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Mass. — Before the feminist movement gained momentum in the late 1950s, women in New England came together to create an organization that is still going strong today.

The New England Piano Teacher's Association is a non-profit organization of over 200 members—that now includes men and women—with the goal of helping students and teachers thrive in music.

"This is really my forte, no pun intended," said Lexington High School Senior Sanjay Rangamani.

Sanjay Rangamani has been playing piano for ten years. His lessons are more than learning pieces for recital.

"Piano instills a sense of perseverance, determination, not giving up when things get tough and pursuing perfection in children at a really young age," said Rangamani. "And I think it stays with you for the rest of your life, even if you never play piano after that."

Ever since Austin Yue started taking piano lessons, he's been excited to show his teacher what he's been working on.

"She's inspired me to be a performer and to be less nervous about performing in general," said Lexington High School Freshman Austin Yue.

And Austin's teacher has been by his side since he began piano lessons in first grade.

"My whole life so far, basically, she's been guiding me through piano," said Yue. "And it's just really nice to have that mentor there to help you on something that's not so usually thought of as important in daily life, but still applicable."

His teacher, Lydia Reed-Guertin, has been guiding and helping students for forty years.

"It's just incredible to think that the legacy of playing the piano, and for me, teaching the piano is very much thriving," said former NEPTA President Lydia Reed-Guertin. "And it's a tradition that really reinforces the original vision that our founders had."

Lydia is among the more than 200 members of the New England Piano Teachers' Association--founded in 1950 by a group of female piano teachers.

"They were really intelligent and independent thinkers, choosing a profession that was very uncommon at the time," said Reed-Guertin. "Women did not have many choices as far as careers. And they also wanted to elevate their profession by joining together and learning more about their craft."

Over the years, the independent, all-volunteer non-profit has grown to become all-inclusive.

"Everyone really has a role," said NEPTA President Rebecca Helm. "It's important that everyone continues to kind of pull their weight in order for this organization to continue to thrive."

NEPTA's current president, Rebecca Helm, says NEPTA has always been a place for piano

teachers to come together, share techniques and ideas. As it's celebrating 75 years—Rebecca is proud to not only reflect on how far it's come—but also how much more NEPTA can accomplish.

"I feel very excited but a large responsibility to make sure that I do my part and pull my weight for the next 75 years," said Helm. "We want to support even the younger generation because the younger generation is the future of NEPTA, is the future of this organization."

The members are getting a chance to show their appreciation with a gala at the end of the month in Concord. The event will honor the past, present, and future, highlighting New England's music community—all thanks to a group of women who started it 75 years ago.