

Banding Together: GSD Students Use Music as a Gateway to Success

By Galen Holley
Staff Reporter

Those who appreciate the storied tradition of band music in the Grenada Public School District gathered on Aug. 18 to enjoy some sweet treats and to hear a word of encouragement.

The Grenada Band Boosters hosted a dessert supper at the Grenada High School Auditorium and young musicians, along with their parents, directors and band-lovers from throughout the Lake City, showed their support.

"When you hear the soaring, golden sounds singing forth, you'll know that all the effort was worth it," said Superintendent Dr. David Daigneault, himself an accomplished musician and longtime director of bands, in his opening remarks.

"In the band program, young people come to appreciate the meaning of excellence and hard work, as well as the fellowship and love of music for which Grenada bands are known," said Daigneault.

The Grenada band program has garnered 67 grand championships in eight states, including six state championship titles, Daigneault said. The bands have also performed twice at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, as well as at the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California.

Band in Grenada isn't just a hobby, nor extra credit on a transcript, according to Director of Bands Joe Presley. Rather, it's a lifestyle, a culture, and a long-term commitment.

"We certainly don't see it as a one-year commitment," said Presley. "Band is a chance to immerse oneself in a creative and fun atmosphere."



Lucas Hall, Chloe Clupka, Charles Clupka, and April Hall



Nakyrah Medcafe and Lakimberia Moore

tossed back a draught of soda.

Music helps Nakyrah Medcafe appreciate the finer things in life. "Music is beautiful and a wonderful form of expression," said the 14-year-old clarinet player.



Keeochius Rhymes, Eria Rhymes, and Lisa Rhymes

Fun and fellowship

In the cafeteria, folks filled their plates with frosted, glazed goodies. The spread included moist, chocolate chip cookies, tangy lemon bars and dense, delicious fudge. In many cases, the treats were made with the same loving hands that each night turn pages of sheet music, rinse mouthpieces and pack snacks to buoy young musicians through the grueling heat and long marches of practice.

Thirteen-year-old Brooke Tatum, who's trumpeting adds to the cacophony of brassy, musical beauty in the seventh grade band, said she plays to continue the musical legacy begun by her mother and brother.

"I enjoy all the songs we play, and our directors are very nice people," said Tatum.

Mirthful tuba player Gabriel Arreola, 12, plays for a more Epicurean, if no less noble reason.

"It just makes me happy, plain and simple," said Arreola, as he happily devoured a bite of cookie and

High aspirations

Students who cultivate musical intelligence score higher on standardized tests and perform better in school. In Mississippi, students involved in high-quality music programs scored 19 percent higher in English and 17 percent higher in math, according to the most recent data.

Band students in the Magnolia State also scored significantly higher on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, commonly called the SAT's.

All this comes as no surprise to Grenada Band Booster President Stefanie Holly. "Our band community is really a family, one in which students are nurtured and exposed to healthy, vibrant opportunities," said Holly, who heads up a small army of moms, dads, supporters and general well-wishers who comprise the boosters. They make sandwiches, tote coolers full of Gatorade and do the menial and meaningful tasks that keep the enormous band machine turning.

Alicia Chaney, Holly's co-president, shared her sentiments. "I think that the focus and determination that band requires translates well into academic work," said Chaney. "Becoming part of this family engenders earnestness and sincerity and real enthusiasm about school life. That's always a positive."



Brooke Tatum, Gabriel Stone, Lilly Stone and Hailey Tatum

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Circuit Clerk
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I am married to Dan James, and we have two sons, Peyton and Bradford. I have worked as a Registered Dental Hygienist for the past 25 years. I am an active member of Emmanuel Baptist Church, where my family and I attend regularly. I have a strong love and passion

for Grenada County and its people. If you want your next Circuit Clerk to be honest, hard working, dependable, trustworthy and personable with a smile that is contagious, then I am your candidate. I would be honored to have your vote on Nov. 3, 2015, as the next Circuit Clerk.

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