

## Punta Gorda Symphony Partners with Local Youth Services for Virtual Music Camp



Punta Gorda Symphony is pleased to report that its first Virtual Music Camp began last week, on Monday July 13, without a hitch! At 10:00am, the first session of online campers met their instructors and Camp Director Beth Morrison before being assigned to break-out sessions for small-group music lessons. They repeated this schedule on Wednesday and Friday and will continue through July 31. Due to COVID-19 concerns, PGSymphony chose to forego its regular two-week in-person camp and develop something new.

Thanks to partnerships with Boys & Girls Club of Charlotte County and with Guardian ad Litem, a total of 30 youth registered for this year's Virtual Music Camp. Thanks to Cadence Music in Fort Myers, 22 youth received free loaner instruments for the duration of the camp. This year's campers include four from Lee County, and even three students from Illinois and Virginia, referred to the program by their grandparents who are patrons of Punta Gorda Symphony.

"It was important for us to make this experience available without barriers," says Executive Director Craig Badinger. Boys & Girls Club and Guardian ad Litem provided coordinators, space, and computers, and generous sponsors underwrote registration fees when necessary. "In a time like this, we believe it's important to provide our young musicians and their families with a worry-free experience. Of course, we want them to have fun, too!"

"Music is a transformative force, helping to heal and giving a creative outlet to all who pick up an instrument," says Jessica Stanfield, Executive Director of Guardian ad Litem Foundation - 20th Judicial Circuit. "We are thrilled so many of those we serve were able to participate in this innovative camp opportunity. Children all over Southwest Florida, some of whom had never touched a musical instrument, are able to experience pure joy through this partnership with the Punta Gorda Symphony, and for that we are so thankful."