

News Release Everett Public Schools



Everett Public Schools

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Barry Manilow and Everett Symphony make music possible for Everett and Marysville students

Starting next fall, students in Hawthorne Elementary in Everett and Tulalip Elementary in Marysville will each have a community-supported, stringed instrument program. The Everett Symphony has announced the launch of the *Prelude Strings* program which will open at the two elementary schools for fourth- and fifth-graders. Grammy-winning music legend Barry Manilow, through his Manilow Music Project, is donating Yamaha instruments to launch a music program at Tulalip Elementary and to enhance Hawthorne Elementary's general music program.

Ron Friesen, a 32-year veteran music teacher and band director, said "By the end of September, we expect to have students playing. Students who could not otherwise afford instruments or lessons will have access to a scholarship which will provide the instruments for them, thanks to the grant we're being awarded."

The donations and program were a welcome surprise to both school districts. Hawthorne Elementary music teacher Rochelle Dean noted, "We are so grateful for this opportunity to offer students supplementary instruction and participation in performing arts! Hawthorne Elementary students have an appreciation for and interest in performing arts, especially orchestra music. Our fourth- and fifth-graders attended a live performance of the Everett Symphony earlier this year. This was the first live performance of any kind that many had ever seen, and they all responded with such enthusiasm and appreciation! Among their responses were:

- *I like when they told and showed what all the different groups of instruments can do.*
- *The harp sounded pretty, like angels.*
- *We are so glad we were able to attend the symphony in person!*

For these students to have an opportunity to play string instruments themselves will be a dream come true."

Sara Hahn, principal of Hawthorne Elementary said, "Hawthorne students crave opportunities to experience the arts, display their talents, and perform for others. We recognize this string program as a positive, life-changing experience for our students, and we sincerely thank Barry Manilow and the Everett Symphony for this generous gift of music."

Everett Public Schools' Interim Superintendent Karst Brandsma thanked everyone who is making the program possible. "Thank you, Barry Manilow! And thank you also to the Everett Symphony, Platt

Electric Supply and the other community music lovers who made this gift possible. Who knows, perhaps one of the students who picks up a violin for the first time next fall will someday write or play music that 'makes the whole world sing.'"

"Tulalip Elementary is pleased with the chance to provide our students with a curriculum that will enhance our learning about the performing arts at our school," said Teresa Iyall, Tulalip Elementary principal. "Getting instruments into the hands of our students in order to be able to create music together has the potential to instill in our students the discipline of collaboration, practice, and the joy of performing which will enhance all of our students' musical repertoire. We are thrilled to be able to be a part of this venture and anticipate a successful launch of a strings program in our school next fall."

"This is core to the refocused mission of the Everett Symphony Orchestra," said Roger Pawley, CEO of the orchestra. Pawley sees a refocusing of the Everett Symphony's services to the community, one that will have a major priority in music education. "We have a goal that every fourth- or fifth-grader in the county will have an experience with symphonic music," Pawley said. "As the schools step back, we'll step forward to develop musicians and their audiences. I think it's essential for the long-term survival of the Everett Symphony."

Everett Symphony Board President Myrna Overstreet, a retired early childhood education instructor and formerly with Snohomish County Office of Children's Affairs, said "It had been sad to see music programs disappear from the schools, knowing how important it is to children. Without programs like *Prelude Strings*, we'd have a hard time keeping symphonic music alive in Snohomish County."

Friesen will donate his time to teach and administer the *Prelude Strings* program. The Tulalip Elementary program will run at noon, and the Hawthorne Elementary program will be an after-school program. Friesen, who has been associated with the Everett Symphony since 1983 and the Tacoma Youth Symphony since 1993, had been developing the idea of a strings education program in the Everett and in the Marysville school districts over the past year.

The outreach from the Manilow Music Project, in connection with the pop star's recent concert at the Comcast Arena at Everett, made the program feasible. Harvey Platt of Platt Electric Supply made the initial contact with the Manilow Music Project, and from that point, the singer's generosity and support of student programs was solidified.

"It was one of those 'aha' moments," said Friesen, who said as a youth, he benefited from music scholarships. He added, "We need to invest in people. I want the kids to understand they live in a community that cares for them."

Hawthorne and Tulalip elementary schools will share information with students and parents this spring. "Every student who wants to participate will be able to," Friesen said. "If a student says 'I want to play,' we'll make sure they get to play."

For more information, or to see how you can be a part of this program, check out www.manilowfund.org and info@everettsymphony.org.

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