Artist Biographies

Debora Butler-Ponko, originally from the Detroit area, completed her M.M. in Violin Performance at the Manhattan School of Music and received her B.M. in Violin Performance from Western Michigan University. She has had the opportunity to study with such teachers Gerardo Ribiero, Blair Milton, Isaac Malkin and Renata Knific.  She currently enjoys a diverse performance career as a soloist, chamber and orchestral musician. Some of the orchestral groups she has performed with are Chicago Sinfonietta, Illinois Philharmonic, Northwest Indiana Symphony, New Philharmonic Orchestra, Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, DuPage Opera Theater, and Chicago Civic Symphony.  Ms. Butler-Ponko studied at Encore, Aspen, and Meadowmount in the summers throughout her high school and undergraduate years, and competed in and won numerous concerto competitions which resulted in opportunities to solo with numerous orchestras.  In addition to regularly performing with chamber, orchestral, and independent music projects, she has more than 25 years of experience teaching individual and group violin and viola lessons.  She was a faculty member of DePaul University Comminity Music Division and currently has a private studio of violin and viola students in the New Trier district and is also the director of the Kenilworth Union Church Chamber Ensemble, the only known string ensemble to be affiliated with a church in the United States. Ms. Butler-Ponko, who currently resides in the North Shore are of Chicago, has passed her love of music onto her three children and enjoys helping them grow in their musical endeavors with the violin, cello and piano.