

Music Parents keep music alive in Holyoke schools

Written by Darci Tomky

Whether it's the first squeaks on a clarinet or a large-scale musical theater production, music plays a huge role in Holyoke schools, and the Music Parents Association is there to support the music program each step of the way.

Having been active supporters of the arts for decades, the Music Parents raise funds each year to support music in the Holyoke Elementary and JR/SR High Schools.

"In a time of nationwide budget cuts, they are keeping arts out there and alive," said music teacher Marcia Dalton.

Most recently, the group purchased laptop computers for both Dalton and band director Pat Wiebers as well as a projector to be used in the music rooms. With technological advances in both school classrooms and music, these computers will help keep the music program up-to-date.

Dalton and Wiebers noted they also have a computer program called Smart Music which they hope can get up and running soon.

Other items provided by the Music Parents in the last few years include a wireless microphone to be used in concerts and cd player/tuner/microphone combos for both the elementary and high school classrooms.

The elementary music room has a new white board with staves on it and a large rug with music symbols. Both are great tools to teach students how to read music and accurately identify music symbols. Elementary students also use a new set of music called "Lets All Sing" with songs from High School Musical and Camp Rock. The Music Parents have also purchased them battery-powered candles which they have utilized at concerts.

Thanks to the Music Parents, the JR/SR high classroom now has a flat screen television and DVD player. Most recently, students watched a promotional DVD for the Young Americans as well as their own performance after the concert in Holyoke.

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Over 100 Holyoke students participated in the Young Americans program Feb. 2, and the Music Parents showed their support for the program by paying half of the fee for each student. The music teachers both noted the huge impact the Young Americans had on the music students, teaching them both skills in the performing arts and confidence on the stage and in the classroom.

Music Parents also provide a scholarship for graduating HHS students who were involved in the music program.

Dalton and Wiebers said the support from the music parents says a lot to the students and encourages them to pursue music.

“Music is a vital part of our community,” said Wiebers, and the work of the Music Parents alongside the school music programs helps keep music an active part of Holyoke schools.



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Holyoke to celebrate Music In Our Schools Month

MENC: The National Association for Music Education has officially designated March as Music In Our Schools Month, and schools across the nation will be making music education their focus in the coming weeks.

Music In Our Schools Month began in 1973 and has grown over the decades. The purpose is to raise awareness of the importance of music education for all children and to remind citizens that school is where all children should have access to music.

Dalton and Wiebers said they hope there will be a heightened awareness of the significance and benefits of music programs across the nation as well as in Holyoke.

For the annual Smorgasbord concert Thursday, March 4, Holyoke will adopt the 2010 Music In Our Schools Month's theme of "Music! Just Imagine..." Band and choir groups will both be featured at the performance.

That same night, the Music Parents will host a dinner to raise funds for the music program. For more information, contact music students grades 5-12, Steph Krogmeier 854-3132, Holli Krueger 854-4156, Deb Helgoth 854-2828 or Michelle Vieselmeyer 854-3965.

Other upcoming events for Holyoke's music program include solo and ensemble contests, pep band gigs, a show choir contest, graduation and end-of-the-year concerts for both choir and band.