



TAKE IT BEYOND THE CONCERT HALL

with From the Top Alum
Jisoo Kim



Jisoo Kim is a 17-year-old violinist from Palisades Park, New Jersey. She performed on *From the Top* on shows [240](#) and [253](#). She is also a [Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist](#).

“Here at Crossing Strings, I am TEACHER, FRIEND, and MENTOR.”

“CROSSING STRINGS” IN THE COMMUNITY THROUGH PEER MENTORSHIP

After having the chance to work with younger kids at a summer music festival, violinist Jisoo Kim was inspired to continue teaching in her own neighborhood. She created Crossing Strings: a program that provides free weekly violin lessons for elementary-aged students at the Ridgefield Public Library. With eight students currently on board, Crossing Strings has been a powerful way for Jisoo to connect with younger performers, share her passion for music, and learn more about what it means to be a teacher. As she prepares to leave for college, Jisoo hopes to continue this work wherever school and music may take her.

GOALS: “My ultimate goal for *Crossing Strings* was to share my knowledge of the violin and music itself to other young people. Personally, I had my doubts in the beginning because I was extremely used to being ‘the student’ instead of ‘the teacher.’ Even though my position was essentially a mentor to my students, I also became their friend. We would share stories and converse about our daily lives.

“I was eager to develop my own program to gain more insight into the rewarding perspectives of being a teacher.”

CROSSING STRINGS

JI SOO KIM, DIRECTOR
MARCH 27, 2012
RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY

FEATURING...

LAURA SUAREZ
ASHLEY AN
NAYUN CHOI
ESTHER OH
HALLIE CHENG
LAUREN CHENG



Q&A WITH JISOO

From the Top (FTT): What inspired you to create this program?

Jisoo: I decided to start my very own violin program because of a particular experience I had during the previous summer. I had worked as a mentor to the younger students that played string instruments (violin, viola, and cello) at a local summer music camp for community service hours.

It was really my first time in the position of a “teacher.” I had always been the student: listening and following my own teacher’s directions. Because the role had finally switched, it turned out to be quite intriguing. I was eager to develop my own program to gain more insight into the rewarding perspectives of being a teacher.



FTT: What was it like having to make that shift from “student” to “teacher”?

Jisoo: The first few weeks were truly a new learning experience for me. I had to take so many other factors into consideration when teaching – patience, responsibility, and creativity. Since I was not used to such a different atmosphere, I admit I was overwhelmed. It made me realize that I was much more familiar with working independently while living the life of a musician because I had always considered myself as primarily a soloist. Other than participating in chamber music or orchestra, I never really took in the complications of what it takes to work with others as a teacher. I was exposed to an entirely new light.

FTT: What were some of the challenges you faced in the program?

Jisoo: The difficulties I faced during Crossing Strings primarily dealt with the varying level of my students. Some learned quickly, and others caught up at a different pace. Because of this discrepancy, I had to seriously consider this factor during my teaching. I feel like I have truly discovered the strength of encouragement and what kind of effect it has on both beginners and experts. As for the instruments and music stands, I contacted violin stores and schools nearby to let them know about my program.

FTT: What do you believe it means to be an arts leader?

Jisoo: To me, being an arts leader is, in one word, incredible. As a violinist, I feel that Crossing Strings has not only affected my students but also me both musically and personally. The best part of teaching has always been when one of my students would successfully play through “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” to the end and immediately glance into my eyes with a proud, hopeful look. I would feel just as accomplished, and in that moment, I realize the appreciation that I have for my very own teachers.

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