

## QUALITY PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN: TO THRIVE OR JUST SURVIVE? (DREAMING TOGETHER ABOUT LAUNCHING A CHILDREN-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY)



Ekaterina Blazhkova,  
Artistic  
Director of  
AfML

*A sense of community comes from social interaction. Music provides a strong base for this. One of the joys of the performing arts is the ability to share music with your community, family, and friends.*

*On January 29th, 2013, members of Alliance for Music Learning – a community-based music school dedicated to high standards of music education in our priority neighbourhood – held a community conversation on quality and affordable music programs which can influence Bathurst-Finch community cohesion and family bonding.*

Since 2010, our school has provided quality music education to the residents right in the neighbourhood. Enrolled children, youth and adults are engaged in an enriching and productive activity such as recitals, music festivals, one-on-one instructions, ensemble playing, group choir and theory classes which act as a form of constructive after school program for busy working parents. (We are currently

working towards establishing an early creative learning child care center to reveal and develop the potential of artistically gifted children as early as possible.)

We are lucky to partner with the Antibes Community Center which provides our children with positive role models and an encour-

affordable, inclusive music education to children that would not otherwise have access to quality music programs for financial reasons. For now, gross family income and number of dependents are taken into consideration to determine if a more suitable lesson fee is appropriate.

*at the Antibes CC. They are of a high quality, very well organized and taught.*

*Using a well-rounded approach based on the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) curriculum enriched with the best traditions of the classical European schools of music our passionate instructor aids the*



aging environment. **We are thankful to City Councillor James Pasternak for his support.** However, the large community interest in our program has caused us to outgrow the space we are currently in.

To expand a school to a space which will give us the ability to work in permanent music studios equipped by storage for our instruments, supplies, and a music library, we need coordinated effort and collaboration with the City of Toronto, TDSB, Toronto Public Library, volunteers and community agencies. If we succeed in principal, the school aims to grow its programs and provide more

Hopefully, one day in our neighbourhood a quality music program generated by enthusiasm and professionalism of residents will have a beautiful space for performance and learning, for arts and music in every way.

**The ideas generated at the discussion are brought to your attention.**



Svetlana Kouznetsova,  
Mother of five

*My daughter Mary attends the classes of the Alliance for Music Learning*

*children to achieve their goals; from personal best to festival success.*

*However, the time of the program is limited by the community centre's schedule: the room in which our lessons take place is shared with several other programs, all on a tight schedule.*

*We strongly believe that the more financial support of donors and government this program gets, the more children and families would benefit from it. In a real atmosphere of piano playing the program will thrive, and the children's ability and enjoyment will skyrocket.*