

Area Students “Link Up” with Carnegie Hall/Weill Music Institute and the Tuscarawas Philharmonic

Nearly 3,000 local elementary school students and their music teachers in eight local school districts are working toward an ambitious goal. After months of preparation, their work will culminate on April 30, 2020 when they come to the KSU Tuscarawas Performing Arts Center to join with the Tuscarawas Philharmonic Orchestra in a concert performance.

It’s all part of Project “Link Up”, a program from the renowned Carnegie Hall/Weill Music Institute in New York City and funded by the Tuscarawas Philharmonic. Participating music educators and their students are now working to learn about music, the orchestra, its instruments and collaboration. Each student uses an instrument or their voice to learn music fundamentals and performance basics.

At Indian Valley’s Midvale Elementary School, music educator Lindsey Trushell says her students are enthusiastic about their “Link Up” experience which includes learning to play recorders, xylophones, and singing.

“They’re very excited to participate in this program and looking forward to the April concert,” Trushell said. “For most it will be their first time to see a live orchestra. Some are even spending extra time in the music room learning how to play the tunes on different instruments.

Trushell is working with 415 Indian Valley students in grades three through five during the week in classes lasting 35 minutes.

At no cost, Carnegie Hall has provided high-quality educational resources including:

- Link Up resources for students, teachers and administrators
- Curriculum Guide for each teacher, lesson plans and activities
- Orchestral scores and parts for most pieces, concert scripts and visuals
- On-line resources for additional lessons and interactive classroom activities

Sallie Stroup, executive director of the Tuscarawas Philharmonic Orchestra, hopes to continue this project for years into the future.

“With local support, which started this year from the Tuscarawas County Community Foundation, our goal is to offer the Link Up program to local schools annually with new curriculum provided by Carnegie Hall/Weill Music Institute and the sponsorship of the Tuscarawas Philharmonic Orchestra,” Stroup said.

The Tuscarawas Philharmonic has covered significant expenses to implement Link Up including:

- Season-end concerts featuring our Orchestra, Conductor, and Link Up students
- Recruitment of local teachers and students for participation
- Professional development workshops and support for local teachers
- Stipend for two local lead teachers to support other local music educators

“The Link Up program has our students playing easy parts or harder ones as some are able,” Trushell said. “The students are learning dynamics, tempo, phrasing, and breath marks. They read a melodic line and allow their instrument or voice to follow. The curriculum targets many learning goals at each grade level to allow the students to stretch and grow musically.”

In the New Philadelphia Elementary Schools, music educator Julie Kandel has introduced the Link Up Program to the district’s fourth graders, who she describes as “beyond excited.”

“Students have been to the PAC for school field trips and cannot believe they will be the actual performers,” Kandel said. “The students are reaching high and working together to be their absolute best. They come into the music classroom with a whole new sense of purpose, and I truly believe they feel important. Each child has unique talents and I love that the Link-Up program allows each child to perform in ways that make them the most comfortable.”

Kandel says the children will be singing, playing recorders and ukuleles, and dancing. “There are levels everyone can attain within the instrumental parts. A simplified recorder part features only a few notes while the more difficult recorder part will require more work for students to master,” Kandel said.

Stroup says this will be a great experience for the young musicians participating.

“Imagine making music with your friends and then coming together with your peers from other schools, joining a professional orchestra in a unified presentation,” Stroup said. “This event is not for an audience but is a collaboration, kids just getting along and being kids.”

Project Link Up is just the latest addition to the Philharmonic’s wide range of educational opportunities for musicians of all ages. During the current season these programs include:

- Performing Arts Camp
- Percussion Camp
- The Children’s Chorus
- The Adult Chorus
- The Honors Band
- Link Up with Carnegie Hall

Generous financial support from the local community, foundations, corporations, and individuals makes these outstanding music education program available at no cost to participants. For more information about the Tuscarawas Philharmonic, the current Orchestra Concert Season, and to purchase tickets, go to: www.tuscarawasphilharmonic.org