

Joe Lester began playing violin at the age of 4 with Suzuki teacher Suzie Stewart in the Atlanta area. He played violin throughout high school and into college. While in college at Columbus State (then Columbus College in Columbus GA) he switched his primary instrument to viola and continued his music study. It was in college that he met his eventual wife-to-be, Samantha. Joe and Samantha both studied to be Suzuki teachers and are registered teachers with the Suzuki Association of the Americas. Music Education is very dear to them and they have recently started the Rome Youth Symphony Orchestra. Joe comes from a family of educators and music educators and is honored to be continuing the family tradition. He has taught kindergarten violin classes since 2008 through the Huntsville Symphony School program in Albertville, AL, as well as teaching a program for classroom 3rd graders for four years. "Mr. Joe" also enjoys teaching private lessons and summer music camps. He is very happy to begin working with the Montessori School of Rome. He is also a performer with various symphony orchestras including the Rome Symphony and the Huntsville (AL) Symphony.

Samantha Lester began playing violin in elementary school in Columbus, GA, and soon after switched to viola as her primary instrument. She excelled in her community to the point of being invited to participate in the viola section of the college orchestra while a sophomore in high school. She also studied keyboard in her younger years. She participated in the Southeastern Music Festival in Columbus, GA, Brevard Music Festival in Brevard, NC and the Garth Newel Music Festival in Hot Springs, VA. Samantha has performed with many regional orchestras in her career, including the symphonies of Columbus (GA), Macon (GA), Albany (GA), Chattanooga (TN), Carroll (Carrollton, GA) and Huntsville (AL). Samantha is currently the principal violist of the Rome Symphony. She is a registered Suzuki teacher with the Suzuki Association of the Americas. "Miss Sam" maintains a private studio of young violin and viola students and is the Co-Director of the recently founded Rome Youth Symphony Orchestra. She is very excited to start this new chapter of music education with the Montessori School of Rome.