

Suzuki  
Piano  
Basics  
Foundation News

*To facilitate, promote, and educate the public on the way of teaching and playing the piano taught at the Talent Education Research Institute in Matsumoto, Japan by Dr. Haruko Kataoka*

*To Nurture  
(Seeing How Children with  
Special Needs Are Educated)*

***By Haruko Kataoka***

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter  
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Translated by Chisa Aoki and  
Teri Paradero  
Edited by Karen Hagberg

***Piano Basics  
Foundation News***

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**Next Deadline: June 30, 2017**

I saw a wonderful television program a while back that I felt was very special and unforgettable. It showcased a facility that educated special needs children from all around Japan. The program featured four children (all around 10 years old) with mental retardation and a teacher who was in training for one school semester.

In the beginning, all four of the students were unable to do anything because they were surrounded by overprotective people who did everything for them. As a way to strengthen them physically, their first lesson consisted of tilling the soil in a field.

It only took them one or two tries of tilling the soil before they would throw down their tools in frustration. They did not have a single iota of perseverance or the ability to put forth any sort of effort. The teacher stated, "They are able to concentrate for only 15 seconds."

They would cry and wail that they didn't want to do it. They would bite the teacher's hand or head butt him. Still the teacher continued patiently to guide them.

Besides cultivating the field, they were challenged to climb poles with bare feet and to jump rope. Every activity was met with screaming protests from every child.

When a child would bite, the teacher would bite them back and asked if it hurt. When the child admitted that it hurt, the teacher would say, "Then you have to stop biting." Similarly, if a child would butt his head into teacher, he would slam back immediately and asked if it hurt. Inevitably the child agreed and would be told that it was a good reason to stop head butting.

Furthermore, when asked to say, "I will stop," out loud, they were asked to say it repeatedly until they could say it well. At night, saying "good night" was also an exercise in repetition until they could say it well.

Little by little, they also increased the distance of their daily run. The teacher ran next to them while cheering and encouraging them to keep going.

One day, one of the students who ran by himself reversed course just as he approached the finish line and went back to the teacher. The teacher understood right away and said, "You didn't go all the way to the finish line as you were supposed to. You've got to run again from the beginning." So the 3-4 kilometer course had to be repeated.

However, this time the teacher ran the course with the student. I was so moved by his action. This is what real education should be! It is not only by saying but also by doing what is difficult with the students that results in students who will work hard regardless of how strict you may be.

When they evaluated the time for the course, they found out that the student was much faster than the first time. The teacher praised him, "You have so much strength!" allowing the student the opportunity experience the joy of accomplishment.

The reason for education at this school is to give children the ability to improve themselves. To teach children, there must be love, patience and perseverance. Repeating what is good with conviction, tenacity and strictness results in great joy as one develops and progresses in life.

By the end of one school term, all four children could jump rope fifty times when initially they had a meltdown over just once or twice of trying to jump rope. They were able to climb the pole, when in the beginning they could not. Seeing this, I was convinced that whether a child is mentally challenged or normal, even though the type of activity may differ, there is no difference when it comes to nurturing with love, patience and perseverance. The challenge of nurturing is the same.

Perhaps the fact that mentally challenged children start from being unable to do anything makes it easier to define the most important Basics of learning for human beings and thereby to be able to offer good solid education to them.

With normal children, who are able to do some things, the Basics of learning are forgotten and considered to be useless, when in reality, it is those who do the teaching who

have forgotten that they are the ones who must do the grunt work of exerting effort. Laying blame on children for inabilities or calling the Basics of education useless is wrong.

All children are so wonderful. It is just that they need good adults who will nurture them in a strict and disciplined manner. The work of bringing up wonderful children is an important and truly rewarding work. Those of us who are around children, let us all be good adults.

## ***Suzuki Piano Basics Board Appoints New Members***

At our meeting in April, the Board of Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation appointed two new members to serve 3-year terms beginning August 2017. We are pleased to welcome Patricia Pritchard of Lafayette, Louisiana and Connie Snyder of Salem, Oregon. Patricia will serve as Secretary of the Board, succeeding Hannah Hall. We thank Hannah for her service as Secretary and are happy to announce that she, along with other present Board members Bruce Boiney, Karen Hagberg, and Linda Nakagawa will remain in their positions.

Both Patricia and Connie have a long history with Suzuki Piano Basics, having studied with Dr. Kataoka and continuing to research with Japanese teachers regularly to the present time. We are thrilled that they have agreed to join us on the Board of the Foundation, whose sole purpose is to preserve and promote Dr. Kataoka's Suzuki Piano Basics Method and to continue the international exchange that it has fostered between Japan and the countries where it is taught.

Karen Hagberg, Chair  
Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation Board

## ***Connie Snyder*** ***Salem, Oregon***

Connie Snyder had her first lesson with Dr. Kataoka 35 years ago in Rexburg, Idaho, and her life would never be the same. Since then she has steadily continued study of Suzuki Piano Basics with Japanese teachers as she pursues the primary goals of helping children and developing the abilities taught by Dr. Kataoka and Senseis Ogiwara and Kawamura. She welcomes the opportunity to become involved with the Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation because it promotes Dr. Kataoka's teaching and continues to provide American teachers the opportunity to study with teachers who are continuing Dr. Kataoka's legacy in Japan.

Connie is the mother three grown children and is married to a soon-to-be-retired High School Band Director. They are proud grandparents of five grandchildren.



Connie Snyder, Salem, Oregon

## ***Palmintier-Pritchard*** ***Lafayette, Louisiana***

Patricia Pritchard was born in Lafayette, Louisiana and studied piano performance at Louisiana State University, the University of Louisiana, and the Aspen School of Music. She currently resides and maintains a private piano studio in Lafayette, Louisiana. Patricia is often invited to give Suzuki Piano Basics presentations to young piano pedagogy students at the University of Louisiana. She maintains an open invitation for them to come and observe her teaching at her home studio.

In 1983, Patricia was invited to start a piano pedagogy program at the University of Louisiana. It was during this time that she became interested in the writings and teaching of Dr. Shinichi Suzuki and began to research. She studied at many of the workshops sponsored by the Suzuki Association of the Americas, and in 1989 while attending one of them, she was introduced to the work of Dr. Haruko Kataoka, co-founder of Suzuki Piano Basics. Not long after learning about her,

Patricia began studying exclusively with Dr. Kataoka from 1989 until 2003. She finally made it to Japan to observe at the last Ten Piano Concert in which Dr. Kataoka taught in 2003. Patricia currently continues to study Piano Basics with the Japanese teachers, Keiko Ogiwara and Keiko Kawamura at the Teacher Research Workshops held throughout the United States each year.

At home, Patricia enjoys the incredible support of her architect/cellist husband, Mark, who not only created the space for her to teach, but also provides encouragement to continue studying and teaching Suzuki Piano Basics. Together they have enjoyed teaching/practicing piano with their daughter, Lindsay when she was a child, and they love performing, puttering in their garden, cooking (especially for friends and family), biking, and traveling whenever possible.



Patricia Palmintier-Pritchard

## ***Suzuki Piano Basics General Membership Meeting 2017***

The meeting will be held in Sacramento during the International Suzuki Piano Basics Teacher Research Workshop, August 10-14, exact time and place to be determined. Members may propose agenda items by contacting a President Renee Eckis <[reneeckis@gmail.com](mailto:reneeckis@gmail.com)>. The slate of officers to be voted in to serve in 2018 is as follows: Renee Eckis, President; Jackie Block, Vice President; Rae Kate Shen, Secretary; and Linda Nakagawa, Treasurer. Members may propose others to run for office by contacting our Nominations Chairperson, Ann Taylor <[Ann@anntaylorstudio.net](mailto:Ann@anntaylorstudio.net)> before August 1.

We hope many of you will attend!

**Attention Teachers:**  
**New Membership Renewal Guidelines**  
**Earn Free Copies of Dr. Kataoka's Sensibility and Education**

Teachers, you have the opportunity to earn ten free copies of Dr. Kataoka's groundbreaking book, *Sensibility and Education* (a \$150 value), simply by enrolling ten of your families as members of Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation. Family membership is only \$25/calendar year, and those families who join *this fall* will receive the two remaining issues of the 2017 newsletter as a bonus. We encourage family membership, because it helps parents understand what the Suzuki Piano Basics Method stands for, thus facilitating our job as teachers. Parents who have read Dr. Kataoka's book have an even deeper understanding of what this teaching is all about. If you enroll more than ten families, you will receive that number of books.

PLEASE NOTE: At its April 2017 Meeting, the Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation Board decided that new memberships and renewals paid by November 30 will be included in the 2018

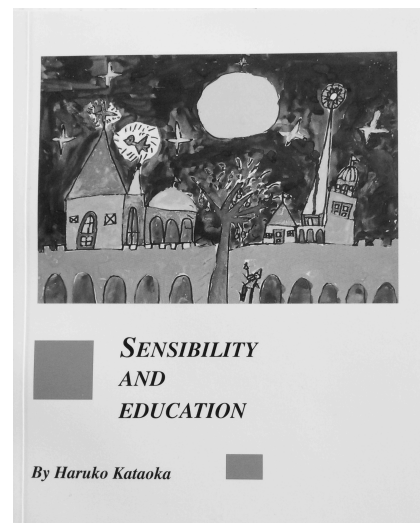
Directory. This is a reminder to all current members to send in your renewal with the enclosed form now to avoid being

left out. Collecting family memberships and remembering your own renewal, the Board assumes, will be easier at the beginning of the school year. The term of membership will remain January-December.

Newsletters for families will be sent in bulk to the teacher's studio for distribution.

Send your new memberships and renewals to Linda Nakagawa, Treasurer, Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation, 242 River Acres Drive, Sacramento CA 95831. Make check payable to Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation.

Thank you all for your continued support for the work of the Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation



***Want to Apply for a Scholarship?***  
***Want to Help a Teacher Get a Scholarship?***

Now is the time to contact our Scholarship Committee Chair, Hannah Hall [correctthecause@gmail.com](mailto:correctthecause@gmail.com) if you are interested in applying for financial help for any event conducted by the teachers from Japan in the year 2018. As the end of the summer draws near, the workshops and events for 2018 will be announced, but you may begin the application process now.

And to ALL TEACHERS who will be submitting your membership renewals *before November 30*, please consider donating to the Scholarship Fund to help younger teachers get involved with the kind of research they need to become Suzuki Piano Basics teachers. The preservation of Dr. Kataoka's amazing pedagogy depends on those of us who know and appreciate it. Let's be generous!

# ***What Are We Teaching Our Children?***

***By Carol Novak, Omaha, Nebraska***

What was the first skill your child was taught as a new Suzuki student? Most likely they learned how to bow. We teachers and parents consider the bow as preparation for performance, a tool for developing balance and coordination, and an indication that the Suzuki Method originated in Japan, where bowing is a cultural habit. Just recently I realized that bowing is teaching our children an important life lesson.

In Matsumoto, Japan, Suzuki Sensei had students say, "Please teach me," as they bowed at the beginning of their lesson. At the end of the lesson during the final bow they said, "Thank you very much." For many years a friend and I both had children studying violin from a teacher who taught Dr. Suzuki's responses while bowing. Through the years these words became a habit like all the other habits our children develop over time.

Recently my friend's daughter performed her Junior Recital at the university she attends. After the recital the vocal teacher remarked to the mother how rewarding it was to teach her daughter. "Most students simply take their lessons for granted, but your daughter thanks me sincerely after every lesson. It is a joy to teach her."

Later I told this story to my own daughter, who is majoring in music in college. She looked at me with amazement and said, "My piano teacher tells me the same thing! I always thank her for my lesson and she seems so surprised when I do that."

I have come to the realization that we are teaching our children to value their education,

to appreciate their teacher (music teachers and others as well), to show respect and admiration for the people who are nurturing them and helping them to grow to their full potential. All of this is embodied in learning and practicing the bow.

What a wonderful lesson for life!



Carol Novak (L) with student



# ***Let's Study***

***By Linda Nakagawa***

August 10-14, 2017 is the date for the upcoming Sacramento International Suzuki Piano Basics Workshop. We are again honored to have Keiko Ogiwara Sensei and Keiko Kawamura Sensei teach the master classes.

Repetition is so important. When I first started my studies with Kataoka Sensei, I did not understand anything. Actually, I understood and appreciated her teaching but I did not know how to transfer the knowledge to my own teaching. From my own "traditional" way of learning, I could not grasp how one teacher could have an entire studio full of students who could play with such confidence and able to bring the best sound from the piano. I only had one choice. I had to study as much as I could with her. And because I did not want to go to Japan, I went to as many workshops as she taught in America. I was hungry and driven, but I also had a cultural prejudice. 'Why do we have to bow before and after the lesson?' It seemed like such a Japanese thing to do. Yes, I am third generation Japanese American so shouldn't there be something innately in me that I could feel comfortable bowing? Nope! It took me many lessons with her before I could start my students bowing in my own studio. With that small but very important detail I learned a lot about myself and others.

Learning how to teach in the way Kataoka Sensei taught is a lifelong journey. It is so different. Even after more than 30 years of studying and teaching, I find myself getting lost and wandering on another path.

I am so grateful that Ogiwara Sensei and Kawamura Sensei continue to come to America. They offer a jolt of hard reality to me. After a weeklong workshop with them I feel refueled and I sense that I must work harder for my students. My tone is not good enough! If my sound doesn't improve how can I expect it from my students!

I'm not sure if I can make it to Philadelphia for their workshop, but I will certainly try even if only for a few days. Of course, I will be studying at the Sacramento workshop. I hope both workshops are crowded with Piano Basics teachers wanting to learn more. Hopefully, there will be Suzuki and traditional teachers interested in learning how Kataoka Sensei taught at the Talent Education Research Institute in Matsumoto, Japan. It would be wonderful if all piano students could use their body in the most natural way, to produce the best sound from the piano and play with ease.

This can only happen if the teachers show them. Students are our mirror image.

Complacency is poison!

*Place: California State University, Sacramento  
(Capistrano Hall –Music Building Room 151)  
Sacramento, California 95819*

*Thursday-Monday, August 10-14, 2017*

*For more information contact: Linda Nakagawa  
[g.nakagawa@comcast.net](mailto:g.nakagawa@comcast.net)*



Closing address by Linda Nakagawa at the 5th Sacramento Suzuki Piano Basics International 10-Piano Concert, August 18, 2007. Keiko Ogiwara on the right.

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# ***Piano Basics Foundation Upcoming Workshops/Events***

**July 7-10, 2017**

**Tacoma, Washington**

Suzuki Piano Basics Festival  
with Rae Kate Shen

Contact: Jacki Block 253-759-7213  
[jblock@ups.edu](mailto:jblock@ups.edu)

**August 3-7, 2017**

**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

Suzuki Piano Basics International Teacher Training Workshop  
with Keiko Kawamura and Keiko Ogiwara

Contact: Janet Kaido 267-251-0429  
[janet@alumni.curtis.edu](mailto:janet@alumni.curtis.edu)

**August 10-14, 2017**

**Sacramento, California**

Suzuki Piano Basics International Teacher Training Workshop  
with Keiko Kawamura and Keiko Ogiwara

Contact: Linda Nakagawa 916-422-2952  
[g.nakagawa@comcast.net](mailto:g.nakagawa@comcast.net)

**The events listed above are for the information of Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation members and others. Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation does not endorse, sanction, or sponsor events.**

To add or change items on this list and on the Suzuki Piano Basics website, contact  
Karen Hagberg ([kh@hagbergsuzuki.com](mailto:kh@hagbergsuzuki.com), 585-978-0600).

**Suzuki Piano Basics Web Site and discussion group:**

**<http://core.ecu.edu/hist/wilburnk/SuzukiPianoBasics>**

## **Correction**

Karen Hagberg  
191 Pleasant Way  
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