

PRESCHOOLERS LEARN TO PLAY THE VIOLIN



We are proud to announce Kansas City, Kansas Early Childhood Center is among the first metro schools to participate in String Sprouts, a groundbreaking early childhood violin program that supports kindergarten readiness.

The program is free and was established about four years ago by the Omaha Conservatory of Music Executive Director Ruth Meints to teach violin to three to eight-year-olds in underserved areas of Omaha, Nebraska. The program has grown to serve more than 1,300 youth at 13 different locations in the Omaha area in four years.

"This program was so well-developed and impactful in Omaha; I had to bring it to our community; it just tugged at my heart strings," said Vicki Olson, founding artistic director for Heartland Chamber Music, an award-winning chamber music academy in the heart of Kansas City. By bringing the program to our community and the metro, many believe, it can be just as impactful with students and will continue to sprout new locations and budding violinists.

On August 29, the program launched in an early childhood program of Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. This was the first day of the 32-week curriculum at KCKECC, where preschoolers got a chance to see, touch and hold their shiny, new violins for the first time.

Their eyes were as big as apples as they carefully opened

the cases containing their instruments, with the help of their parents. That's one of the guidelines of participating in the program, a parent has to accompany their student to the class and participate in the class by assisting their child with the lessons.

Some of the students could not wait to touch their new musical instrument while others just gazed at it awaiting further instructions from their teacher.

When those instructions were articulated from String Sprouts Instructor En-Ting Hsu, the students listened intently. Doing so enabled each student to learn how to properly stand and hold the violin and how to apply rosin to the bow (made from the sticky resins of conifer trees, the amount of resin applied to the bow will influence its sound and playability).

They even learned how to play a single note on the first day. Their mastery of playing that single note prepared them to accompany their teacher in a rendition of the popular children's song, "Pop Goes the Weasel" and to take a celebratory bow at the end of the performance to which they received thunderous applause from parents, staff and community partners.

This is only the beginning of their performances and rounds of applause. At the end of the year, the students will perform with the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory Orchestra.



"This is such a great opportunity for our kids to learn how to play a musical instrument, enhance listening skills, practice following instructions, and work together as a team," said KCKPS Superintendent of Schools Dr. Cynthia Lane. "These are great lessons they will be able to use for a lifetime," said Dr. Lane.

The hope is to eventually expand this program, which would not have been possible without the generous support of donors, which include the following:

- Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation,
- Francis Family Foundation
- Loretto Foundation

A great deal of thanks also goes to the following companies that donated the violins for use by the students:

- KC Strings
- Beckmann Violin Shop Inc.
- Meyer Music
- Wyatt Violin Shop

For more information about String Sprouts program visit Heartlandchambermusic.org.



GLORIA WILLIS MIDDLE SCHOOL



The future new middle school will be named in honor of Gloria Willis, a long-time school district educator, administrator and Board of Education member who passed away in 2016. The school's mascot will be the panther and the colors will be "harvest" orange and black.

The members of the Board of Education voted on the future new school's name, mascot and colors based on the results of a community-wide survey posted on the district's social media sites.

"This is an incredible way to honor Ms. Willis who worked in the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools for 41 years and served on the Board of Education for 21 years," said Superintendent Dr. Cynthia Lane.

The new middle school will be housed on land of the existing campus of the current Coronado Middle School located at 1735 N.

64th Terrace. Coronado will be razed after the new middle school is completed.

The new facility will be built to accommodate the population of students from both Coronado and West middle schools. The structure will be approximately 127,000 square feet and will house about 750 students.

Among the standout features of the new two-story facility are 30 classrooms, including a science room and prep area; flex and open collaboration space in each wing; art room; vocal and instrumental, computer science and special education classrooms well as a media center, auditorium, gymnasium, and cafeteria.

Construction will begin in the spring of 2018 with completion scheduled for the 2019-2020 school year.