



PORT ALLEGANY MUSIC DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Port Allegany Named Best Community for Music Education

Port Allegany School District has been honored with the Best Communities for Music Education designation from The NAMM Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education.

Now in its 21st year, the Best Communities for Music Education designation is awarded to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to provide music access and education to all students. To qualify for the Best Communities designation, Port Allegany School District answered detailed questions about funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities and support for the music programs. Responses were verified with school officials and reviewed by The Music Research Institute at the University of Kansas.

Research into music education continues to demonstrate educational/cognitive and social skill benefits for children who make music. After two years of music education, research found that participants showed more substantial improvements in how the brain processes speech and reading scores than their less-involved peers and that students who are involved in music are not only more likely to graduate high school, but also to attend college as well. Everyday listening skills are stronger in musically-trained children than in those without music training. Significantly, listening skills are closely tied to the ability to: perceive speech in a noisy background, pay attention, and keep sounds in memory. Later in life, individuals who took music lessons as children show stronger neural processing of sound; young adults and even older adults who have not played an instrument for up to 50 years show enhanced neural processing compared to their peers. Not to mention, social benefits include conflict resolution, teamwork skills, and how to give and receive constructive criticism.

Port Allegany students have the opportunity to participate in music electives and co-curricular classes in grades PreK through 12. Students in the upper elementary grades may participate in choir and band with the opportunity to audition for the Elementary Ensemble. Students in grades 7 through 12 may choose from choir, band, piano class, vocal arts, and other music electives. High School students also have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular ensembles including Chamber Singers, Show Choir, Jazz Band, and Marching Band. In the Spring, students collaborate on a musical theatre production and concerts. Many students participate in annual instrumental and choral festivals including: Elementary Song Fest, IU9 Band, PMEA District and Region Chorus and Band.



ATTENTION PARENTS & GUARDIANS!

The Port Allegany Music Boosters are always looking for new ideas and faces at their monthly meeting – the first Wednesday of each month.

The music boosters assist with fundraising, help at concerts and events, and support the music students and teachers.

Upcoming meetings: September 2 October 7
Meetings are held in the PAHS Band or Choir Room at 6 PM.
Email: tishhoward34@gmail.com – music booster's president

The Importance of Music Study

Music is vital to education. It is a powerful force in human learning and a language that cannot be denied. A child searches for expression and creative opportunities to share with others to satisfy their need for communication. The foundation for comprehension is enhanced significantly through the fine art of music by developing a child's critical listening and thinking skills through the nuance, inflection, and subtleties of rhythmic and lyrical expression. Becoming sensitized and being able to recognize and respond to music's fine art of detail provides a depth of understanding and a value appreciation that enhances the development of the total individual. This is not found in any other school learning experience.

One must consider the impact music makes on the student as they pursue academic excellence. Through music performance, we expand academic achievement and create a productive, successful life only attainable through the fine detail of artistic production and performance. Through music study, students experience the beauty of musical expression. Beauty, compassion, feeling, appreciation, sensitivity, love, peace, tolerance, sympathy, warmth, empathy, self-esteem, cooperation, and respect..... These are but a few "living or life priorities" hidden in music study! No other discipline addresses these "living or life priorities" found within music. Once a school district denies the opportunity for music study, a student is lost to the whims of life's desensitizing environment.

Edward S. Lisk, Conductor, Clinician, Author

Guitar Class at PAHS

The sounds of guitars have begun to fill the music wing of PAHS. With the arrival of 14 new Yamaha acoustic guitars, students now have the opportunity to begin or expand their knowledge of the string instrument. The goal of the course is to provide students the skills necessary to play confidently in group settings, across a wide variety of genres, while also composing their own songs and learning the history behind the music they are performing. Beginning with the music of Appalachia, students will hone in their basic skills through Old Time Folk and Bluegrass tunes. This music is accessible, fun, and helps to build a strong community of honest music making in the class. From there, exploration into singer-songwriters, pop, country, rock and roll, and blues, help to lay the foundation for students to compose and improvise all along the way.

Learning guitar is something that many students have an interest in pursuing, many of them not being in the "traditional" music classes. This is a great opportunity to introduce the joys of music to a wide audience of students, whether they have been involved in music already or not. If you know a student who expresses interest in playing guitar, encourage them to sign up for the class. You never know who could be at the front of the next local band!

Mr. Cole Ramsey



Marching On despite COVID

After months of speculation the Port Allegany Marching Band kicked off their 2020 season with drumline rehearsal on August 5 and the full band on August 10. This year's halftime show features music of the Beatles including *Eleanor Rigby*, *Let It Be*, and *A Hard Days Night*. Students and staff were excited to get started after a very long break. In a typical year the band would have several performances before the school year starts. However, due to event cancellations and the delay of the football season, the band is awaiting their first performance. Due to COVID the band will only be performing at home football games and not traveling to away games. The band has plans to produce a video performance of the halftime show for release to the public.

Mr. Brad Stewart

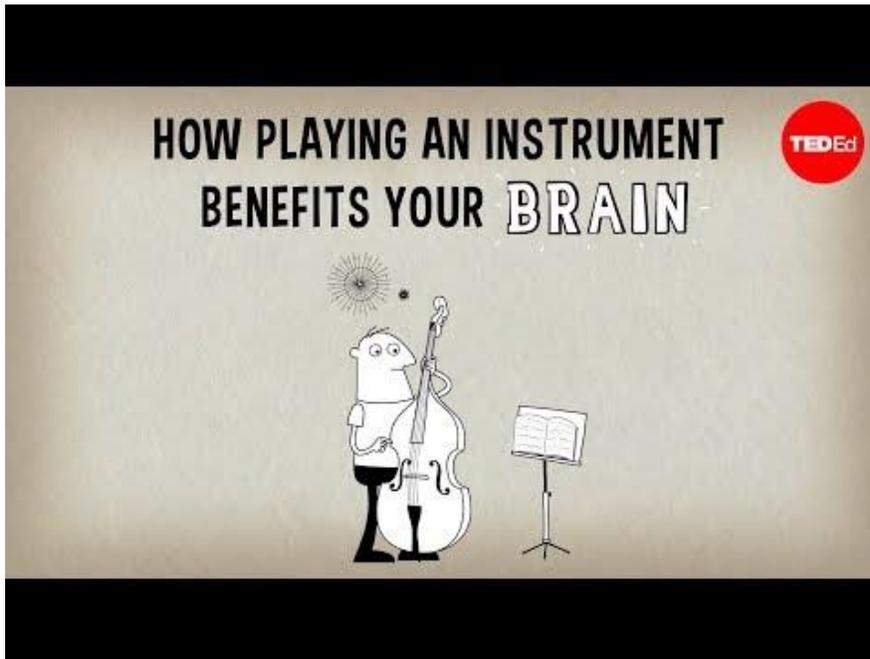
Elementary Music Update

At the elementary school, we are excited to begin singing again! The fourth, fifth, and sixth grade choruses will be rehearsing weekly on every E-day at the elementary gym. We are very thankful for the opportunity to make music together despite the circumstances of wearing masks and social distancing. The elementary music department also welcomes fourth graders who will be participating in chorus for the first time!

In grades 2-6 general music class, we are beginning to utilize the Conversational Solfege method by John Feierabend. This method engages students in a rich collection of traditional folksong repertoire and activities. These activities, many of which are game-like in nature, are perfect for engaging students in class or even having music class outside! Conversational Solfege emphasizes music-learning by rote (or "by ear") and ultimately allows students to translate musical ideas to musical notation. For more information about the Conversational Solfege method, please visit Ms. Hanson's teacher webpage or feierabendmusic.org.

Ms. Akane Hanson





Members of the 5th Grade Chorus are rehearsing with Ms. Akane Hanson in the gym to allow for social distancing.



SEPTEMBER MUSIC ALUMNI OF THE MONTH

Heather Nance

What ensembles were you involved with in high school?

In high school, I was involved in Chorus and Show Choir. I was a member of the Concert Band, Jazz Band, and Marching Band. I played flute, saxophone, and was a drum major. I also participated in many musicals including Hello Dolly, Oklahoma, and West Side Story.



What have you done since graduating from high school?

After graduating high school, I attended Mansfield University where I earned a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts with a Music Minor. I held many jobs after graduating, including working for the Pennsylvania State Education Association. I returned to Mansfield and earned my Masters Degree in Elementary Education while working as a Graduate Assistant for the Education Department. I have been an elementary school teacher for 8 years for the Port Allegany School District.

What have you done in music since graduating from high school?

I was an active member of the music department at Mansfield University. I studied voice under the direction of Jean-Anne Teal. She offered me the amazing opportunity of traveling to New York City with her where I took lessons from Cornelius Reed. I was a member of the Festival Chorus, Concert Choir, Mansfieldians, and Chamber Singers. I recently returned to Mansfield to participate in a performance celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Concert Choir.

My current involvement with music is centered around my children, who are all very active in various musical groups. I sing with my daughter often, as she has an avid interest in pursuing a future career in music. I also occasionally participate in choir performances at church.

Do you have a favorite story about a Music Department event that can be shared with everyone?

I have many amazing experiences and stories that I could share from my time with Ken and Annamaria Myers. My proudest accomplishment, that I can recall after all these years, would have to be earning a solo at a PMEA District Chorus festival. That performance was the experience that made me confident enough to pursue music beyond high school.

How has being involved with music helped you in your life after high school?

Music is a part of my life every day. I honestly can't imagine a day without music. Music can put me at peace after the hardest of days. There are very few minutes of the day when there is not some kind of music being played, practiced, or sung in my home. I firmly believe that music keeps us in touch with our humanity and connects us to the people and the world around us, a connection that we need now more than ever.

