

Developing Music Appreciation, One 3rd-Grader at a Time

By Patricia Koning

Three months ago, 17 third graders from across Livermore didn't know much about music—how to read music, the different note lengths, or the difference between a treble and bass clef. On Wednesday, June 2, each of those students demonstrated how far they had come by playing two pieces of music on the piano for their families.

The students learned music through the Oakland East Bay (OEB) Symphony's Music for Excellence (MUSE) program, which provides free piano lessons, musician mentors, music clinics, school visits by OEB music director Michael Morgan and other activities to complement public school music curriculum. The MUSE piano lessons, also offered in elementary schools in Oakland, came to Livermore about three years ago through donations from the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association.

"When I heard about this program, I thought it has to be too good to be true," said parent Jennifer Cuellar. "I'd been looking for an introductory music class but everything I found either had a long waiting list or was too expensive."

Her daughter Kaitlyn, a third-grader at Altamont Creek Elementary School, now wants to learn guitar. "This program helped her

appreciate music," said Cuellar. "It sparked her interest, which is what I was hoping for. This is really a great age to start."

Kimmy Luty, a graduate student in music at Cal State East Bay, teaches the classes with help from Topher Shepherd, a 2010 graduate of Granada High School. OEB pays for the instructors, lesson materials, and keyboards.

Luty and Shepherd taught one session in the fall and another in the spring, reaching nearly 40 Livermore third-graders. Each session was comprised of two classes, with the first open only to students at Joe Michell School, where the classes are held. The second was open to any third-grader in the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District. Teachers recommend students for the program.

When Joe Michell principal Angela Ehrlich heard the program was looking for a school site to host it, she jumped at the chance. "I couldn't pass up such a great opportunity for our students," she said.

Luty admits that teaching up to 10 students in a 45-minute class is a challenge. She says the students need to be self-motivated and disciplined to succeed. Each lesson included study of theory, with weekly homework, and keyboard practice.

"They learn a basic foundation



Third-grader Casey Sansoni explains different note lengths at the MUSE piano lesson graduation.

in reading music that they can apply to practically any other musical instrument," she says. Some of the students will continue studying with Luty, who teaches private les-

sons in her home and through ABC Music. For students interested in other instruments, like Kaitlyn Cuellar, she provides references for other music teachers.

A new session of MUSE classes will begin in the fall. For more information on the OEB Symphony's MUSE program, visit www.oeb.s.org/page/muse.htm.

Day at the Races to Benefit Axis Community Health

The Foundation for Axis Community Health will sponsor *A Day at the Races* on Saturday, July 10, from 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. during the annual County Fair.

The event will take place at the Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Avenue, Pleasanton.

Tickets to the event are \$50 per person and include admission to the Alameda County Fair, a catered buffet luncheon, a lesson

on placing bets, the afternoon of horseracing, a "Best Race Day Hat" contest, prize drawings, and a no-host bar. Tickets may be purchased at www.axishealth.org. All proceeds benefit Axis Community Health, provider of medical care and behavioral health services to the community.

"We invite our friends and neighbors to join us for an afternoon of fun at the Fairgrounds,"

says Foundation Board President Becky Yeffa. "All proceeds will benefit Axis Community Health, which provides a true safety net for members of our community who may find themselves without health insurance and in need of medical care, mental health services or substance abuse counseling."



The Foundation for Axis Community Health Board of Directors prepares for the "Best Hat" contest at *A Day at the Races* on July 10th. Seated (left to right) are B. Penny Woods and board secretary Tanya Shah; (standing) Axis CEO Sue Compton, board president Becky Yeffa, board treasurer Bert Brook, board vice-chair Bob Brown and Donna Bratton-Kearns. Not pictured is Barbara Will.

Pleasanton Library Offers Adult Reading Game

Pleasanton Library is offering an adult summer reading game, "Outside Reading," through July 31.

To take part, just stop in at the library to pick up a reading log. Then read, or listen to 3 books and/

or attend 3 library programs or any combination of the 3. Completely fill out the log and turn it in at the Adult Reference Desk. Logs will be entered into a drawing for Pleasanton Downtown Gift Cards. The

first 100 people to turn in a log will receive a personal book light.

For more information call 925 931-3400 x 7 or go to www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/library