

THERE'S MUSIC IN FINE CRYSTAL

Some say there's an abundance of harps in heaven. Perhaps so, but I know the celestial brass section recently got a boost. Some say that God has a hankering for talking in tongues. Perhaps so, but last week I know I heard the master maestro articulate a symphony in Suisun of earthly instruments harmonizing as helping hands.

Some say making dazzling crystals from seeds is a difficult process. Perhaps so, but last week I witnessed the alchemy of talented public servants and citizens transforming Crystal Middle School (Crystal) into a factory for priceless gems. At 7 pm on May 25th, at the Fairfield Center for Creative Arts, a showcase of precious jewels will be on display with the incredible phenom guitarist-songwriter, Jackie Greene.

Who are these alchemists? They are Jeff Trager, a storied big hearted music producer with adventures ranging from Joni Mitchell to The Moody Blues. Chris Frasu, a tussled hair passionate music teacher deferring pressing personal needs with impassioned service to kids he loves. Roxanne Rice, a late to the dance San Francisco summer of love child turned talented and insightful Crystal Middle School principal and Woodrow Carter, a PhD wielding retired army warrior with a new mission as Superintendent of Schools. Finally, there is the magic in the memory of Demari Hutchinson, a newly minted Crystal horn player tragically taken too soon by Highway 12 in November, 2006.

It started a year ago when Trager, son of a career San Francisco educator, had his heart tugged after a tour of Crystal where a fledging program sought to expose the Crystal gem seeds to the wonders of all things musical-especially the song of "can do" dreams. Frasu, an out of the box and into your heart troubadour of tunes and former Marine who knows 'service before self', traded his M 16 for slick guitar licks, a teaching credential and a love for "his kids"

Then Rice, under what she called the "affectionate nurturing" of Carter, was able to marshal magic on Mothers Day, 2006. I was there at Solano Community College when dozens of goose bumped parents and generous taxpayers like you got their groove on to an incredible benefit show with the kids, the incomparable Delbert Bump big band and velvet voiced world class Jazz vocalist Jamie Davis. Six thousand dollars were raised

There is a melody to our minds, a rhythm to our life's walk and a symphony woven into our souls. Listener or lyric tenor, impresario or improvisational genius, virtuoso or buck naked shower wailer, music carries notes and people to places we need to go. Music brings beauty, joy and the dividends of left and right brain thinking whether created alone or as part of a team blending and bending in harmony. As Roxanne said, "(the music) experience at Crystal is one glimmer in the day that turns them on to the whole experience (of the joys of learning), it's the hook"

Because of the Crystal Middle School music program your generosity has funded, some lives are changing. Problem kids have become percussionists, frequent flyers to the principals' office have turned flutists and giggling goof offs have morphed into serious guitarists. Why? Because music is a loving mentor endlessly providing connection to something much larger than yourself that never lies, is always there, can never be conquered and seeks allegiance only to its truth and beauty...and it's feel-good fun.

Thank you Jackie Greene, Fabulous Frasu, forever rocker Rice, caring Woodrow Carter, incomparable Fairfield Community Services and the Hutchinson family, who assailed by your sons' unfathomable death, have added to the symphony of life.

I am sure as you listen between the sweet strains of music resonating as only it can from the finest Crystal, you'll hear a tiny trumpeter blowing above us all. Dimarco, tell Louis Armstrong he was right, "What A wonderful World"

Kevin Ryan is a retired Colonel, physician, musician and author who lives in Fairfield.