

Give a Child a Teacher 2021 Pippa Macmillan

Give a Child a Teacher is a special campaign organised by the ESA each year to raise funds to give more children the opportunity of a SUZUKI™ education in Europe, Middle East and Africa. Running from January to May 2021, children could take part in a *100 days Practice Challenge* to raise funds through sponsorship. The money raised is donated to the Suzuki Teaching Trust, which gives financial support to Suzuki teacher training projects in countries where there is need.

Having been brought up to practice twice daily every day of the year apart from Christmas Day, it was somewhat automatic to expect my daughter Lyra to do the same. Expectations are easy to have though, and the reality of actually doing the practice is somewhat different!

Taking part in this campaign gave **me** an added incentive to ensure practice happened and, as all the impetus to practice has to come from the parent (I'm expecting it to be another decade before she may choose to do it by herself), I suggest that teachers present future challenges of this nature not only to the student, but explain to the parent how beneficial it will be for **them** too. I think most people will agree that getting started with practice is the hardest part - the same with many tasks (including writing this article!).

Participating in the practice challenge coincided with a course I took entitled "*Honing Parents' Practice*", run by Suzuki Violin Teacher Kimberley Wong. This excellent course focussed on the parent's attitude, energy and enjoyment of practice sessions. Six families participated, and we all videoed our practices so we could re-watch them and see how our reactions and body language came across to our children.

Kimberley also watched the videos

and gave us feedback and we could watch the practices of the other families taking part in the course and gain tips and inspiration. The course was an important lesson in the role played by the parent during practice - this affects everything the child does (or doesn't!) do.



The trickiest day of the challenge came when we were flying from London to Toronto – there are always so many last-minute packing jobs to do, but Lyra independently played through her piano repertoire as well as her newest piece on the violin. It was a useful experience for her to play without me next to her, and it actually occupied her quite well while I was busy with other tasks! Without the ESA's practice challenge to motivate us (or rather me), we may have skipped that day, but we proved to ourselves that something can be achieved every single day.

It felt very special to be able to raise money to provide teachers for other children who aren't fortunate enough to have the presence of a Suzuki teacher in their lives yet. Having music lessons is a luxury that not many children worldwide are afforded, but Lyra

was lucky enough to be sponsored by many supportive family members, friends, and colleagues of mine, raising almost £500 for the ESA. It is quite extraordinary that she can contribute so positively to society at the age of five.

During the challenge, Lyra also performed on the violin via Skype to residents of a nursing home - half of Book 1 and half of Book 2. Easy for a Suzuki child to do without any specific preparation. It felt wonderful to be able to provide a special experience to elderly people who clearly loved seeing a child play beautiful music.



We look forward to the next practice challenge!