

Media Release

An Instrument for Every Child

Hamilton's Musical Movement for 2010 – Empowering Children through Music

HAMILTON – Hamilton businessman Paul Lloyd is committing \$125,000 in seed money to launch an innovative global music project that will provide inner-city Hamilton children with a chance to learn to play a musical instrument.

An Instrument for Every Child (AIFEC) is being led by the Hamilton Music Collective in partnership with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra and Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. Inspired by similar work in Germany and El Sistema in Venezuela, it will begin as a pilot project in September 2010 at King George Elementary School (77 Gage Ave. N.).

Students in grades 1 to 4 will learn to play a musical instrument and will receive general music education within the Ontario school curriculum. The long-term vision for the program is to have it grow, so that every child in Hamilton is part of An Instrument for Every Child.

“An Instrument For Every Child is not just another music project. It is a social project at heart, and we are very excited that AIFEC is becoming a reality in Hamilton,” said Astrid Hepner, Chair of the Hamilton Music Collective. “AIFEC doesn’t set out to produce great musicians. Rather, it hopes to create community spirit by giving children the opportunity to develop teamwork and interpersonal relationship skills through music.”

An Instrument for Every Child began when founder Manfred Grunenberg introduced it in 2003 to 300 children in 10 elementary schools in Germany. It is based on the belief that cultural education is a basic ingredient in a healthy society, and that culture has the power to transform a city. AIFEC, which will be a feature in Germany’s 2010 European Capital of Culture festivities, now reaches 50,000 children in 900 elementary schools.

“We are very pleased to be piloting such a wonderful program in Hamilton,” said John Malloy, Director of Education at Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. “The arts are an important component of our commitment to improved literacy, numeracy and student engagement.”

Laurel Trainor, Director of the McMaster Institute for Music and the Mind and Professor of Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour at McMaster University, said the program will bring benefits to participating students.

“I am thrilled that the Hamilton Music Collective is bringing An Instrument for Every Child to Hamilton schools,” Trainor said. “As an important part of social, emotional and cognitive development, music should be accessible to all children. Research indicates that active participation in music not only benefits individual children, but leads to greater social cooperation and sense of community.”

About the Hamilton Music Collective

The HMC is a network of accomplished musicians, respected educators and experienced industry professionals dedicated to inspiring and encouraging audience growth for jazz music appreciation in Hamilton through performance, outreach initiatives and music education.

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