

# The Learning Curve

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Your weekly guide to students, schools, teachers and triumphs in Bibb County's Public Schools

## School concerts reach out to community

### Central High School hosts benefit concert to help a New Orleans school reopen



(above) The Central Chorus performs a series of spirituals.

(below) A strings trio plays as people arrive before the concert.



"The whole school is doing a lot to reach out," says Central High School Choral Director Caroline Carson. "We realized we could sing to raise money."

As a preview for the school's Fall Concert, the ensembles had already talked about putting on "a taste of what we're playing this semester," in order to build up expectations for the big event. After the hurricanes in the gulf, though, they wanted to help in their own way. So they decided to move forward with this concert and make it a fundraiser. The recipient: the repairs to Benjamin Franklin High School (BFHS) in New Orleans.

The Board of Directors of BFHS recently came to the unanimous decision to have the school reopened by January of 2006. In a press release, they state the school "is committed to assisting with the rebuilding of the City of New Orleans by reopening its doors as soon as possible so that the students and their families will be encouraged to return to the City and

resume their productive roles in our society."

"We thought it'd be good to help them raise money to help re-open," says Carson.

"It was truly a grassroots movement," praises Principal Dr. Erin Weaver, who says they found out about the school because one of its displaced students, sophomore Caylie Sadin, is currently attending Central. "She's a wonderful addition to our school," adds Weaver. "When she came, she gave a meaning to what we're doing."

Sadin had finally convinced her dad to move back to New Orleans at the beginning of her freshmen year "because I really wanted to go to Ben Franklin. It's a really good school." Also, in New Orleans, she could attend the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA), focusing on her love of theater, which made Central – as the county's Fine Arts Magnet – the perfect choice for her to attend.

However, she couldn't start her drama program at NOCCA until her sophomore year, meaning she was there for only two weeks before they had to evacuate. Though adjusting well to her new living situation (her grandmother lives here) and her new school, "I want to go back no mat-

ter what," she says. She's been in contact with her teachers at the schools to keep up on her studies, play reading, and monologue reading. "I want to keep up with what I'm missing."

Playing to an overflowing audience, the benefit concert featured performances from two faculty members and The Central Orchestra, Chorus, and Jazz Band. The opening faculty duet with violin and piano moved many in the audience to misty eyes and even tears in some cases; the Chorus and its soloists wowed them with their spirituals; the Orchestra took people away with a beautiful rendition of *Amazing Grace* and *Spirit of '76*; and the Jazz Band had heads bobbing and feet tapping to rocking versions of *Milestones* by Miles Davis and *Chameleon* by Herbie Hancock.

According to Carson, the concert raised more than \$470 for the school's repairs. One of the biggest surprises of the night, she adds, was a woman who had moved to Macon a little more than a year ago from New Orleans. She heard about the concert and came out to watch and support because she was a 1972 graduate of Ben Franklin High School.

### Weaver Middle School performs special Patriotic Show

Leading up to Weaver Middle School's patriotic-themed Fall Concert, the students were getting more and more excited about performing, but it wasn't just about the music. Not only were they going to be inviting veterans to the show, the next day they would be visiting Senior Living Homes to sing to the elderly. "It'd be nice to share [the program] with people who would appreciate it," said Choral Director Brooke Lefevre.

However, with recent gas shortages, it looked as if they would not be given the opportunity to take the music out into the community, but Lefevre and Band Director Jonathan Baker still wanted to let their students perform. "So we figured we'd bring them to us," said Lefevre.

The students took their places at the Fall Concert, performing for student, faculty, and family, among them more than 100 military personnel. They were asked to stand and be recognized to rounds of applause.

At the in-school show the next day, The Villas on College Street brought their residents to enjoy the show, and as they entered the room, the students clapped until they were seated, bringing smiles to all their faces. In between the chorus' set and the band's set, the Veterans were honored while the *Armed Forces Medley* played over the speakers.



The band, under the direction of Jonathan Baker, performs one of its patriotic pieces.

For the shows, the chorus sang *The Star-Spangled Banner*, *The Spirit of America*, *We are America*, *Peace Song*, and *America, of Thee I sing*, and the band performed *Colonial March*, *Grand Ol' Flag*, and *Grandstand March*.



Chorus members introduce themselves and spend a moment speaking with the visiting retirees.