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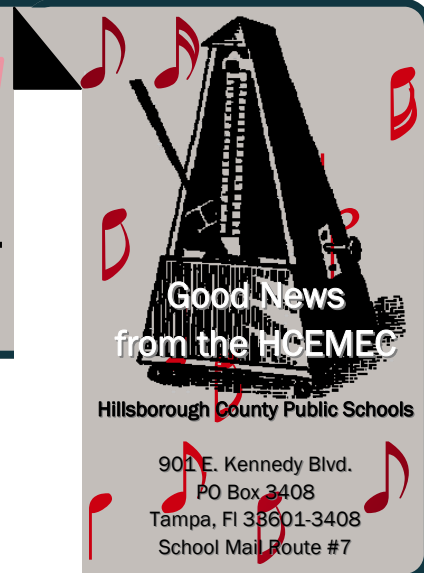
ON THE UPBEAT

Hillsborough County Elementary Music Educators' Council

<http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us>

HCEMEC Executive Board

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It has often been called organized chaos, or like herding cats, but the truth is there are no cats involved, and there is no chaos; the only accurate word in those descriptions is *organized*. To an observer backstage for the first time, it may seem chaotic, but there is nothing but organization. And that organization takes work: an entire year, in fact. (As the curtain dropped on the 2017 Fine Arts Festival, the date for next year's Fine Arts Festival has already been set, and plans are in motion for next year.)

Since about this time last year, when the date for Fine Arts Festival 2017 was set, the organization and planning began to ensure this year's Fine Arts Festival continues the tradition of a fabulous night of music, featuring the best and brightest of Hillsborough County. Lucky enough to live in a large city, home to the David A. Straz Center for the Performing Arts, we have a beautiful venue in which to hold our equally beautiful event. Unfortunately that beautiful venue is in high demand, so acquiring a date at the Straz that conflicts with neither their many touring shows, nor the many requirements of an academic calendar chock full of testing, is a feat in and of itself. Nevertheless, it is a feat that is accomplished through the organization of our Elementary Music Supervisor Melanie Faulkner, the Hillsborough County Elementary Music Educators' Council, and a supportive School Board, Superintendent, and Administration who value the arts and Music Education.

Once the date is set, work begins on choosing conductors to lead the various ensembles. This year eleven conductors were chosen: James Rigby – East Chorus, Dannielle Vega & John Knepper – Central Chorus, Ernesta Chicklowski – West Chorus, Kathryn Jurado & Betty Trascritti – Honors Handbells, Nathaniel Strawbridge – Honors World Drumming, Raymond VansEvers – Honors Orchestra, and Jodie Donahoo & Cliff Fouts – Honors Orff, plus Deah McReynolds, conductor of the mass chorus piece and Finale featuring all of the performing students. Next the conductors must choose repertoire to feature the talents of the students who will represent each school in the district; Students who have not even been identified yet! Choosing of the pieces leads to recruiting accompanists to play for each chorus or accompany the instrumental ensembles.

Each year the FAF ends with a grand finale of all students performing together. With a unique event such as ours, finding a piece that features chorus, orchestra, handbells, world drumming, and Orff, is a near impossibility, thus music must also be arranged. That honor (and huge responsibility) went to Phil McReynolds, music specialist at McDonald Elementary and ubiquitous FAF accompanist, who arranged *Feel Good* for nearly 600 students.

Fine Arts Festival



The combined choirs perform the opening piece, *Cantate Domino*



Festival Honors
Handbells



Central Chorus conductors Dannielle Vega
& John Knepper with Deah McReynolds



Festival Honors
Orff Ensemble

Meanwhile, host schools and site coordinators must also be chosen. Finding space for upwards of 120 students in a chorus is not an easy task, and a school willing to host them with a music specialist willing to undertake the responsibility is no laughing matter either. This year host sites and coordinators were: FishHawk Creek - Justin Daniels, Essrig - Val Smith, Pizzo - Rosalie Lathers, Roland Park - Jen Edelblute, Crestwood - Mindy Simonds, and Philip Shore who hosted Handbells and Orchestra, coordinated by Rebecca Traenkner and Katie Valdez. Also working behind the scenes concurrently is the design and ordering of t-shirts, lay out of concert programs, and arrangements for transportation of students and instruments. Even after participating in the FAF for many years as teacher, instrument truck crew, "covering" the FAF for the *Upbeat* reading and editing articles and pictures, and now as conductor, I'm sure there are still many things that I am forgetting that happen during this time.

Once the date has been set, conductors chosen, music selected and arranged, then students must be selected. Either through auditions within their own schools or by video auditions, as the Orff Ensemble holds, students are chosen to represent their various schools. They are considered the best-of-the-best, and every year they never fail to live up to that designation. As a first time conductor, I can attest to that, as I wish I could take every student from the Honors Orff Ensemble with me back to Deer Park and add them to the already amazing group of students I get the privilege of teaching every day. These students are truly the best-of-the-best. They were attentive, and so quiet that it was almost creepy!

Now after months of planning have taken place, the rehearsals finally begin, and once the rehearsals commence you better hold on to something because it is a whirlwind of activity. However, due to the planning I don't think you realize everything that has transpired until after the fact. The planning beforehand, as well as the planning the conductors undertake each week to prepare for the next rehearsal is astronomical. And that planning is necessary in order to put on a concert of the caliber we do with only five short rehearsals to prepare.

While there is no right or wrong way to have an "All-County" event such as ours, and every district must make choices that are best for their students and their situation, I will not hide that I have an obvious partiality to how we in Hillsborough organize our All-County concert, the Fine Arts Festival. In some districts, students and teachers meet for two Saturdays to rehearse and then perform. Quite a feat for such young musicians! As Jeff Henson, HCEMEC President said, "there is something special about how we do it here in Hillsborough, though. Part of performing with an ensemble is about creating relationships, and communicating with each other and learning how to be musicians together."

During the five weeks in which our students meet, something amazing *does* happen. Students who have never met each other create new friendships, musicians who have never performed together bond and become an ensemble, music specialists who are colleagues (yet spend most of their working hours in solitude unless they are blessed with a second music teacher for a few days of the week) get to collaborate and work together to create beautiful music, and music that the students have never heard before is performed magnificently!

Before the magnificent performance on Wednesday night, the morning was full of wonder and amazement as the students entered the huge Carol Morsani Hall at the Straz Center. For many students, it is the first time they have ever set foot in a room of such size, much less get to go backstage and

Fine Arts Festival

see all of the inner workings of such an awesome space.

Even as an adult who has been back stage at least once a year for the past 16 years as part of the Fine Arts Festival, I still get a tingle of excitement walking backstage seeing all of the lights, electrical rigging, and the doors (they are HUGE!!)

The Fine Arts festival day is a favorite among many music specialists, and for good reason. Imagine if you will, a bevy of school busses pulling up to the curb and unloading hundreds of students who excitedly rush into the stage door entrance of the Straz. Now, when viewed by someone unfamiliar to what we do, Wednesday morning's technical rehearsal at the Straz, from the unloading of the busses, to a full run through of every piece of music, to finally reloading the busses in time for drivers to make it back for their afternoon runs, could be the source of the "organized chaos" description, which is understandable, but far from the truth. And "cat herding"? Professional cat herders wish they could do it like we do. Despite late busses, sick students, lost music, or any of a myriad of other "stuff" that happens, every year it happens, and it happens beautifully.

Another source of this beautiful organization is the stage director. In her second year as stage director for the performance, Tracy Lisi, Mitchell Elementary Music Specialist, deftly maneuvered through the many obstacles and served as a perfect liaison with the stage crew and management at the Straz. Assisted this year by Lindsey Jones, Hunter's Green music specialist, these ladies are one of the many reasons the performance on the front of the stage was so smooth and flawless. From the timing of the raising of the wall to the movement of 600 students and many instruments, a successful concert is thanks to the hard work of the stage managers whose work, if done well, is never seen. From planning beforehand to draw stage layouts, arrange delivery and set-up of instruments, and coordinating with the sound crew and management at the Straz, the stage managers job is invaluable.

After a long 12 months of planning, organization, and preparation, the concert is over in a mere 90 minutes. And every second of planning is worth the time to make each year's Fine Arts Festival the best ever. Speaking of planning, organization, and preparation, the continued success of the FAF is due to one other name that I have not mentioned yet. As overall coordinator of the Fine Arts Festival for the past two years, Steve Florio has done an amazing job in making sure we all look good. Working hand-in-hand with Elementary Music Supervisor Melanie Faulkner, Steve and Melanie have been the planners and organizers-in-chief, leading us through another successful Fine Arts Festival. If you could only see their email inbox in the last month, you can only imagine their relief as they moved thousands of emails and text messages to a new folder, and out of their inbox, on Thursday morning.

So, in honor of the organization and planning required to put on the Fine Arts Festival, if you have never attended this event before, you should plan to do so next year. As I said, the date was secured with the Straz Center before we even began this year's performance. So, you can mark your calendars now and plan to attend the next Fine Arts Festival on **May 3, 2018**. As you go about your year, know that behind the scenes many dedicated music specialists are working diligently to produce yet another amazing evening.

*Cliff Fouts, UPBEAT Editor,
Honors Orff Co-Conductor, Deer Park Elementary*



Festival Honors
World Drumming



Many administrators attended the
2017 Fine Arts Festival



Several Music Specialists assist with the
organization of the Fine Arts Festival



Festival Honors
Orchestra

Students Playing Music Is Our BEST Advocacy!

Music Education Spirit Week to Benefit Tampa Little Kids Rock & MIO SM Events

If that headline is true, and it is, then rock music must be one of the VERY best ways to advocate for music education. Popular music reaches so many people. It creates a time-line of important aspects of life and punctuates those moments that deserve to be clearly remembered and cherished.

This year's Music Education Spirit Week to Benefit Tampa Little Kids Rock* was all that and more. What a great time we had during our 4th annual weeklong event. Spirit Week, held the last week in March, keeps on growing, thanks to our performers and supporters. Beef 'O' Brady's restaurants were thrilled to host us and provide our students this real life experience. The bands were amazing, the parents were proud, the teachers were fantastic, and overall we had five nights of Rock 'n' Roll across Hillsborough County, from Citrus Park to Riverview - 14 LKR teachers, 12 schools and 15 different bands. We are making a difference in the lives of children through music!

This year, bands from BT Washington, Roosevelt, Ruskin, Lowry, Lowry HOST, Lewis, Cannella, Kingswood, Roland Park, Lewis, Bellamy, Riverview, and Dale Mabry jammed the week away to packed houses. Spread the word and rock with us in 2018!

Well if that isn't enough, there was more of the very best influential music from our rather quiet, but no less impressive All State students who sang the National Anthem at the Hillsborough County Public Schools Board Meeting in March. These angelic voices from All State Chorus and Orff Ensembles sang a Capella, captivating school board members and those present for the annual Music In Our Schools Month Proclamation reading. But wait, there was more. Prior to the School Board Meeting, the Limona Hand Bell Ensemble, directed by teacher Kathryn Jurado, rang out such incredible tones that it brought ROSSAC staff down from their offices to enjoy. Hearing this type of beautiful music brings a different kind of nostalgia and sweet memories to listeners, and we saw many introspective smiles.

Superintendent Jeff Eakins and school board member Susan L. Valdez were present and expressed their appreciation and support of one of the NAMM* Best Communities for Music Education in the United States. We are so fortunate that we have students and teachers who make these connections with others, creating genuine advocates for music education.

**Go to LittleKidsRock.org and NAMMFoundation.org for more information*



Please follow us on Twitter!
HillsCoMusicEd @HCEMEC





Fine Arts Festival Honors Orff Ensemble



Fine Arts Festival Honors World Drumming



Fine Arts Festival Honors Handbells



Little Kids Rock students perform at the Beef 'o Brady's Spirit Night

HCEMEC Grants

The music council is thrilled that we were able to set aside \$4,000 to put towards member grants in the areas of Professional Development and Musical Equipment & Materials! After reviewing dozens of applications, this year's grant winners are:

Musical Equipment and Materials

Melissa Grady, Shore Elementary, Sound System
Cynthia Maxwell, Mendenhall Elementary, 2 Xylophones
Marissa Anguillano, Knights Elementary, 4 Tubano drums

Professional Development

Kathryn Jurado, Limona Elementary, Handbell Musicians of America Summer Conference
Rebecca Scott, Sessums Elementary, Little Kids Rockfest

Congratulations to all of our grant recipients - your students will benefit greatly and we can't wait to hear all about it!

2017 Elementary Music Banquet

Music Through the Decades

On April 28th, 2017 Music Specialists, Administrators, School Board Members, and guests gathered at Maestro's Restaurant at the David A. Straz Center for the Performing Arts to celebrate the many accomplishments of Elementary Music this year, and recognize a few individual award recipients.

Principal of the Year for Elementary Music - Kristine Dosal, Grady Elementary

Kristine Dosal was a student at Grady Elementary School, later a teacher, then Assistant Principal, and now she is the principal. Mrs. Dosal believes that Music, Art, and P.E. are a necessity for every child. She is a strong advocate for both physical activity and any artistic creation our students can achieve.

"I believe that our principal is the Principal of the Year because she helps focus all aspects of my professional life into being an extraordinary educator. She not only does this for me, but nearly every teacher on our faculty. In turn, she also sets the highest academic standards for our students, and finds ways to help every faculty member support these goals," says Steve Florio, Grady Music Specialist, who nominated Kristine Dosal for Elementary Music Teacher of the Year.

Furthermore, Mrs. Dosal leads by example. She sets and leads the standards she expects her teachers to follow. She achieves this by affording the Grady faculty the professional latitude to spread their wings and the artistic license to arrange their pedagogy for how they deem necessary for their students to achieve the lofty goals that have been placed in front of them. The faculty is encouraged to expand their knowledge base, while Mrs. Dosal pushes them to also expand their comfort levels as educators.

For these reasons, we proudly name Kristine Dosal, Hillsborough County Elementary Music Educators' Principal of the Year!

Rising Star Award - Tony Negrón, Hunter's Green Elementary

Nominated by his principal, Gayle Holt, Tony Negrón was awarded the HCEMEC Rising Star Award. About her music specialist, Mrs. Holt says, "Our music teacher goes above and beyond his duties as a music instructor to provide students, teachers, parents, and the community opportunities for enrichment, instruction, motivation, and the enjoyment of music."

Tony is very knowledgeable of the content and demonstrates exemplary pedagogy when teaching his students. His classes are intellectually engaging, getting all students to participate and contribute to their learning. He also collaborates with the fourth grade team for RTI/MTSS, as he teaches the enrichment group to these students with a focus on music, reading, and vocabulary. To increase his teacher effectiveness, he has worked with the teacher talent developers, attended area PLCs, participated in the FMEA conference, and collaborated with other colleagues.

Several mornings a week, on his planning time, Mr. Negrón works with the ensemble groups; Orff, Handbells, and Chorus, in which he instructs students on how to play and perform these instruments. Tony Negrón also works with students after school many days to prepare for performances. He is willing to do anything that is asked of him and is always striving to improve the music department.



HCEMEC Music Educator of the Year

Joey Willoughby

Nominated by fellow Music Specialist, Justin Daniels, our 2016-2017 Music Educator of the Year Award goes to Joey Willoughby from Riverview Elementary. Speaking about Mr. Willoughby, Justin Daniels says, "I have had the honor of knowing this music teacher for almost 7 years now. Between interning with him and co-teaching with him for two school years, I have been able to not only get to know him as a person, but as a fantastic teacher who, even after teaching for over 20 years, still strives to create exciting and challenging new lessons each week for his students, when so many others would just settle into their routine."

Mr. Willoughby is always integrating the latest technology into the classroom and has been tactfully using it in his lessons for years. His students come to music and know the expectations are high and that they are cared for. He does not just create good musicians, but teaches them to be great individuals that are ready to be successful in life. His passion to go above and beyond can be seen through his students and through his participation in events like All-County Chorus, Young Songwriters, teaching core district trainings like Conversational Solfege, and the elementary music council, where no matter what his role is, he is always offering and lending a helping hand. In my time working with him, many teachers have emailed him with questions and he has freely given up ideas and content he has created to help those who came to him. This truly speaks for him as a team player for the district and putting others first, not just himself.



HCEMEC Music Educator of the Year,
Joey Willoughby,
nominated by Justin Daniels



Changing Lives One Note at a Time™

Encore Award - Instruments of Change

The HCEMEC Encore Award is a way to recognize and thank those in our community that have demonstrated support above and beyond for music education in our district. This year the Encore Award is presented to Instruments of Change.

The primary mission of Instruments of Change is to profoundly impact the lives of disadvantaged children through the gifts of musical instrument donation, instruction and performance. They do so by seeking out new and gently used musical instruments that are not being played, and place them with children whose parents do not have the means to purchase an instrument of their own.

Instruments of Change also provides instruction for those children receiving instruments, and Instruments of Change actively seeks out volunteers with experience in musical training to provide lessons for these children.

Supervisor's Sound-Off

Where has the year gone?! It has been a year of challenge as well as excitement and it is quickly coming to an end. One of the big highlights this year was introducing *Spotlight on Music* by McGraw-Hill. This is the first time in close to 30 years that we were able to purchase K-5 music materials district-wide! Professional development will continue to be ongoing as we become more familiar navigating digitally and implementing resources to impact students.

Students were remarkable at the Fine Arts Festival and emcee Marco Villarreal, News Channel 8 morning anchor, was so impressed he called a camera crew on the spot and we received some generous publicity on the morning news! He also announced that Hillsborough is once again one of the 2017 Best Communities for Music Education. We are proud of this distinction that separates us from good to GREAT!

<http://wfla.com/2017/04/13/hillsborough-school-district-gets-best-communities-in-music-education-recognition/>

To our teachers new to the elementary music faculty, you made it! To Ibi Simon who is retiring, you made it! To ALL of our teachers, thank you for your commitment and dedication on a daily basis. This is a rewarding profession and you make a lifelong impression on children. Music education is essential to a well-rounded education and in the midst of testing, field trips and general end of school activities, performances and showcasing students' talents are high priorities. We are preparing students for life!

Enjoy the summer! We've got even more exciting plans for next year!

♪ *Melanie Faulkner, Elementary Music Supervisor*



Fine Arts Festival emcee, and News Channel 8 morning anchor, Marco Villarreal took a moment from his emcee duties to tweet this selfie of our finale piece, *Feel Good*.



**Hillsborough County
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Excellence in Education

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2016-2017 HCEMEC

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Convention

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Cliff Fouts

Member at Large

Dann Shea

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