

Dedication to Kids Drives Award-Winning Music Van Volunteer

SOURCE: TIM DOUGHERTY FOR SANTA BARBARA SYMPHONY

Mary Jane Cooper, a Santa Barbara Symphony volunteer, was honored with a Most Valuable Player Award at a recent event held as part of the Association of California Symphony Orchestras' (ACSO) annual conference in Los Angeles.

Cooper was recognized for her outstanding efforts on behalf of the Music Van, the Santa Barbara Symphony's award-winning outreach program for area children.

In operation since 1978, the Santa Barbara Symphony Music Van visits third-grade classrooms in the greater Santa Barbara area between September and December, serving some 2,000 students in more than 40 schools each year.



The mobile music classroom enables students to see, learn about, and play a full selection of orchestral instruments.

"Mary Jane Cooper personifies all the admirable qualities we see in so many of our volunteers: Dedication to our community's youth, a genuine love of music, a warmly engaging personality, and a generosity of spirit," said Kevin A. Marvin, the symphony's executive director.

"I can't think of anyone more deserving of this award," Marvin said. "The ACSO MVP Award honors individuals who are instrumental to an organization's success."

"The Santa Barbara Symphony Music Van would not be possible without Mary Jane's unending efforts to schedule docents and otherwise tackle the program's many complexities," said Amy Williams, the symphony's director of education and community engagement.

"We are grateful for her extraordinary work, and are very proud to have her as a member of our education team," she said.

The music van program is the recipient of a California Teachers Association Gold Award for Outstanding Support of Public Education and a Sally Parker Education Gold Award from the League of American Orchestras.

ACSO created its Most Valuable Player Awards in 1996 to recognize exemplary volunteers, volunteer projects and volunteer organizations working for California's symphony orchestras and choruses.

For more information on the Santa Barbara Symphony Music Van, visit www.thesymphony.org/education/music_van.

— *Tim Dougherty for Santa Barbara Symphony.*