



100th Anniversary Reception

In November, hundreds of grantees, Trustees, and staff came together to celebrate the 100th anniversary of The Presser Foundation and its philanthropy. The momentous occasion was marked by community, connection, and, of course, music. Read below for an excerpt from Board President Ellen Rosen's remarks celebrating this milestone, and check out Strategy Director Kate Houstoun's [reflection](#) on the event.

“With all of you here tonight, we carry forward a legacy that began with one man's vision and has flourished into a century of transformative impact.

One hundred years ago, Theodore Presser's passing marked not an ending, but a beginning. His struggles to fund his own musical studies became the foundation for a lifetime devoted to making music accessible to all. From launching The Etude Music Magazine to establishing the Presser Publishing Company to founding the Presser Home for Retired Music Teachers, Mr. Presser never wavered in his belief that music should belong to everyone.

In 1925, following Mr. Presser's generous bequest, The Presser Foundation began a century of sustained support both nationally and in Greater Philadelphia. As we celebrate this milestone and reflect on the past, we also look ahead with renewed purpose. The work each of you does - from performances to education to community engagement - ensures that his vision of equitable access to musical experiences remains strong for future generations. Our grantmaking has empowered numerous organizations and driven meaningful change, highlighting the vital role of our grantees in this shared mission.

Thank you for being here tonight and for the work you do every day.”

Ellen Rosen, Board President

GRANT GUIDELINES

2025-26 Capital Support

The Capital Support deadline is coming up! Capital projects include the construction of new facilities and the renovation, repair, or expansion of existing facilities. We will also consider proposals for capital needs, including hardware, software, and equipment. Applications are due on the grants management system by **February 1**.

Reach out to Rachael Gartner, at rgartner@presserfoundation.org or 267.519.5349 with any questions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2025-26 Undergraduate Scholar Award and Graduate Music Award

In 2025-26, The Presser Foundation is supporting 265 undergraduate schools and programs of music through the [Undergraduate Scholar Award](#) program. Each higher education institution will receive \$3,000 to give to a selected outstanding music major.

In addition, 15 graduate schools of music have been chosen by the Scholar Award Committee to participate in the [Graduate Music Award](#) program. Each institution selects a graduate student and their proposal for funding at \$10,000. The Foundation is eager to learn how the awards will contribute to the study and practice of music by students dedicated to the field.

The Presser Foundation is pleased to announce the support of the [American Indian Musicians' Scholarship](#) (AIMS) (through The Heartbeat Music Project) under the leadership of Renata Yazzie, a Diné pianist and musicologist currently finishing her graduate studies in Music. AIMS provides Indigenous students pursuing music education with support for tuition, instruments, and mentorship.

Strategic Planning Process

As we enter our second century of service, The Presser Foundation is holding tight to its founding purpose while adapting to meet today's needs. Last year, the Foundation adopted a strategic framework that affirms its long-standing commitment to music access and positions the organization for expanded impact in the coming decade. While we are still in the research and design phases and months away from implementation, we wanted to share that this work is underway and highlight several core areas of focus.

Our strategic planning process engaged Board members, staff, grantees, community leaders, and peer organizations nationwide. Facilitated by 8 Bridges Workshop and guided by a Strategic Planning Working Group, the process created space for dialogue about challenges and opportunities within both Greater Philadelphia's music ecosystem and nationally. The Board of Directors approved the strategic framework in June 2025, including several strategies, summarized here:

- **Youth Music Education Access in Philadelphia:** Research and address gaps in music education access for Philadelphia youth, creating pathways for equitable participation.

- **Community Music Initiatives:** Deepen the Foundation’s strategic investment in Greater Philadelphia music organizations that are working to dismantle barriers to participation and engagement in musical experiences, while empowering communities to organize and lead.
- **Ecosystem Collaboration:** Leverage the Foundation’s reach, knowledge, and resources to strengthen the music ecosystem in Greater Philadelphia through new programming and collaborations.

To undergird this work, the Foundation adopted a new Vision Statement in October 2025:
Equitable access to all musical experiences transforms communities and fosters connection, well-being, and joy.

To define how these priorities will take shape in practice, and how progress will be measured over time, the Foundation began implementation research in July 2025. This phase will continue through 2026. We are grateful to the more than 100 leaders who have contributed to this work to date, generously sharing their experience and insight.

We look forward to sharing updates as this work continues!

Summer Intern

The Foundation is recruiting one undergraduate intern to work on projects related to business administration and research this summer, June through July 2026, for 20 hours per week. The internship is paid and on-site at the Foundation’s office at 8033 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia. If you know someone interested, the Foundation’s social media will provide information and instructions on how to apply in the upcoming weeks.

GRAMMY Museum and Recording Academy's Music Educator Award

Imagine your favorite music teacher. Now imagine them walking across the stage at The GRAMMYS. You can help make it possible!

The **GRAMMY Music Educator Award** was created to honor educators who have made a significant and lasting impact on the field of music education and who show a dedication to the larger cause of supporting music education in schools. The Award serves as a powerful advocate for music education. Every year, ten current teachers (from kindergarten through college, in both public and private schools) are selected as finalists, and each receives a personal award as well as a donation to their school’s music program.

Pennsylvania has had five individuals achieve finalist status, with three from the Greater Philadelphia Area. No Pennsylvania music teacher has been selected as a finalist since 2020. Help us elevate an inspiring local music teacher!

Nominate someone by March 15, or apply yourself by March 31, [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Movement: March 2026

The Foundation looks forward to hosting its first Next Movement of the year in March! More information and a registration link will be shared via social media and on our website soon. To learn more about Next Movement, check out [the website](#).

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster



Founded in 1998, the [Mennonite Children's Choir of Lancaster](#) (MCCL) offers three auditioned choir ensembles and two non-auditioned exploratory music classes, guided by core values: exceptional musical education cultivates vocal and choral excellence, strong character evolves in an environment that balances nurture and structure, music invites connection and celebrates diversity, and every person needs a place to belong.

Through this musical lens, singers engage with cultures and stories that deepen their understanding of the world and each other. In spring 2026, MCCL will welcome guest clinician Carlos Casilla-Nova for rehearsal retreats focused on Hispanic choral repertoire and partner with the Wheatland Chorale for a joint concert experience.

MCCL extends music beyond performance into meaningful service. In summer 2025, nearly 70 singers toured North Carolina and Virginia, partnering with Mennonite Disaster Service to bring music to Hurricane Helene-affected communities. One singer reflected, "The true gift wasn't just sharing music—it was discovering how that music could help make sense of joys and griefs for both us and our audiences." Beginning in November 2025, MCCL launched a three-year partnership with Landis Homes retirement community, exploring singing's impact on mental health across generations.

MCCL offers income-based scholarships, multi-participant discounts, and one-on-one coaching for singers whose families face time or educational barriers. Weekly Musicianship Classes, introduced last year, have strengthened singers' reading skills and confidence through small-group instruction in sight-singing, rhythm, and theory. All concerts are free and held at various Lancaster area venues, creating a shared space that bridges differences and reveals unity, beauty, and hope.

Tri-County Concerts



Founded in 1941, [Tri-County Concerts](#)' (TCC) mission is to foster the performance and appreciation of the highest quality solo and ensemble chamber music in Montgomery, Delaware, and Chester Counties.

TCC offers at least four concerts each season, specifically through its Emerging Artists Series that features outstanding young musicians in the early stages of their careers while providing audiences with opportunities to expand their understanding of music. To ensure wide access, TCC keeps admission prices low, offers series and senior discounts, and provides free admission to people of limited means, students, and children. The Series also includes virtual concerts that were first developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, but have continued as a service to people who may not be able to attend live performances.

To obtain the best talent and provide emerging musicians more support, TCC has steadily increased their artist rates. With the tapes from their concerts, they are building a library to use as future virtual concerts and a means of audience expansion. In addition, virtual concerts are offered on a pay-what-you-wish basis, which is another way in which TCC seeks to increase access to chamber music. To further TCC's education mission and enhance the listening experience, artists speak about their music in between playing and at post-concert question-and-answer sessions and receptions that generate interesting discussions enjoyed by all.

Beginning in 1943, TCC has also organized an annual Youth Festival, which has been a steppingstone to achievement for thousands of student participants and both advances music education and serves as a means to encourage the next generation of classical music audiences and artists. The Festival provides local middle school and high school students constructive feedback from professional musicians and the winners a public performance. It also helps generate interest in TCC - some participants attend concerts, and a number of Board members first became involved through the Festival.

NEWS & INFORMATION

PANO

The Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations, or PANO, is a membership organization of nonprofits across Pennsylvania. PANO offers a wide range of resources to both its members and non-members who have questions related to their work, including on such topics related to legal matters, advocacy, communications, finances, leadership,

fundraising, and much more. Every month, PANO offers [a variety of webinars and in-person classes](#) on topics of interest to nonprofit professionals, board members, and volunteers.

In addition, PANO offers a service called [Ask PANO](#) where anyone can submit a question, with PANO staff and their network of experts can respond. PANO assistance through Ask PANO is free unless it takes 30 or more minutes to respond. PANO will provide a notice if it appears that a response merits a charge.

In February, PANO is also launching The PANO Navigator, a curated resource hub designed to help Pennsylvania nonprofits find vetted tools and information quickly. The resources are curated, Pennsylvania-specific, and seek to save nonprofits' time as they seek answers.

In an era of uncertainty, PANO provides Pennsylvania nonprofits a ready resource to answer questions related to all aspects of nonprofit work.

Social Media Series - Undergraduate Scholar Award

From December and continuing on through February, the Foundation has presented a social media series featuring 13 2024-25 Presser Scholars every Friday. The students, as well as their hundreds of Presser Scholar peers, represent the top music talent around the country. Check out the Foundation's social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) to look back over the series and learn more about these amazing young people!

Blog Posts & Newsletter

Guest Blog Post: Remember that your organization can submit a guest blog post about your efforts and receive an unrestricted honorarium! Check out the guest blog post guidelines on our website.

Report Blog Post: The Foundation may also reach out to feature your organization based on information from your most recent grant follow-up report. Foundation staff will write the post and share a draft with you before publication.

Board & Staff Updates

At the halfway point of their Fellowships, our Graduate Fellows shared their reflections on their experiences at the Foundation and in Philadelphia.

Erica Breitbarth, Graduate Research Fellow

Time is flying by! I cannot believe I'm already at the midpoint of my time as a Presser Fellow. Over the past few months, I have learned so much about the importance of strategic philanthropy in supporting equitable access to music in our community. In conducting research related to our strategic plan, Strategy Director Kate Houstoun and I have had such rich conversations about music access with leaders in Philadelphia and beyond. I look forward to continued research and learning in the coming months. The next phase of my work will be focused on my greatest passion: music education.

Attending the 100th anniversary gala was a stunning reminder of the depth and breadth of the music community in the Greater Philadelphia Area and the role The Presser Foundation plays in the health and sustainability of the music ecosystem. What a wonderful evening to

celebrate and toast to the future of music in our region. I am honored to serve an organization with such an enduring legacy!

Jeremy Jefferson, Graduate Music Fellow

One of my missions as a musician is to make music as inclusive as possible, and I truly believe that classical music should be enjoyed and experienced by all. I do this by choosing my language specifically, keeping an open ear and mind to all types of performances, and, of course, highlighting the performances I attend! The Presser Foundation has given me the avenue to really learn more about Philadelphia, its music organizations, and how to write about them. I've loved how each organization has spotlighted "old" and new composers, unheard-of composers, and BIPOC composers, and how responsive audiences have been to new works. I've been told in the music sphere that you sandwich the new work in between two popular works so that people stay and listen, and while I believe there's some merit to this strategy, it's so wonderful to see how many music organizations in Philadelphia challenge this notion.

In summary, this Fellowship has opened my eyes. I've learned a lot about how I understand, interpret, and interact with music. I want to keep this same energy going forward, and I intend to still attend as many performances as I can once my Fellowship is complete. Thank you to The Presser Foundation for allowing me the opportunity to really understand what music means to me.

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