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Music school opens in West Boylston

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West Boylston's Julie Holston teaches a children's music class at the Pakachoag's Shrewsbury location last December. (Banner photo/COURTESY SARAH SMONGESKI)

WEST BOYLSTON — Arts in West Boylston are getting a shot of adrenaline with the opening of a new music school in town. The Pakachoag Music School, a 30-year-old music school based in Auburn, began offering private music lessons for children on Sept. 4 at its new satellite location in the First Congregational Church of West Boylston.

Sarah Smongeski, executive director of the school, is excited about the school and being in West Boylston.

"We offer private music lessons, and we offer 'Music Together' classes for ages birth to 5 years, and for ages 5 to 8 years," Smongeski said.

"We're so looking forward to being in West Boylston. The administration at the Congregational Church has been so welcoming to us, I know this will be a great move," she said.

In West Boylston, Pakachoag presently offers private music lessons on violin and piano, and 'Music Together' classes start on Sept. 24.

Smongeski said flute and guitar lessons, "will likely become available," at some time in the future.

"Music Together" classes are innovative classes for parents and youngsters to explore basic music premises together.

"The classes, initially, explore singing and movement, having fun with rhythm instruments," Smongeski said. "We use folk-based music and it's a lot of fun, but the underlying curriculum involves exposure to tonality."

Music Together classes at Pakachoag are taught by West Boylston resident Julie Holston, who said she is looking forward to bringing the classes to town.

"This will help support music in our community," Holston said.

Holston has been involved with Pakachoag for over 18 years. She started as a mother who brought both of her daughters to the school. Since bringing her own children to the classes, she has taught Music Together for 15 years.

"It is a wonderful program," Holston said. "It's done so much for both of my daughters."

And the classes teach more than music, she said.

"Even though we're a music school, we do work on growth motor skills, fine motor skills, social skills, and even speech," Holston said. "I've had speech therapists send kids to me and we've really been able to help them."

Holston also points to the benefits Pakachoag brings to West Boylston.

"I'm really happy the West Boylston Arts Foundation has done as much as it has to help keep music in the West Boylston schools," she said. "Pakachoag can help offer music lessons to kids and help support music in our community. Our offerings will help us bring music out and bring it closer to our families."

'Music Together' classes, which begin Sept. 24, will be offered in two 45-minute classes at 9:45 and 11 a.m. for ages birth to 5 years old. A class for 5- to 8-year-olds will be offered from 4 to 5 p.m.

"We encourage people to come and observe a class, then sign up," Holston said.

"We like people to call the school in Auburn, though, to arrange the observation. We just like to know how many people to expect for each class," Holston said.

The Pakachoag School can be reached at (508)791-8159.