

Name Dropping: Bringing music to the children

By Justine DaCosta , Santa Cruz Sentinel

SantaCruzSentinel.com



Piano protégé Joey Alexander and his trio performed a private concert for local students. (Contributed photo)

Local elementary students received a musical treat when 12-year-old piano protégé Joey Alexander and his trio performed a private concert for them on Sept. 29 at Kuumbwa Jazz Center.

More than 170 students and chaperones from the El Sistema Program at Gault Elementary, ASES Afterschool Program at Bay View, Monarch Community School, DeLaveaga Elementary and

Gateway School attended the free event, aimed at exposing students to a live jazz experience.

Local music educator Dillon Baiocchi kicked off the event by providing some tips on how to listen to jazz, then gave a brief overview of the music the students were about to hear. This was the first concert for many of the young attendees.

When asked about jazz music before the concert, most of the students described it as being slow and sleepy. By the end of the performance, however, the kids were on their feet applauding.

"I love how they smiled and looked like they had a great time," Emily, a fourth-grader at Gault Elementary was quoted as saying.

For Lucas, a fifth-grader at DeLaveaga Elementary, his first concert was one to remember.

"I loved it and it was awesome and it is my very first concert," he was quoted as saying.

Joey Alexander and his band held a short Q&A with the kids after the event, and Alexander happily signed autographs.

A new chapter

EMC Planning Group of Monterey recently announced that Dana McCarthy has joined its team as an assistant planner.

McCarthy, who earned a bachelor's in earth sciences from the UC Santa Cruz, will be responsible for the research, preparation and production of environmental documents in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, and will also assist with permit processing and various other planning projects.

McCarthy's work experience includes serving as a project manager and professional geologist for more than 15 years in environmental consulting, serving several retail petroleum clients.

Raising money and awareness

Sangha Shantivanam held a fundraiser to benefit the Homeless Garden Project on Sept. 4.

Rev. Cyprian Consiglio, Prior at the New Camaldoli Hermitage in Big Sur, was the guest speaker and performer. The event also marked the release of his new book, "Spirit, Soul and Body: Toward an Integral Christian Spirituality."

Francis Krebs, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker on staff at the Homeless Garden, welcomed everyone before introducing Chris Omer, the farm manager at the Homeless Garden. Omer spoke about the Garden Project and its goals to assist people in making positive changes in their lives.

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Gitanjali Lori Rivera was also in attendance, and joined Rev. Cyprian in song.

An academic accomplishment

Congratulations to Julia Gratton, a senior at Mount Madonna School who has been named a Commended Student in the 2016 National Merit Scholarship Program.

This recognition signifies that a student scored in the top 5 percent of the nation's 1.5 million students who took the 2014 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

"Julia brings a genuine intellectual curiosity to both her academic work and her creative endeavors as a writer and poet," high school history teacher Tiffany Wayne was quoted as saying.

Gratton, a Santa Cruz resident, began attending MMS in ninth grade.

"Julia is so deserving of this recognition," MMS Director of High School Jivanti Rutansky stated in a press release. "She is a creative and compassionate young woman who thinks deeply, acts with integrity and leads by example. Her interests are diverse and whether she is writing poetry, studying calculus or researching socio-political issues, Julia always gives 100 percent."

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