

# Fauquier Times

## **Let Your Light Shine**

*Allegro fosters a community, not just students*

By Danica Low  
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### ***Music brought them together***

At age four Lachelle Yoder began piano lessons. Her mother was a church musician and her father, the pastor, had a music degree. Her mother needed something to keep Lachelle busy, she says. And thank goodness for that because today Lachelle and her husband Sam Yoder, who has a background in professional music, have put their love of the arts to work as the executive directors of Allegro Community School of the Arts in Warrenton.

Nearly every day, Lachelle and Sam arrive at Allegro bright and early and spend the day guiding art lessons of all kinds. Sam is an instructor [and Executive Director](#), and Lachelle handles the program direction, administration and marketing. The Yoders routinely head home well after supper time, with many weekends full of the same. Winter break, summer vacation, snow days, they are usually at Allegro, and they always have smiles on their faces. It's as if their cause runs through their veins.

### ***Community is the why***

Lachelle explains, "We love to see art impact the lives of our kids, but there is something in the umbrella of the arts that reaches everyone. What art does for the soul is hard to put to words. The arts bring a community together."

In 2017 alone, the school will host or co-host more than three dozen events for Fauquier. Lachelle was co-chair for this year's Warrenton Spring Festival.

"The arts are non-generational," she continues. "Music, visual arts, theatre, literary arts, dance – all art forms – inspire, motivate, encourage, teach, and help give folks purpose and direction. This is true for the itty-bittys (younger children) and the older generations too. Art brings us to a place of understanding and connection with one another."

### ***The birth of the future Non-Profit of the Year***

After taking piano lessons for more than a decade, Lachelle went on to teach piano, and completed a work-study program in theatre at the University of Arkansas. She met Sam on a worship team at church (she sang and he played keys), and she worked at the church in its theatre and music ministries.

Then, in 2004, Lachelle and Sam's daughter, Cyndi, began a venture that was the beginning of Allegro: an early childhood music and movement program. Piano instruction was added, leadership evolved, additional instructors were hired, Allegro moved to Vint Hill (and then to Main Street four years ago), an expanded Board of Directors was implemented, and in less than a decade, Allegro enrollment has soared to several hundred. In 2016, Allegro was named the Non-Profit of the Year by the Fauquier Chamber of Commerce.

Today, Lachelle sits on the Board of Directors for Allegro, Experience Old Town Warrenton, and Fauquier Arts Council. Lachelle and Sam have six grandchildren, serve on the hospitality committee at church, and enjoy spending time with their family and pets on Sundays.

*Allegro School of the Arts, 20 Main St., Warrenton. 540-349-5088. [allegrocsa.org/new](http://allegrocsa.org/new)*