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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUSICLINK FOUNDATION SETS A GOAL OF REACHING 5,000 STUDENTS IN ALL 50 STATES IN 2012

Grassroots organization of music teachers across the nation donate time and talent to fulfill mission that any child who has musical potential deserves the opportunity to nurture this musical promise to its full extent.

October 2011 (Arlington, VA) – The MusicLink Foundation announced today that it is setting a goal of reaching 5,000 students nationwide by the end of 2012 to acknowledge the 20th anniversary of the MusicLink program. The foundation currently has active programs in 37 states and 4 Canadian provinces. Over 1,700 teachers have provided 300,000 hours of instruction to students in financial need, equivalent to \$7.2 million in-kind donation since the inception of the program. The student count total as of October 1st is 4,600 and growing every day.

Founder and Executive Director, Joanne Haroutounian explains, “while the love of music is universal, many children lack the opportunity to receive specialized music instruction due to financial need. MusicLink fills this need by linking these students with professional music teachers who, quite simply, agree to teach the student for whatever can be paid (if anything) for as long as the child wishes to learn. We have seen these lessons take hold through these simple links, across the country. The result is a lasting mentorship that can truly make a difference in a child’s life. This initiative seeks to complete our national scope to reach students that have a passion to learn music.”

The grassroots nature of MusicLink encourages businesses in communities across the country to support the program by providing local funding and in-kind donation of instruments. The foundation has distributed over \$200,000 in instrument donations, with major publishers providing free or discounted music for students equivalent to \$50,000 annually. The MusicLink Foundation’s network of coordinators, teachers, and business partners is the vital link for “creating musicians, one student at a time.”

“Too often I have heard stories about children who display a musical gift at an early age, but because of lack of funds in their family they were unable to pursue that gift. So it is a wonderful thing to know that the MusicLink Foundation is an organization that comes to the rescue of these talented kids,” states Marvin Hamlisch, eminent composer and conductor, who is a member of the MusicLink Foundation’s Advisory Board.

The impact of music lessons affects everyone involved with the program. A MusicLink teacher explains that it is “a small way to pay back the many wonderful teachers who have helped me through the years to share the great gift of music.” A parent explains, “as a single parent with four children, I could not afford lessons. My son’s MusicLink teacher has made a real difference in his life, because he admires him and wants to emulate him. I thank MusicLink for making this great musical connections for my son.” And a young student explains, “my teacher is fun to be with. I like using my fingers and I love to make beautiful music. And there’s nothing I don’t like about it!”

"We see the value of music in a child's life with each new "link" in our program and the ongoing relationship established between our teachers and students. Setting a goal to reach 5,000 children in all 50 states is an exciting way to celebrate 20 years of the MusicLink program." says Haroutounian. "With our great team of music teachers and business partners, donors and 'alumni', I am confident we will reach and surpass our goal."

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About the MusicLink Foundation: The MusicLink Foundation is a national network of coordinators that works with teachers, organizations, and businesses to offer lessons and opportunities to promising students in music that may not be available through their schools. It began in 1992 as a program of the Virginia Music Teachers Association, seeking a way to reach promising students who could not afford lessons. MusicLink initially worked with schools in the DC metropolitan area, asking school music teachers to nominate students who could benefit from private music instruction, using eligibility for the free or reduced school lunch program as a guideline to financial need. MusicLink would then "link" them to professional music teachers located in their community who agreed to teach on partial to full scholarship.

After six successful years spreading the program throughout Virginia, MusicLink expanded to the national level in 1998 through support from the Music Teachers National Association Foundation. In September 2001, the program was restructured into the MusicLink Foundation, a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, to provide more freedom to seek funding for the specific needs of the program and expand possibilities beyond a single professional music organization. Currently, the MusicLink Foundation, based in Arlington, VA has 116 coordinators at the regional, state, and local levels working with professional music teachers who provide low- or no-cost private music instruction to students enrolled in the MusicLink Foundation program. For more information on how to participate in the MusicLink Foundation or to make a donation, visit www.musiclinkfoundation.org

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