

PRESS RELEASE

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3,150 fourth graders from 4 counties perform with local symphony

MUSKEGON: On April 15, 2009, 3,150 fourth graders from 45 schools in four West Michigan counties played their recorders along with the West Shore Symphony Orchestra. The students arrived by the bus loads to fill the Frauenthal Theatre at 10:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. They performed under the direction of Music Director Scott Speck. The interactive live concert experience was the culmination of a year-long study of music. Students accompanied the orchestra by singing, clapping, snapping their fingers, and finally playing their recorders.

What the participating students from Muskegon, Oceana, Ottawa, and Newaygo counties may not have known is that the West Shore Symphony Orchestra is one of only 11 in the nation to be selected to partner with The Weill Music Institute's Communities LinkUP! program that utilizes the famed Carnegie Hall's educational expertise and resources. The program is designed to increase students' performing, creating, and listening skills through a series of sequentially-linked activities, which include classroom instruction as well as interactive orchestra concerts. In addition to the year-long curriculum that meets Michigan's educational standards, The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall provides professional development for teachers and orchestra administrators, student and teacher workbooks, and supporting audio resources and materials.

This year's event focused on America's greatest music and composers and included an essay contest that drew 400 entries. Students Kaleb Cartier from Ravenna's Beechnau Elementary and Alexis Nixon from Muskegon Catholic Central Elementary were recognized for writing the winning essays on why they love America. Both students were awarded a pizza party for their entire class.

The West Shore Symphony Orchestra has participated in the Communities LinkUP! program since it began in 2004. Local sponsors included Meijer, Alyce R. Erickson Field of Interest and Mary Ann Sherwood funds of the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, Verizon Foundation, Fremont Area Community Foundation, Johnson Controls Foundation, L-3 Communications Combat Propulsion Systems, Comerica Bank, Spread the Music Foundation, Michael and Kay Olthoff, and many other supporters.

The Communities LinkUP! program is based on Carnegie Hall's own acclaimed LinkUP! program, which, since its inception in 1985, has engaged in musical learning for thousands of children in New York City and the tri-state area schools. The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall creates wide-reaching music education programs that play a central role in Carnegie Hall's commitment to making great music accessible to as many people as possible. Its educational programs serve over 115,000 children, students, teachers, parents, young music professionals, and adults in the New York City metropolitan area, across the United States, and around the world annually.