

# What If?

## What if Every Child Had a Musical Instrument?

By Jessica Erskine

Children and young adults shouldn't have to share instruments. They shouldn't have to sacrifice necessary after-school practice because they don't have an instrument of their own. Music programs shouldn't have to turn away eager students because of a lack of inventory.

But they do.

That's why StubHub's Next Stage Social Good Music Program partnered with nonprofit Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation (MHOF) to help keep music in schools alive. In partnership with MHOF, which donates musical instruments to underfunded music programs, StubHub has put instruments in the hands of thousands of students across the United States.

Funding for the program comes from the StubHub Foundation, a Silicon Valley Community Foundation corporate advised fund. The StubHub Foundation has allocated nearly \$4 million in charitable giving to music, sports and the performing arts since 2012. As the world's largest ticket marketplace, StubHub collaborates with these industries daily, and aims to give back to them on a grass-roots level.

MHOF shares StubHub's belief in the life-changing power of music. Both recognize that music not only gives students an outlet for creativity, but also develops language and reasoning, improves memory and coordination, boosts test scores and builds imagination. Learning an instrument also builds confidence, and playing with a group helps foster social and team-building skills.

Yet many schools have had to cut or eliminate music programs because of a lack of funding, leaving many kids without the benefits of music. That's

why we're amplifying the message about the need for music education. By collaborating with MHOF and participating artists, we're making a lot of noise.

Our 2014 Next Stage Concert Series, combined with a StubHub Foundation grant, raised \$600,000, which MHOF used to purchase instruments for 16 U.S. schools. In 2015, we cranked up the volume with the Next Stage Social Good Music Program. We succeeded in providing more than \$1 million in musical instruments to schools in 11 U.S. cities, including Oakland.

At each stop during the program, we organized a private musical party. Musicians such as Portugal. The Man, X Ambassadors, Bebe Rexha, Michael Ray, and The Family Crest gave performances. For the encore, we surprised students with dozens of new instruments. Through these events, the music students see that they have support to pursue their dreams, and the rest of the students and faculty realize how much music means to the people around them. Watching these kids light up when they see their new instruments will put a lump in your throat.

While StubHub would love to give to every school that asks, we have to make sure that the instruments will be well used and have a lasting impact.

MHOF's thorough vetting ensures that the money we provide benefits students for many years. StubHub



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how long students stay in the program, and the program's components. MHOF also assesses whether the program has the stability to continue for many years. As a result of these detailed assessments, StubHub helps place instruments where they can do the most good.

In 2016, we plan to take our music education message to an even broader audience. We'll make as much noise as we can to show our fans how they can impact music education. We have a major milestone planned that will surpass our contributions so far. Stay tuned!

*Jessica Erskine is the head of entertainment communications for StubHub, an eBay company, which allows fans to buy and sell tens of thousands of tickets. She brought the Next Stage Social Good Music Program to life in 2014.*