

## MUSE Program Helps Keep Music Alive

The Oakland East Bay Symphony's MUSE (Music for Excellence) has been partnering with Livermore music teachers for the past five years to provide programs in the schools. The program expanded last year to add a third grade keyboard program.

Carl Stanley, the education coordinator for the Oakland East Bay Symphony (OEBBS), notes, "The keyboard program represents a portion of education programs in Livermore." He noted that the MUSE program provided the six secondary schools in Livermore with a string mentor from the Oakland East Bay Symphony to assist with the orchestras. The third grade piano keyboard class is offered to forty third graders at Joe Michell Elementary (open to all elementary school students).

Two Young Peoples Concerts will be performed for the Livermore School District in June. Michael Morgan and musician ensembles made school visits for assemblies.

Another event in Livermore is the annual Livermore Young Peoples Concert. It will be held at the new Bankhead Theater on June 4, 2010. Two performances are offered free of charge to the Livermore schools. Fourteen schools are signed up to attend with approximately 1,000 students. The theme of the concert this year is "The Science of Sound/The Art of Music."

The MUSE program was able to expand to Livermore using funds provided by the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association, which makes a donation to the symphony. The symphony uses that money to provide the program to local students.

Last September, Stanley met with the Randy Watson, the music supervisor for the district, and Livermore music teachers and determined assignments for the string mentors. Mentors assisted with orchestra classes, directed sectional rehearsals, helped prepare students for the district solo-

ensemble festival and gave private lessons to promising students, including those who were financially challenged.

The keyboard class met on Wednesdays after school. The capacity of the class was 10 students. Two sessions were held every week (for a total of 20 students).

Fall and Spring sessions are offered – so there are a total of 40 students involved.

The first session was dedicated to Joe Michell third grade students. The second session each week was opened to interested schools from within the Livermore district. Students at Joe Michell Elementary School were chosen by the third grade classroom teachers on the basis of academics, music interest and financial need. Students from the visiting schools were chosen by sign-up from flyers distributed at the participating schools.

Livermore music teacher Kim Luty is the instructor for the keyboard program. The students will

demonstrate their newly learned skills during a "graduation recital" on June 2.

During the 13 to 15 week class, the students receive two music books and a 45-minute group lesson each week. One book is a work book on music theory, the second a book of songs.

Luty explains that the Oakland Symphony provides the keyboards and headphones to each student. "At the end of 13 weeks, they can read music. Using that knowledge they are able to go into a band program or continue on piano," stated Luty.

She added, "It is a great opportunity for young kids to get excited about music, to learn to read it and take that skill into any instrument, including vocal."

Luty says she has found that parents are happy with the program. "The kids are great. They are eager to learn. I love teaching it."

According to the symphony's website, "The objective of MUSE

is to provide the students with a continuous and sequential instrumental music program that will augment education programs by fostering cognitive development and analytical skills, allow youth to experience the joy of artistic expression and creation, and provide a sense of self and place in the community. The program also provides a creative outlet for the energy of youth that will provide these young people with a foundation for positively viewing themselves as capable and contributing members of our society."

Randy Watson, Manager of Music Program at the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, has been quoted about the impact of the program, "Our Community is feeling connected to the Symphony. They're seeing concerts and hearing about the Symphony at dinner tables."

For more on the MUSE program, go to [www.oebbs.org/page/muse.htm](http://www.oebbs.org/page/muse.htm).