

To News Room:
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Photo Attached

PLAYERS OF UTICA RECEIVES FUNDING FOR COLLEGE BOUND MUSICIANS PROGRAM

Utica, NY – Over the past few months, Players of Utica's newest program for area youth, College Bound Musicians, has been praised and supported received by the community. This program is designed to target an under-served population in the community. The mission is to offer quality music instruction to low-income and minority youth, increase the number of young people who participate in music throughout and beyond high school, decrease high school drop-out rates, improve chances of participants to enter into collegiate music programs through mentorship, and to provide opportunities to serve the community through public performance. Thanks to the support the program has received, student orientation was held on August 28th and instruction with Professor Michael "Doc" Woods begins on September 10th at the Players of Utica Theatre on State Street in Utica.

On September 3, 2011, Paul Crowther presented the group with a check for \$310.01 from funds raised during the Microcosmic Festival. The Microcosmic Festival was a very successful charity event that presented the community with the unique opportunity to enjoy an array of multi-media arts at various venues. The venues included, The New Uptown Theater, The Green Onion Pub, Café Domenico, and The Other Side, all on Genesee Street in Utica. Crowther is a musician who has been playing in local bands for about 15 years. Crowther stated, "I decided to donate all proceeds to charity and I have really been amazed by how many people have stepped up and donated their own talents and time to the cause." Crowther said of the College Bound Musicians program, "Arts programs like this are critical to this area because they provide new positive opportunities for children to challenge themselves creatively and stay off the streets. We are proud to support them."

On August 11, 2011, United Way of the Valley & Greater Utica Area awarded the program with a \$5000.00 Community Empowerment Grant that has made it possible to welcome the inaugural class of 20 students into the program. These funds will be used for the direct benefit of the program and the students being served. Reverend/Dr. Mary Webster, the program founder and Director said, "We are eternally grateful to the United Way and to the grants committee for their confidence and support of College Bound Musicians program."

Over the summer, The Academy for Performing and Creative Arts in Clinton also held an event to benefit the College Bound Musicians program. This event was an urban dance and performing arts presentation coordinated entirely by Jovita Bernard, Managing Director of The Academy. The event was held at New Hartford Baptist Church and raised nearly \$800.00 for the Players of Utica's youth program. In addition to this event, Jovita Bernard made the first official donation to the program in the amount of \$1000.00.

Besides the events, local businesses have stepped up to assist with instrument donations, event support and to offer guidance. J-Kay Lumber, Big Apple Music, K-Music, and Tiny's Restaurant, are among those that have supported the effort. "Reverend Webster has put in many hours of her personal time and talent to launch this program. We are so grateful to Reverend Mary for bringing this idea to us and for the expertise she lends to the program. Without her, this program would not exist", says Vince Scalise, Players of Utica President. Scalise also states that, "Without the community and the businesses that have donated money, time, and goods to the effort, the task of launching this program would have been daunting and near impossible. We have a group of inspired young people ready to begin only because of the generosity and gracious welcome that College Bound Musicians has received from the community."

About Players of Utica: Players of Utica, a non-profit community theatre, has been continuously producing shows in Central NY since 1913. We have entertained more than 1 million individuals with first-class community theatre. Players of Utica is an equal opportunity community theatre organization. For more information, a complete history, and to support or participate in Players of Utica, visit our web site at www.playersofutica.org.



Left to Right: Vince Scalise, President - Players of Utica, Paul Crowther, Founder - Microcosmic Festival