the 40th anniversary of teacher Ruth Johnson. Ruth has taught with ESPS since 1979, and we recently interviewed Ruth about this significant achievement. Find the full interview on our website ([edmontonsuzukipiano.ca](http://edmontonsuzukipiano.ca)).*

### **ESPS: When did you first start learning music/piano?**

I started taking piano lessons when I was 8 years old. I also played clarinet for many years after learning in band in Junior High School.

### **ESPS: When first learning to play, did you always enjoy music? Were there times your parents had to encourage you to practice?**

Yes, I always had enjoyed music, my parents really never had to tell me to practice. They sometimes had to tell me to get off the piano bench. My father was one of my inspirations. He played piano by ear a lot.

### **ESPS: What led you to become a piano teacher originally?**

When I was a teenager a family asked if I would teach their 3 sons. I was a real novice and I don't know how well I did but the family appreciated my efforts. I spent four years in Three Hills after high school and I taught piano there as well. I had a great piano teacher that supervised my teaching and I was thoroughly inspired by her. I also had an aunt who played very well, and I wanted to play as well as she did.

### **ESPS: How did you become a part of the Edmonton Suzuki Piano School?**

Through Tess Brown, I heard about a teacher who was teaching Suzuki Piano and she put me in touch with Clarice Moellering, the first Suzuki piano teacher in Edmonton. I observed her teaching for several months and when she went on holiday, I taught her students. I started with six of my own students in 1979.

### **ESPS: Have the students faced similar or different challenges over time?**

Not very different. Although I think students have a lot more opportunities in sports, dance, etc. that compete with piano lessons and practice becomes harder to fit in on a daily basis now.

### **ESPS: What have been your favourite pieces to teach?**

That's a hard question to answer! I really enjoy teaching Book 4 from the Beethoven Sonata to the end of Bk 4. But each book has its own great pieces. I love Book 2 as well. Books 5-7 have changed a lot since I started and there are several pieces in those later books that I love to teach - Chopin's Waltz in a minor Bk. 5, Mozart's K330 in Bk. 6, Grieg's Nocturne in Bk. 6, and Chopin's Nocturne in c# minor in Bk. 7.

### **ESPS: What would you be doing if you weren't teaching piano?**

I really have no idea! I have a B.ED. but never did want to teach school! Since starting to teach piano as a 15-year-old I haven't considered any other profession.

### **ESPS: Any concluding remarks about your 40 years as a Suzuki piano teacher?**

I still love teaching Suzuki. I wouldn't teach any other method, although I've put a few students through the Royal Conservatory later grades – 8 to ARCT, after they have finished the Suzuki program.

I've had some really great students over the 40 years.

***Congratulations, Ruth!***

## Congratulations November Graduates

Congratulations to the following students for their well-deserved graduations:

### ***Volume 1***

Sophia Chin  
Salomea Kennedy  
Crosby Kim  
Caidence Wong

### ***Volume 2***

Zachary Chia  
Ava Gee  
Louis Lu  
Toluwani Omisore  
Eduardo Jordao

### ***Volume 3***

Shawn Doroshenko  
Josiah Li  
Dmitry Pavlov  
Isabella Wang  
Erin Zapesocki

### ***Volume 4***

Toby Johnson

### ***Volume 5***

Abigail Chua

### ***Volume 6***

Marlon Beakhouse

*"Perhaps it is music that will  
save the world."  
Shinichi Suzuki*