



How to Organize a MusicLink Playathon



- Kids help kids through music
- Performance in a mall for students of all ages – always fun!
- Local organizations promote what they do in the community
- Event raises public awareness of the importance of music lessons
- Funds help kids in need receive ongoing lessons through MusicLink

The following directions provide an easy way to bring a MusicLink Playathon to your community. All Playathon forms, sample articles, pledge cards, and MusicLink information sheets are available by contacting Sue Wege, Playathon coordinator, who will send these to you through email.

Contact Information:

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About MusicLink Playathons

Thank you for your interest in coordinating a benefit Playathon for the MusicLink Foundation. The MusicLink Foundation provides ongoing music lessons to students in need by "linking" an eager student with a professional music teacher who agrees to teach this student for a greatly reduced fee or on full scholarship. The foundation provides business connections for discounts, assists with instruments, music, camp scholarships, and event fees incurred by teachers. We are excited when people value our mission and seek a way to help us reach more students nationwide through an enjoyable Playathon event.

Playathons can be organized by any group interested in having "kids help kids" through music. This may include local music teacher organizations, student music organizations linked with schools or colleges, community public service organizations, a local music store or business, or any group interested in bringing an enjoyable performance experience to their community while raising funds for a worthwhile charity that brings music into the lives of children.

Students of all ages love performing in a public venue, teachers enjoy giving their students an exciting performance opportunity, parents love seeing their children help other children with their talents and the mall or other public venue appreciates the traffic that is generated by performers, families and friends.

All Playathon participants receive a MusicLink pin or pen if they raise \$25, with tote bags or backpacks given to those who raise \$100. \$50 gift cards awarded to those who raise over \$250. All students raising over \$100 get their photos in the MusicLink eLINK newsletter.

Monies raised through pledges collected by student performers in the Playathon are tax-deductible. Checks should be payable to the MusicLink Foundation. Funds are used to support the growth of state and local programs, provide camp scholarships and assist students as needed with music, instruments, and event fees. The foundation targets funds as needed to state and local programs that raise monies through Playathons.

Organizing a MusicLink Playathon, Step by Step

A. Secure organization and business support (several months prior to event)

1. Enlist the support of your organization in sponsoring the benefit Playathon. (local or state music teacher organization, school/student organization, or community group or business)
 - Playathons in a public venue help raise awareness of the value of quality music instruction. The event advocates for music education and provides a way to distribute information about the work of your local organization.
 - The MusicLink Foundation will provide brochures and donation envelopes for use at the event for on-site interest in the program. (A one-page overview is available from MusicLink)
2. Encourage your local music store or other business to help sponsor the Playathon by donating rental and moving costs for a piano for the performers. In return, you can acknowledge their sponsorship in your promotional materials and have their brochures available at the Playathon.

B. Secure venue for the Playathon (2 or 3 months prior to the event)

3. Contact your local mall or other public venue to inquire about the use of their space (usually pro bono for non profit organizations). Reserve a date for the event. Malls appreciate events that bring in potential customers and may even assist with promoting the event to the public.
4. Arrange for insurance for the event, according to requirements of the mall or other venue. If a state music teacher organization affiliated with MTNA is involved you can get insurance through MTNA as they cover all State MTA events. If not, check with the National MusicLink Foundation office for the use of their liability insurance.

C. Recruit teachers and students for participation (2 months prior to event)

5. Place an article in your local or state organization newsletters promoting the event to teachers. They, in turn, can promote it to their students and families. (A sample article is available from MusicLink)
6. Put Registration Forms and Pledge Cards on your organization website for downloading by interested teachers and/or provide a contact person for distribution of these forms. Set a registration deadline of at least 2-3 weeks before the event. (Forms are available from MusicLink)
7. Send an e-mail notice out to all teachers/members in your directory telling them about the event. Ask them to share event information with colleagues who may not be members of your organization. This will have the additional benefit of informing them about your organization and may motivate them to become members.

D. Organizing the Playathon schedule (2 weeks before the event)

8. Once the registration deadline has passed, make up a schedule for the performers, taking into consideration the length of their pieces and blocking them by teacher, if possible.

Tip: Teachers tend to over-estimate the time the performances will take, so you can schedule the performers quite closely to help stay on schedule.

9. Make a Master List with students' names, assigned number, and performance time for the day of the Playathon. You will need one copy for check in and one for the emcee if you have one. Also make a Tally Sheet for the volunteer taking the donations. This is to keep track of donations and numbers of prizes given out. Example available.

10. If you are going to have an emcee announce the students, either print the performer information on 6X4 cards (the name of the student, their age, hometown if you like, and the pieces they will perform) or you can use the original registration forms if they are legible.

11. Contact the MusicLink National Office to let them know how many performers you expect, so they can send pins and totes. These are given to the students on-site. Gift cards may be mailed to the winners after the event.

E. Last minute details for the big day! (1-2 weeks before the event)

11. Once the schedule is complete and performance times are assigned, e-mail the teachers with their students' times and ask them to pass this information onto the students. Include any final instructions in this e-mail such as where to park, how early they should arrive, where exactly in the mall they will be performing, etc. (An example is available to you)

12. Check with the mall for any last minute arrangements and with the music store to finalize the move of the piano. Make sure the contact people from each know how to get in touch with each other.

13. Arrange for some volunteers to help with student check-in and to write out tax receipts for the donors. 3 volunteers at any one time should be enough.

14. Arrange for a volunteer to take photos (digital is best) of students who raise \$100 or more and to document the event in pictures for the MusicLink eLINK newsletter and local media.

15. Print tax receipts to have on site for the event.

F. Ready for showtime – the day of the event!

16. Volunteer 1 – has master list, and emcee cards (if using emcee). Using a copy of the Master List, volunteer 1 checks in the students and has the students' check over the information on the emcee card. Students should have donations and pledge cards with them, which are passed on to the next two volunteers.



Have some blank Pledge cards on hand for students who forget to bring them. Remind students to check back before leaving, so they can get their receipts and prizes. Volunteer 1 (or event coordinator) gives cards to the emcee.

17. Volunteer 2 verifies that checks and/or cash equal the total on the donor card and that all checks are made payable to the MusicLink Foundation. Volunteer 2 keeps a tally of the donations brought in and the prizes awarded.

18. Volunteer 3 writes out receipts for the donors. Clip the receipts together and add a post-it indicating any prizes won or if a picture needs to be taken. Students should check back in after their performance to pick up their receipts, prizes and get their picture taken.

G. Aftermath – How did we do?

19. Count the cash and get a cashier's check from your bank made out to the MusicLink Foundation for that amount. Add up the total amount of checks and send them & the cashier's check, with a list of students who earned gift cards, to the MusicLink national office.

20. E-mail pictures of students who earned over \$100 to the national office for inclusion in the newsletter.