



**OCTOBER** School is back in session along with so *many* other activities. You and your children may be feeling overwhelmed and struggling to get into a good routine. Rest assured, it's just the nature of the season!

You may be tempted to cut back on activities and stop music lessons, but think again before making that decision! Sometimes, a "short break" can take the excitement and fluency out of music study. Music is an outlet for our students -- a fun activity that allows them to express themselves creatively. It helps them gain confidence, not only in learning new songs and skills but also performing in front of others. Studies have also shown that actively participating in music improves memory and reduces stress and anxiety.

Practicing consistently just a few minutes a day helps students improve and move forward. Consistency is the key, and a good routine will help. Encouraging your child to play their instrument for 15-20 minutes before starting homework, or right after dinner, works well. Or if your child is an earlier riser, before school may also be an option.

We have our little red assignment books to help us stay focused on our weekly lessons. Please take a look at your student's book for any weekly comments from your music teacher! We are beginning to work on our Christmas Recital all ready, and each student will participate in an ensemble piece of the Nutcracker Suite! I am researching several parts for each instrument in the 8 songs that we will perform. With so many different levels of experience, you will be able to play your instrument well in your group, and students studying more than one instrument will play in more than 1 song! We will need a little help with the HATS we are making for Sugar Plum Fairy, Chinese Dance, Arabian Dance, Russian Dance, and Waltz of the Flowers.

Our performance will be on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00 in the orchestra room of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, on Neese Avenue. Children are asked to wear black pants and white shirts, to move easily in and out of the characters in each ensemble. All scholarship winners will be expected to do a Christmas solo, and they can dress more fancy if they want to. Our group rehearsals will start in November, during your lessons, and I will create rehearsal calendars for each song. Please let me know if you would like to help set up, or clean up after our recital, and let me know if you'd like to help with hats!

Thanks for these wonderful students! **Laurel Gibson**