



Quantum Leap Handbook

Summer 2026

PO Box 621
Crete, IL 60417
suburbanyouthsymphony.org
thesyso@gmail.com

Immanuel Lutheran Church
4800 Sauk Trail
Richton Park, IL, 60471

Organization

Board of Directors	Name	City	Contact
President	Andrea Gibb	Olympia Fields, IL	N/A
Vice President	Christie Burali	Crete, IL	N/A
Treasurer	Cynthia Westerman	Crete, IL	N/A
Secretary	Sue McKeigue	Palos Park, IL	N/A
Board Members	Mort Castle	Crete, IL	N/A
	Chris Cochrane	Crete, IL	N/A
	Joan Finnegan	Burr Ridge, IL	N/A
	Andrea Hetzel	Park Forest, IL	N/A
	Emily Kenny	Chicago, IL	N/A
	Marilynn Tannebaum	Olympia Fields, IL	N/A
Operational Team			
Executive Director/Music Director	Brian Ostrega	Chicago	thesyso@gmail.com
Orchestra Manager	Brenda Thomas	Chicago Heights	thesyso@gmail.com

Mission

Our mission is to provide all students with the necessary skills, music education, and inspiration to play and enjoy music, and to rebuild the culture of string playing in the south/southwest suburbs.

Ensembles

- **Suburban Youth Symphony Orchestra**

The Suburban Youth Symphony Orchestra (SYSO) is the top performing group and namesake of the organization. Students in SYSO have achieved a level of technical independence, and are able to play their instrument well enough to adapt to the goals of the group.

- **Suburban Youth Symphony Junior Orchestra**

The junior orchestra is the bridge from IOP level work to membership in SYSO. In the junior orchestra you continue to expand the skills you've learned in IOP as a beginner, and learn to use those skills as a member of an ensemble. Students will spend time in rehearsal dedicated to technique and theory. Our goal is Junior orchestra students will

learn that the more skill and ability you have to share, the more you enjoy sharing. Students in SYSJO will have the same performance opportunities as students in SYSO.

- **Incredible Opportunity Program**

The Incredible Opportunity Program (IOP) is our beginner ensemble, a group instruction class, for students ages 8-13 who do not already play a string instrument, but would like to learn to play the violin. Students will learn and reinforce basic violin skills such as how to hold the violin and bow, making a solid sound with good technique and ensemble skills by playing with other students.

Quantum Leap 2026 Auditions/Placement

There is no formal audition process for placement in Junior Orchestra or Symphony Orchestra for our Quantum Leap Summer 2026 Program. Placement is made at the discretion of the Music Director based on the duration of a student learning their instrument, age and any past orchestra and ensemble experience the student may have.

If a student wishes to be considered for the Symphony Orchestra who is placed in Junior Orchestra, that student may be placed in the ‘Share the Stage’ opportunity to play one or two pieces with the Symphony Orchestra.

If a student is able to play the Symphony Orchestra music with limited technical assistance, the student may be placed in the Symphony Orchestra, at Music Director’s discretion.

Expectations

Tuition

- All ensemble tuition is \$200, with the exception of early bird applications (\$180) made by April 15, 2026.
- Summer tuition is due by June 7, 2026. Electronic payments can be made to SYSO via our website, or given to us by check (preferred) in person or mailed:
<https://www.suburbanyouthsymphony.org/tuition>

Instrument Rental

- Instruments can be rented from SYSO for the 10 week Quantum Leap Summer 2026 program for a total of \$50. If you are in need of a violin, please email thesyso@gmail.com to coordinate an instrument size and payment for rental. Rental is due once the instrument is in the student’s possession.

Financial aid

- Financial Aid is available upon request to the Orchestra Manager (Brenda Thomas) or Executive Director (Brian Ostrega). All requests for financial aid are reviewed by board members appointed to the scholarship committee. Applications may be submitted at any time, but since funds are limited, families are encouraged to apply early in the season.

“Away for the Day” Policy

- To foster and encourage an environment of community, friendliness, developing connections and getting to know one another, students are required to have all their smart devices “Away for the Day”. This is a similar implementation of no-device policies at school. This includes, but is not limited to phones, smartwatches, smart tablets, computers and laptops. Devices MUST be kept in a student’s backpack, case or personal belongings. **Devices are NOT allowed during the designated ensemble break time.**
- If a student is expecting an urgent form of communication from a parent/guardian, that parent/guardian MUST let us know. It is expected the student will not use their phone unless their device rings.
- This policy is to ensure students are fully present and involved in the creative process of our rehearsals.

Anti Bullying/Harassment Policy

- SYSO strives to maintain a safe, respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students, families, staff, volunteers, and audience members. This is to ensure all participants are treated with dignity regardless of age, background, identity, skill level, or experience.
- Bullying includes, but is not limited to: Verbal abuse, insults, name-calling, mocking, or humiliation, threats, social exclusion, damage to personal property or instruments, physical aggression or unwanted physical contact.
- Harassment includes, but is not limited to: Discriminatory comments or behavior related to race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, or appearance, sexual harassment, including inappropriate comments, jokes, gestures, or unwanted advances.
- Student expectations: Treat all orchestra members, conductors, staff, volunteers, and families with respect at all times. Demonstrate professionalism during rehearsals, performances, and competitions. Encourage and support fellow musicians regardless of skill level. Follow conductor and staff instructions promptly and respectfully. Use appropriate language and behavior in all orchestra settings.
- Possible disciplinary actions based upon infraction: Verbal warning, parent conference, written behavioral contract, suspension from orchestra activities, loss of leadership positions or seating privileges, or permanent dismissal from SYSO. Severe violations may result in immediate suspension or removal from the program pending investigation.

Rehearsals and Performances

- **Rehearsal times**

IOP: Incredible Opportunity Program classes are held Sundays 12:45pm-1:30pm at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Richton Park. Parents are encouraged to stay with their child for the entire class. **Expected arrival time for students to set up and get tuned is 12:30pm.**

SYSJO: Suburban Youth Symphony Junior Orchestra rehearsals are scheduled Sundays 1:45-3:15PM. Members of SYSJO may be asked to attend part of SYSO's rehearsal at 3:00PM. Please be prepared to be available for the entire rehearsal time. **Expected arrival time for students to set up and get tuned is 1:30pm.**

SYSO: Suburban Youth Symphony Orchestra rehearsals are scheduled for Sundays from 3:30-5:30 PM. Please be prepared to be available for the entire rehearsal time. **Expected arrival time for students to set up and get tuned is 3:15pm.**

No Rehearsal Dates: There are few Sundays throughout the season where SYSO will not rehearse. These largely account for holidays and other special occasions. Sundays where SYSO **will NOT** meet are:

- 4th of July weekend (July 5, 2026, no rehearsal)

Students On-Site

- Students who are in the SYSO program at any level (IOP, SYSJO, SYSO) do not need a parent to accompany them for the duration of the rehearsal. Parents are encouraged to attend their child's ensemble rehearsal. Siblings, cousins, or any form of extended family under the age of 18 who are not enrolled in the program are not allowed on site unless accompanied by an adult family member for the duration of the rehearsal.

Parent Meeting: SYSO will hold a parent meeting after the first day of rehearsal on June 7, 2026. This will be in-person at Immanuel Lutheran Church, and will run from 3:20pm - 3:50pm. This is an important opportunity for our staff and parents to connect and share vital information for the season.

- **Rehearsal Arrival Times**

Please plan to arrive 10 - 15 minutes before scheduled class/rehearsal. We will use this time to unpack, tune, and prepare for rehearsal.

- **Attendance**

Attendance at all rehearsals and performances is expected. **If you absolutely must miss a rehearsal, please contact thesyso@gmail.com, or contact Brenda Thomas (Orchestra Manager) at 1-(708)-373-1975**

Absences without contact are considered unexcused. **More than three unexcused absences may result in dismissal from the upcoming concert without refund of tuition.** Like other team-oriented programs that require a solid commitment, students in this program are accountable to each other and absences affect the outcome of the music.

- **Required Materials**

- Instrument
- All current music, organized in a binder or folder
- Sharp pencil/eraser
- All other materials needed to play: rosin, endpin anchor, etc.
- It is recommended for students to bring their own snacks and drinks to eat during the designated break time. For Quantum Leap 2026, SYSO will provide bottled water for students at rehearsals.

- **Practice**

In addition to attending all rehearsals and performances, it is expected that all orchestra members practice regularly at home. Group rehearsal time is limited, and must be used wisely in order to prepare pieces for the concerts and improve the group's ensemble.

Private lessons are highly recommended, and go hand in hand with the outcome of a student's playing ability. **ALL STUDENTS IN SYSO AND SYSJO ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE A PRIVATE TEACHER.** We encourage all students to take any challenging parts of music to their teacher.

- **Performance Attire:** For each performance, musicians should wear appropriate clothing and arrive at the call time given by the music director. Call times will be communicated to students and parents no later than two weeks in advance. Reminders will be given in rehearsals and through online communication.

IOP/SYSJO/SYSO: Summer concert attire is our Quantum Leap Summer 2026 shirt (distributed on concert day) and comfortable pants/shorts/shoes. Our concert will be outdoors, weather permitting. In the event of inclement weather, we will perform indoors at Immanuel Lutheran Church at 4800 Sauk Trail, Richton Park.

Communication

Communication between staff and parents is vital to successful outcomes. Any changes in the schedule will be communicated via email and other online communications. Parents and students are encouraged to reach out to the orchestra manager if they have any questions or comments.

- Email: thesyso@gmail.com
- Website: <https://www.suburbanyouthsymphony.org/>
- Facebook: <https://facebook.com/SuburbanYouthSymphonyOrchestra>

- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/syso_ig/
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCIC0IF35I2LP7TcifYNhtQ>

To help spread the word about our organization, we invite you to join, like, share, and subscribe to our social media groups. We encourage you to share your photos and videos on our pages. We will post photos periodically as well as updates and reminders for events and helpful articles for students and parents. Concert videos will be recorded/live streamed and uploaded to YouTube and Facebook.

Quantum Leap SYSO Calendar Summer 2026

All schedule times are subject to change at the discretion of the Music Director. All changes in the schedule will be emailed to members, as well as posted on our online outlets.

Performance Details

Summer Concert

- Date: Sunday, August 16, 2026
- Location: Immanuel Lutheran Church, 4800 Sauk Trail, Richton Park, IL 60471
- Concert time: 4:00pm
- Call time: 1:30pm

Quantum Leap 2026 Summer Season Calendar [Sundays]

DATE		
June	7	First Rehearsals; SYSO/SYSJO/IOP Parent Meeting
	14	Rehearsals - Student Shirt Size Response Form Due
	21	Rehearsals
	28	Rehearsals
July	5	No Rehearsals - 4th of July Weekend
	12	Rehearsals
	19	Rehearsals
	26	Rehearsals
August	1	Performance
	2	Rehearsals
	9	Rehearsals
	16	Quantum Leap 2026 Performance

