

Community

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KEITH NORDSTROM / THE SUN CHRONICLE

Denise Laferriere conducts the Attleboro Summer Band program's annual season-ending concert at Capron Park's Newell Shelter.

Banding together

Parents join kids in popular summer band program

BY JANETTE SEARS
SUN CHRONICLE STAFF

For young musicians who just can't get enough time honing their craft and enjoying the musical atmosphere, Summer Band 2006 was a perfect way to spend part of the summer.

For about 25 area musicians, from grade 4 and up, both beginners and advanced, the free summer band program offered plenty of practice and the opportunity to display newly acquired skills in an end-of-the-season public performance.

Both the practice sessions and the concert were held in the Newell Shelter at Capron Park, where other musicians have been given the same opportunity for many years.

In fact, the free summer band program has been providing just such an opportunity for budding area musicians for the past 44 years.

The program began in 1962 as the Attleboro Summer Band Program, and was sponsored throughout most of its history by the Samuel Stone Trust Fund.

Since 2002, however, two years after the program lost most of its funding through the trust fund, the program has been overseen by the Attleboro YMCA, which has been pleased to do so, according to YMCA Community Outreach Director Tim Killion.

"The Attleboro YMCA is thrilled to continue to support the Summer Band Program," Killion said.

As part of the YMCA's role in overseeing the program, the YMCA either funds the program directly or arranges for grant funding, such as the partial funding supplied by the Attleboro Cultural Council this year

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Lynne Ippoliti, of joining summer band program

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and in previous years.

Combined with other community contributions, such as that of Denise Laferriere, who directs the band; the Attleboro Park Department, which provides practice and concert space; and the Music Revitalization Project, which provides much of the sheet music for the band, it's a team effort, according to Killion.

"This unique collaboration has enabled the Y to bring arts to the city while building strong kids, strong families and strong communities," Killion said.

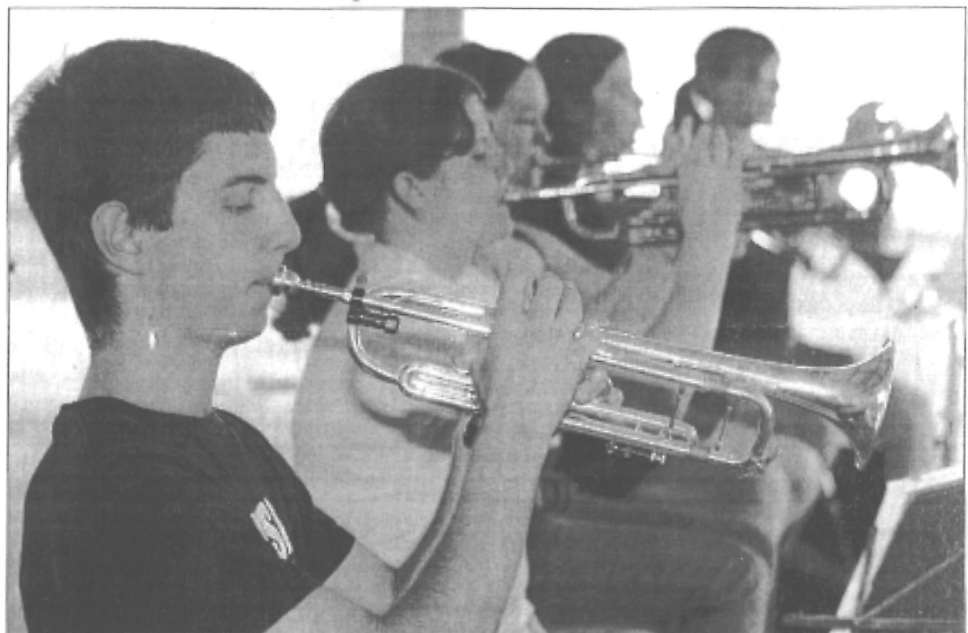
Among the different contributions that make the collaboration possible each year, Killion pays special tribute to Laferriere, who has directed the band for the past 13 years.

"This program would not have been possible without the dedication, enthusiasm and passion of Denise Laferriere," he said. "The program has been fortunate to have someone of Denise's character in working with the students."

Laferriere, a longtime music teacher, however, says she has been fortunate in turn.

"We get to play a lot more music over the summer than the students do during the school year," she said. "We do a lot of music in all different styles, and every summer it seems to be more fun both for the students and for me."

SEE BAND, PAGE B8 ►

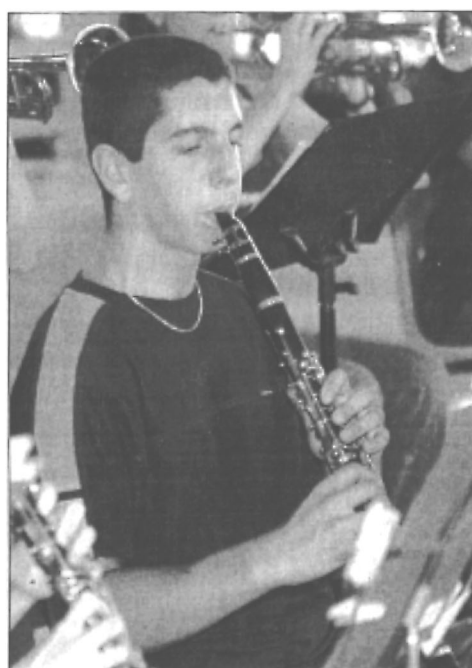


PHOTOS BY MIKE GEORGE / THE SUN CHRONICLE

Family affair

The Ippoliti family of Norton made the Attleboro Summer Band program a family affair. ABOVE: Paul Ippoliti, a senior at Norton High School, plays the trumpet in preparation for the season-ending concert. BELOW

LEFT: His brother Eric Ippoliti, a freshman at Norton High School, plays the clarinet. BELOW RIGHT: Their mother Lynne Ippoliti, joins her sons in the band after she started taking clarinet lessons in January.



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The brass section performs during the season-ending concert at Capron Park.

► BAND: Parents make music alongside their children

FROM PAGE B3

Laferriere also notes that the program is an opportunity for students to continue playing over the summer while also expanding their musical horizons.

"Because there are two different bands, two different levels, students can play music that's easier or music that's more difficult, and almost all of the students do both bands. Sometimes they play two different instruments."

As testimony to the success of the program, Laferriere also notes that many of the same students come back year after year, and even get their parents involved, as the Ippoliti brothers of Norton did this year.

Paul Ippoliti, a senior at Norton High School, and Eric Ippoliti, a freshman at Norton High, have been involved in the summer band program for several years and were eager to see their mother, Lynne Ippoliti, join in the fun after she began taking clarinet lessons in January.

"When I first started, I didn't think I would do the summer band, but my boys urged me to start so I did, a little reluctantly," Ippoliti said.

She was also encouraged to participate by Doreen Velmer of the Music Revitalization Project, who herself has participated in the band for several years with her daughter Natalie Rolince. Although reluctant because she had never played with a band before and because she felt she needed more time to learn her instrument, Ippoliti said she is happy she gave it a try.

"It's pushed me a little bit, and I've learned a great deal, I can say that," Ippoliti said. "I kind of thought maybe next summer would be more the time to start, but I will say it has been a great learning experience."

Noting the importance of the program for the younger musicians, Ippoliti said it has been a wonderful way for her children as well as others to stay active with their music over the summer.

"They've done it for several years now," she said of her children, "and they want to do it again next year, so that says something right there."

Her oldest son, Paul, who plays the trumpet, and also participates along with his brother Eric in the SMARTS Summer Winds Symphonic Band, says at this point in his musical career he also enjoys helping other students in the program.

"I feel myself as more of a leader, so I kind of help my section with the music, and I help them follow the director," he said.

As for himself, he says the program is still a good opportunity to keep playing in the summer. "There's not a whole lot to do as far as playing an instrument," he said, speaking of other opportunities to practice in the summer. "There are some camps that I could do, but they cost a lot of money and this is for free, so it keeps me playing. It's a nice experience. And, it's outside. I like that."

Eric Ippoliti, who plays clarinet, agrees that the opportuni-

ty to practice is good, but says he likes it for other reasons as well. "I like doing the band with my friends and stuff, and it's just kind of like a relaxing time," he said.

"Denise is a very good instructor, and I think she gives us really good music — some challenging and some good for practicing and keeping in shape."

Emily Hall, a 16-year-old student at Seekonk High School, who plays the flute, has been participating in the band for the past three years and taking lessons from Laferriere even longer. She says she got involved in the band through Laferriere and found other reasons to continue with it.

"I basically just go for the fun of it and just have fun and play in the band, Hall said. "I rarely get to do something that is like very, very fun, and just something to do for myself and for others," as well as "to help the other flute players out, and just try and set a good example," she said.



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Emily Hall performs a flute solo at the year-end concert.