

# NJIO

## Backstage Pass!

*Susan Peterson*

**Susan Peterson's** journey with NJIO began about 25 years ago, when her daughter, invited by founder Lorraine Marks, joined NJIO as a 4th grader. With extensive arts administration experience, Susan stepped in when the founder left NJIO, helping to establish the infrastructure needed to keep the organization going strong.

Throughout her tenure on the board, she has held various roles and currently serves as president as of June 2024. Outside of NJIO, she is the Operations Director at Wharton Arts, where she manages 15 ensembles and organizes 30 concerts a year. She also has two amazing kids, and enjoys making props and costumes for theater productions.

The impact that NJIO has had on Susan has been profound, allowing her children to engage with adults as peers in a collaborative learning environment—an experience that is rare and precious. She also noted that NJIO provides opportunities for people of all ages to learn ("I love life-long learning!") and how important it is to never stop learning, staying active, and picking up something new: "You'll thrive for longer!" Working with NJIO also gave her the experience and confidence she needed to be successful at Wharton Arts.

Susan's love for classical music was sparked by John Williams' "Star Wars" soundtrack. Things really took off when she met her husband, Lloyd-- between the two of them, they had over 200 vinyl records when they first started dating, but only 11 of them overlapped. Lloyd, who sometimes steps in to play percussion with NJIO, introduced her ears to the wonderful world of orchestral music.

She isn't an instrumentalist, but if she did pick up an instrument, she'd like to learn bassoon or cello-- something in the lower register.

Susan has a message for our readers: **"So many places are asking for your money. If you're reading this, you're interested in what we're about. You know the impact we've had on you or your family— if you want to give that gift to someone else, donate to NJIO to grow our impact."**

*Thank you, Susan, for your many years of service to NJIO. Here's to many more!*