

For Immediate Release

Staller Center for the Arts, Stony Brook University

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Photo attached - Caption: The Instrument Petting Zoo from Staller Center introduces children to musical instruments. Photo credit: Paul Newland

### **“Instrument Petting Zoo” from Staller Center for the Arts at Stony Brook University 1,000 Preschool Children Reached**

June 14, 2016, Stony Brook, NY – Very young children of preschool age have had a team of educational outreach staffers as well as student and professional musicians bring them an “Instrument Petting Zoo” created by Staller Center for the Arts at Stony Brook University. Over 1,000 preschool children have been introduced to musical instruments at programs at their local libraries, Head Start centers, and non-profit organizations. The children see, hear, and learn about the different instrument families and have the opportunity to play those instruments with the help of the “Zoo” staff.

“We enjoy exposing young children to musical instruments,” Paul Newland, Outreach Director at the Staller Center for the Arts said. “The children light up at the chance to hold a bow, make music on a violin, and press the keys on a flute. We have a wide variety of instruments, including clarinet, cello, and trombone. We also expose children to rare instruments like the theramin, an electronic instrument that can be played without even touching it. Exposure to orchestral instruments in a fun, interactive way can help to build a lifelong interest in music.”

The initiative began with seed money from an anonymous donor, who has continued to fund the Instrument Petting Zoo as it has gained in popularity.

The program has spread as library directors and day care program directors tell their colleagues about the Instrument Petting Zoo experience.

Centers that have hosted the program include Stony Brook University Child Care Center, North Shore Library (Shoreham/Wading River), Commack Public Library, Mastic/Shirley/Moriches Library, Islip Library, Emma Clark Library (Setauket), Longwood Library, Brentwood Library, Brookhaven Library, Copiague Library, Port Jefferson Free Library, Comsewogue Library, Montauk Library, Middle Country Library, West Babylon Library, Northport Library, Bayport-Blue Point Library, New

York City Public Library (Tompkins Square Branch), Head Start Central Brookhaven, North Shore Jewish Center Nursery School, and the United Cerebral Palsy Children's Center.

"We are thrilled that the Staller Center shared this wonderful program with us," said Sherri Glazer, Principal of United Cerebral Palsy Children's Center. "Many of our children are limited due to their disabilities, so they might not have an opportunity to go to a concert or a music program. The Staller Center brought the magic to us."

### **About Staller Center**

Innovative programming at Staller Center for the Arts has been made possible through financial donations by the Friends of Staller Center and through generous corporate support. Over 200 events in total are presented, including events from the Department of Music and the Department of Theatre Arts.

Among its many offerings, educational outreach to preschoolers through the "Instrument Petting Zoo" has won accolades. Another successful educational outreach program is "Orchestra to the Orchestra," which brings high school student musicians to Stony Brook Symphony Orchestra performances.





