

NELSON SCHOOL

Strings Program Proposed for 2010-2011

Nelson is a very special town; those of us that live here, those who visit, and those who travel to partake in various cultural events know this.

In the Contra Dance community Nelson is known not only nationwide, but worldwide, thanks to the Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music and various international visitors throughout the years. The Nelson contra dance is a highlight for many a visitor, not only for the welcome people receive, but also because of the music. The Nelson contra dance has an open policy, if a musician wishes to play at the dance they request to play and are fit into the evening schedule.

You may be wondering how this fits into the title of this article. Well, for several of us there has been a long standing desire to have students in Nelson learn about our rich musical heritage. It is said that there has been contra dancing in Nelson Town Hall for 200 years. Now it may have been called square dancing or country dancing, but people have been gathering to socialize and dance to traditional tunes in that hall long before any of us were born.

Our local traditional music has a story much like our nation. It is a

blending of English, French, Scottish, Irish, and Yankee inventiveness. It is a tradition that is living and changing. We've heard wonderful swing, jazz, classical music, and even Middle Eastern influences in modern tunes. It is vibrant and a reflection of our culture.

Traditional music comes alive for students through a new Suzuki inspired curriculum, written by renowned composer and musician Mark O'Connor, that draws from all these influences.

A partnership with Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music and Nelson School has been formed, and violinist Sarah Kim has stepped up to teach our children this new method. Not only will our students learn traditional tunes, but they will also benefit from the world class skill Sarah brings to Apple Hill.

Sarah Kim will be attending a teachers workshop taught by Mark O'Connor in December and she will be bringing her professional skills and enthusiasm for teaching to our students.

We are actively seeking financial donations so that we will be able to purchase student violins (which come in various sizes and are perfect for new students). This will enable students from financially strained families to afford lessons. Decent student violins start at \$300 and up. We can add additional instruments in following years.

As this goes to press, we are still working out the logistics of where donations can be sent, so please stay tuned.

For more information please feel free to speak with:

Lenny Matczynski, Director Apple Hill (847-3371)

Valerie Van Meier, committee member (847-9931)

Sheila Vara, Nelson School Teaching Principal (847-3408)



Trick-or-Treat For UNICEF 2009

Nelson School once again participated in the October Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF Campaign. Rather than setting a monetary goal, we were hoping to instead work towards increasing our participation rate. I am THRILLED to announce, that for the first time EVER, our students had a 100% participation rate! (Our record prior to this year was 84%.) Way to go!!!

The 31 boxes that were collected resulted in a grand total of \$241.31

Thank you so much for your help with this important project.

~ Cindy Benner



OLD TIMERS' DANCE

The flowing fabrics
Of the long cotton skirts
Swing through the air
Answering the dance calls
Prompted by Dudley.

We call it the Old Timers' Dance,
An autumn affair in the Nelson Town Hall,
When we can celebrate
Where we were in the Sixties
When we were in our twenties.

Old friends, lifelong friends,
Gather again to choose partners
For Money Musk and Chorus Jig.
Harvey's fiddle keys up with the piano
To play tunes so familiar

That our feet begin to dance
Like an automatic reflex,
As though little hammers
Are tapping on our knees
Keeping time with the music.

"Once and a half around...."
We join smiles up and down the contra line.
"Below one couple and forward six...."
We dance the rhythms
Of our younger days

Forgetting the pains
From our well-worn hips and knees,
The challenges from our aging bodies,
And the cancer wounds among us,
Just for the evening.

- Karen Tolman