

## **Berkshire Hills Music Academy 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Highlights**

1. BHMA is the first program in the country that infuses music, dance, and creative arts with teaching of life skills and vocational preparation for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
2. Enrollment has grown from a first class of 14 to over 70 individuals today, in a residential/day program offering a two-year certificate and extended services.
3. Over 160 students have graduated from the Transition Program, coming from 22 states, Washington DC, US Virgin Islands, 2 Canadian provinces, Bermuda, and India.
4. We serve adults with a variety of diagnoses, currently: autism 40%; Williams syndrome 20%; Down syndrome 15%; other 25% (for example, global developmental delays, chromosomal disorders or deletions). Blindness is a dual condition for 7% of the students.
5. Our physical/geographical footprint grew to accommodate our numbers: 4-person group home in South Hadley (2010), Shared Living Program (2016), Bernon Music Center (2017), Art program moved to off-campus studio space (2018), 3-person group home in Hadley (2019).
6. The projected FY 2025 operating budget is over \$5.6 million, compared to the first operating budget of under \$1 million.
7. Music remains central. The required core curriculum of the two-year program –“Music and Human Service” – brings performers twice a month to 18 different assisted living and eldercare facilities. The Music Department provides 2 individual lessons weekly to each student, and offers 20 ensembles ranging from Digital Music to Rock ‘n Roll and Classical. Seven of these groups are working bands, paid for their “gigs” in the region and beyond.
8. New departments of Art and Dance have enriched the curriculum. Art offers 9 different classes each week, from painting to photography, with 18 artists receiving 100% profit from their consigned work. SHINE, our Dance ensemble, performs in the community, specializing in leading activity and movement sessions at eldercare programs, for which they are reimbursed.
9. Work placements have increased and include non-music settings. Currently 85% at BHMA are working or volunteering in the community weekly in addition to their music/arts activities. By combining music and arts with other vocational experiences, individuals are set up for success in multiple areas of their lives and those with varying vocational interests can be served. Paid sites include retail stores, hardware stores, groceries, town offices, and BHMA. Volunteer sites include: Council on Aging, animal shelter, food bank.
10. Our musicians have done over 1,000 performances, reaching more than 250,000 audience members. Some high profile appearances by students and alums: National Anthem at Red Sox, Celtics, and Miami Heat games; Disability Awareness at Pepsico Corporate Headquarters; Cleveland Symphony; Best Buddy Ride-a-thons with Tom Brady; Union Station, Washington, DC; Carnegie Hall; Tanglewood Visitor Center; Six Flags New England; Springfield Museums; Colleges from Berklee College of Music in Boston to McGill University in Montreal, Canada.