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MEDIA CONTACT:

KyMBERLY Drake
Public Relations Manager
NAMMM
760-438-8007, ext. 162
Fax: 760-438-8257
kymberlyd@nammm.org

Scott Robertson, APR
Director of MarCom
NAMMM
760-438-8007, ext. 102
Fax: 760-438-8257
scottr@nammm.org

STUDY REVEALS TEENS' STRONG COMMITMENT TO MUSIC AND MUSIC MAKING

New Research Reveals the Meaning and Importance of Music Participation in the Lives of Teens

CARLSBAD, Calif., March 5, 2008—The NAMMM Foundation today announced the results of a recently published research study by Patricia Shehan Campbell, Ph.D. of the University of Washington as part of the Foundation's *Sounds of Learning* research initiative.

The study, titled "Adolescents' Expressed Meanings of Music in and out of School," was based on responses by 1,155 teens who submitted student essays to *Teen People* magazine as part of an Online contest. Throughout their essays, students expressed their thoughts toward learning and playing music and revealed that they value music making as a central aspect of their identities.

The findings include:

- Playing music provides a sense of belonging for teens
- Making music provides the freedom for teens to just be themselves; to be different; to be something they thought they could never be; to be comfortable and relaxed in school and elsewhere in their lives
- Music helps adolescents release or control emotions and helps coping with difficult situations such as peer pressure, substance abuse, pressures of study and family, the dynamics of friendships and social life, and the pain of loss or abuse
- Teens believe developing musical skills and performance is important since it paves the way to musical opportunities as skills develop
- Teens long for more variety and options for making music in school, including the expansion to instruments and technology used in popular music
- Adolescents are genuinely committed to their instruments and their school ensembles because they love to be involved in these musical and social groups
- Teens believe that music is an integral part of American life, and that music reflects American culture and society



- Teens feel that playing music teaches self discipline such as “there are payoffs if you practice and stick with something”
- Adolescents are of the opinion that playing music diminishes boundaries between people of different ethnic backgrounds, age-groups and social interests
- Teens associate playing music with music literacy, listening skills, motor ability, eye-hand coordination and heightened intellectual capabilities.

“This study outlines what music and music making means to teens—that it helps define them as they grow up, it gives them purpose and meaning, and contributes to their success in school and in life,” said Joe Lamond, president and CEO, NAMMM. “From what we have learned from this study, and others, it’s clear that music is essential to a complete education for all children, so why would anyone anywhere ever consider reducing support for music education and denying access and opportunity to our nation’s children?”

“We will do well to listen to what teens tell us about music as a common need and a constant presence in their lives,” Campbell said. “Music is their social glue—a bridge for building acceptance and tolerance for people of different ages and cultural circumstances. Music provides opportunities in school for teens’ engagement as performers, composers, and intelligent listeners, and these activities and qualities appear to be deeply meaningful to them. For teens who are desperately seeking relevance, musical study may give them the balanced experience they require.”

The analysis was funded by the NAMMM Foundation as part of its *Sounds of Learning* initiative, a program devoted to studying the associated learning benefits of making music. Campbell conducted the study with Claire Connell of the University of Washington and Amy Beegle of Pacific Lutheran University. The findings were published in the Fall 2007 issue of the *Journal for Research in Music Education*.

About The NAMMM Foundation

The NAMMM Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to advancing active participation in music making across the lifespan by supporting scientific research, philanthropic giving and public service programs from the international music products industry. For more information visit www.nammfoundation.org or e-mail info@nammfoundation.org.

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