



The Charlotte Symphony and Community School of the Arts have combined forces to launch a bold new public music program aimed at building pathways to success for Charlotte-area youth. By engaging children in orchestra programs that foster skill development and personal empowerment, Project Harmony is social transformation through music.

This new community collaboration offers an intensive youth music program focused primarily on communities with the fewest resources and greatest need. It builds off of Community School of the Arts' long-running Orchestra in Schools program and expands the Charlotte Symphony's Winterfield Youth Orchestra elementary school program to a number of new community-based sites.

Shifting the focus from individual schools to broader communities extends this valuable opportunity to a larger number of students in Charlotte's underserved east, west, and southwest neighborhoods. The collaboration comes on the heels of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Opportunity Task Force Report.

Through its Winterfield Youth Orchestra, the Symphony has served east Charlotte since 2010, engaging an average of 58 students per year. Over the past three years, Winterfield has seen 18 students accepted into Northwest School of the Arts, an audition-based arts magnet school in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School district.

Through its Orchestra in Schools program, Community School of the Arts has served nearly 1,000 students, providing violin instruction to 3rd through 5th graders at three Title I schools. Participants in the program have gone on to play in orchestras in a number of CMS schools, as well as the Symphony's Junior Youth Orchestra and Charlotte Symphony Youth Orchestra. Graduates have been seated as section leaders and concertmasters, won merit-based music scholarships, and been accepted into middle and high school honors, Western Regional, and North Carolina All-State orchestras.

Project Harmony is inspired by the renowned El Sistema youth and community development program of Venezuela. The program will serve Charlotte's Oaklawn and Montclair neighborhoods in the 2017-18 season and aims to serve 500 children by 2020.

