

CLASSROOM CORNER

Teaching the next generation

DPHS STUDENTS SHARE MUSIC KNOWLEDGE WITH EBES KIDS

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EAST BROOKFIELD — The most successful high school sports teams all have one thing in common — a deep feeder system. The same applies for music, and the Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District is striving to build the foundation for a deeper program by introducing elementary school students to instruments.

Beginning last week, David Prouty High School music teacher Francis Fazio and several DPHS musicians are giving East Brookfield Elementary School kids a start in music. The hope is that they will continue to learn and improve as they progress through middle school, then thrive as part of a bolstered DPHS music program.

"Music is just like sports. If you don't have kids starting early, then it's tough to build the music program once they reach high school. They have already developed many other interests at that point," said Fazio, who leads the DPHS Marching Panther Band. "This is where it starts — this is the foundation for success."

Understanding that the construction of a strong feed-

er system requires commitment and patience, Fazio and his Prouty Panthers visit the EBES students twice weekly. EBES Principal Ron Tomlin was thrilled with the turnout of 22 fifth and sixth graders for the after-school music lessons.

Looking ahead to future years, school officials are eager to see the EBES students craft their skills and take on new challenges in music. For now, though, it's all about having fun.

"Starting this young allows the kids to play without worrying about making mistakes. All they want to do at this level is have fun," said Fazio, who previously led the music programs at Brimfield and Brookfield Elementary Schools. "Right now, any sound they make is a success. They are so happy to do this."

Fazio thanked his DPHS students for taking time out of their schedules to share knowledge and give back to kids just starting out. Reflecting on their own origins in music, the students understand the importance of sparking the passion early.

"It feels great to be a part of this program. Teaching younger students how to do the thing that you love is very enjoy-



Students in the David Prouty High School music program introduce East Brookfield Elementary School students to various instruments last week.



Kevin Flanders photos

able," said DPHS senior Emily Nairn, who began playing the alto saxophone when she was ten years old. "Starting music at an early age is very important. Children absorb information like a sponge — if you make it fun for them, they'll enjoy it and want to learn more. If you start at ages 10-11, there's a greater chance to achieve your musical aspirations."

Other DPHS Panthers taking the time to volunteer at EBES include: Emma Moroney, Brianna Mensah, Ryan

Nordquist, Jacob Fulmer, Connor Scott, Joseph Wilkman, Derrick Mensah, Fiona Halloran, Jon Hidenfelter, and Darius Jones.

"I couldn't do this without the high school students," Fazio said. "They are invested in the future, and they know that working with these students will lead to more kids eventually being in the high school program. They want to leave our music program better than they found it."

DPHS students and staff

alike have been energized by Fazio's commitment to deepening the program, not just at the high school level but throughout the school district.

"Mr. Fazio is dedicated to this program. Getting music classes started up again will help the band grow as these students go into the high school," Nairn added.

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