This semester I have had the supreme honor of working with students at Cummings Elementary as they prepare for their performance of “On Broadway” at the Hobby Center. It was exciting for me to have an opportunity to do something which I am passionate about and that impacts the lives of our children. Little did I know how impactful it would be for me.

Benjamin Disraeli said, “The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own.” I have seen the fruits of a child whose riches are slowly being revealed. A compliment for being able to pronounce a word that was previously allusive or praise for a student’s progress, regardless how big or how small, these seemingly tiny things have the ability to make a student come alive. A smile bursts upon their face like the sun coming out of a dark cloud. Surely that moment must be as life changing to the mentor as it is to the mentee! What an incredible opportunity each and every one of us has to make a change in somebody’s life and thereby indelibly change our own.

Along with the great euphoria that comes from seeing these children blossom comes the realization that much still needs to be done. The need in our Title 1 schools is great. Many children have incredible obstacles to hurdle. They come from single parent homes where the parent may need to work multiple jobs to support the family. Some students have access to both parents but both must work long hours at low paying jobs in order to provide the basic necessities. Often there is no other option than to leave a child with the responsibility of acting as the parent, providing dinner and helping with homework for their younger siblings. These children are often at an unfair advantage with less time for homework or to participate in enriching extra-curricular activities such as Music Doing Good in Schools.

The children need our help. Consider becoming a mentor or making a donation to Music Doing Good so that we may continue making an impact on the lives of children in Houston.
What principles are you instilling in your scholarship recipients?
We want our scholars to know that while there is a community ready and willing to help them. They must also hold up their end of the bargain. We want them to not be afraid to ask for help when they need it, while recognizing that they are ultimately responsible for their own success or failure. We also expect them to reach back and help someone else when they are able to do so.

What are your greatest rewards as a mentor?
A couple of weeks ago I posted a position for my company on LinkedIn and one of our former scholars responded. He emailed me to let me know of his work history and at the end of the email he wrote, “I’m also a Linda Lorelle Scholarship Fund winner, class of ’08... so thank you so much for that. It changed my life!” It doesn’t get any better than that.

From your perspective, why is it so important to mentor?
We have to help our young people see and develop their potential. So often they look at others deemed successful and think they can never achieve that for themselves. They’re wrong — they can achieve anything and it helps to see how someone else overcame obstacles and persevered to achieve their goals. I believe that part of being a good mentor is sharing the failures that helped lead to success.

What is your favorite success story with a student?
It’s hard to come up with just one. But a young man named David Daniels comes to mind. David was a drug baby, born to a mother who was addicted during her pregnancy. He had a very difficult childhood that included being estranged from his mother periodically and moving from one foster home to another. Someone told him about our scholarship and he almost didn’t apply. He waited until the last moment of the last day to submit his application. David received our scholarship and went on to graduate from Prairie View A&M University with a degree in Communications and Journalism. He worked as the Communications Specialist for the Houston Center for Literacy for a few years and recently moved to New York to further his career. A couple of years ago David shared his story on stage at our annual awards dinner and there wasn’t a dry eye in the house. On September 24th of this year, we will celebrate David and more than 300 of his fellow scholars at our 25th anniversary gala.

What are some of the greatest challenges your students are facing today?
We actively seek student applicants who are dealing with life circumstances that might prevent them from reaching their full academic potential. That means our students have a lot of “stuff” going on in their lives — everything from parents in prison to being sexually abused to escaping war-torn countries. So the life stuff is always a challenge for our students, but an increasingly daunting challenge is how to pay for college. There seems to be no end in sight when it comes to tuition hikes, so organizations like ours have to help pick up the slack to ensure that our students have access to higher education.

What motivated your leadership role with your scholarship program?
When I was promoted to prime time anchor shortly after starting at KPRC-TV, Channel 2, I felt it important to use that visibility to do something meaningful. My husband, Lou Gregory, and I are both passionate about education so we decided to make that our focus and reach out to a population of students who often get overlooked; students who may have average grades because of their life circumstances. We were both blessed to have grown up with parents who modeled giving to others, so it’s in our DNA. It’s who we are and it is what we will always do.

What is some of your favorite music that was introduced by parents/teachers/mentors?
Some of my most favorite childhood memories are of listening to my parents’ turntable (I’m dating myself:) in our living room. If I close my eyes I can hear the songs of Frank Sinatra, Nancy Wilson, Ramsey Lewis, Nat King Cole and so many more filling the room — and see my parents dancing to the music. Such wonderful memories...
“HOLDING EVERYTHING”- AN INSPIRING COLLABORATION

Music Doing Good was honored to collaborate with High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) and Dr. Kayleen Asbo to bring an intimate and inspiring discussion entitled, “Holding Everything,” to piano, voice and band students. When asked why the arts were such an important part of education, Dr. Asbo referenced The Gospel of Thomas. “If you bring forth what is inside of you, what is inside of you will save you. If you do not bring forth what is inside you, what is inside you will destroy you.” She believes that this statement sums up the arts in a nutshell. “People open their hearts to pour into poems, paintings and symphonies the pain they were experiencing. It is then transformed from suffering into the light of illumination for the world. Those works of art still echo and reverberate today. We can take the suffering we feel and inflict it on others or we can go more deeply into it and transform it into something that is beautiful. I know what I want people to do. It is absolutely essential to have models for that process,” adds Dr. Asbo.

Dr. Asbo remarks that the difference between Beethoven and his abusive father is that Beethoven had his music, into which he poured that pain. There are places in his music that communicate outright rage and despair. Without an artistic outlet, Beethoven probably would have inflicted suffering on others, like his abusive father. His pain ultimately became the 5th and 9th Symphonies!

She believes that the stories of Beethoven, Dante and other artists must be shared because these stories can serve as a lifeline for many people, just as they did for her as a child struggling through what she calls, “some very dark times.” She believes that it is imperative to impart this concept to young people as a tool for empowerment. Dr. Asbo credits her music teachers for giving her a conduit for transforming this energy within herself. And in turn, we believe that Dr. Asbo has taken mentoring to a whole new level.

“William Blake encouraged us to embrace spiritual maturity by holding both hands full: one full of grief and the other full of joy and gratitude,” quoted Asbo. Her message to the students was that every one of us is going to experience heartache, but our duty is to not waste it. Described as an alchemical process, we must mine that darkness for its gold. It truly changes us -- and ultimately the world.

Pianist, professor and composer Dr. Kayleen Asbo holds Masters Degrees in psychology, mythology, piano and Baroque Performance Practice, as well as PhD in mythology. She lectures and performs around the world through her company, Mythica, and for organizations like the San Francisco Opera, the Santa Rosa Symphony and the Assisi Institute of Depth Psychology in Italy. She is on the faculty of four colleges and universities in the San Francisco Bay Area, including UC Berkeley and the San Francisco Conservatory.

Dr. Asbo received a standing ovation, which we were told rarely happens at HSPVA, and the students who did not have to rush off to class remained in the auditorium to talk with and perform with the pianist. Someday soon, the students will also find themselves in the role of the mentor and they will draw on this moment to pay it forward.

SPOTLIGHT ON: MUSIC DOING GOOD IN SCHOOLS

Veteran fashion designer, Lord Andrew, is graciously bringing his talent and passion to create the costumes for the Music Doing Good in Schools production of “On Broadway” on May 20th at the Hobby Center. Additionally, he paid a visit to Stevenson Middle School to discuss with the students the various ways that they can express their culture as Latinas (Mexican Americans) through music, mannerisms, food, and of course, fashion. They had an empowering conversation about self-expression and honoring their culture. “People are put into boxes... especially people who come from other countries. They tend to give up their culture to become ‘American.’ So when I thought of their costumes, I thought about what would empower them – the flag of their country. When they flip their skirts over in the choreography, it is the flag of Mexico. They are putting on their country,” remarks Lord Andrew. He also reminded the students to never forget their roots. We are truly grateful for this new and exciting partnership!

Everyone is getting involved in Music Doing Good in Schools at Cummings Elementary. In preparation for “On Broadway,” students are diligently learning their choreography. The girls are working with Ms. Roberson, the dance teacher, and the boys are learning their choreography from working with Coach Rhodes. PE classes now consist of rehearsing these brilliant dance moves. As an element of the dance, the boys will be utilizing basketballs in their choreography! The entire campus is buzzing with creativity.
SPOTLIGHT ON: MUSIC DOING GOOD IN SCHOOLS

Music Doing Good in Schools works with campus faculty and staff to design Positive Behavior Support (PBS) to meet the needs of each child. Working with the school community to identify students with greater needs, learning differences or more extreme challenges at home, toward enrichment programs to offer a different approach to learning. The program often galvanizes a breakthrough for those children.

One of the desired outcomes of mentoring is that students learn to take on a leadership role within their peer group. The Music Doing Good in Schools program creates leadership roles throughout the year in the form of assistant choreographer, stage managing, costume management, props management, time management and more.

Monserrat is only in the third grade, but she doesn’t miss a thing. Aisha is encouraging her to speak up when she sees mistakes and opportunities. She wants to be a leader, but she just doesn’t know how...yet. Monserrat is learning that perseverance yields the greatest reward!

At Cummings Elementary, a whole circle of mentorship has been created! Principal, Ms. Byrd has officially become a mentor to Music Doing Good in Schools program director, Aisha Ussery. In turn, Aisha has become a mentor to music teacher, Pheobie Willis. They will meet regularly to discuss trends, the campus action plan and opportunities to help struggling students. This is a dream campus for the program, where everyone understands the value of “paying it forward.”

With all the time our staff spends making sure our outreach programs are the best they can be for our students, it is easy to forget that many of our staff members are also professional musicians. Phillip Hall serves as Music Doing Good in Schools’ assistant director, but he’s also a very accomplished jazz musician. This winter, Phillip was selected to perform in two gospel and jazz festivals. The first festival was in Covington, Louisiana, and the second was in Linhue, Hawaii.

In Covington, Phillip collaborated with New Orleans-based drummer Jason Marsalis, of the famous “first family of jazz.” This wasn’t Phillip’s first time playing with jazz’s royal family, either. “A few summers ago, I had the opportunity to play with Delfeayo Marsalis during Music Doing Good’s show The Great American Songbook. This was a life-changing experience. That I had the opportunity to play with his brother is just miraculous and equally thrilling.”

Experiences like this have allowed Phillip to become more than just the music director for the students in Music Doing Good in Schools. The students have been excited to learn that Phillip had the opportunity to travel, and most importantly, that his music was taking him there. Phillip says, “The students are receptive when they realize ‘this guy is a professional!’ The students connect with the music more knowing that it’s coming from someone who just toured the country performing, and it helps to validate and strengthen Phillip’s role for them. Now, when Phillip brings music to the students, they see it differently. In fact, Mr. Hall says, “I don’t want them to think of their performance as just a kid show, I treat them as adults and professionals.” He uses many of the same techniques that he uses with his professional musicians and the students respond to it very positively.

Mr. Hall has become a role model and a living example of what these students see as possible for themselves. Phillip has been very vocal about letting the students know that if you embrace your gift, it can change your life. “For many of the students, they haven’t been taught that music, or any of their other gifts, can take you places,” says Phillip. It’s important for these students to see positive role models in the arts, and Phillip Hall embodies this role for our students.
Houston’s most notable women philanthropist and business moguls were honored at the “Sweet 16” Women’s History Celebration and exhibit unveiling at the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum on March 5th. The sixteen women honored have hit the “sweet spot” in their lives by making a significant impact on the Houston community. The event was emceed by news journalist and author, Damali Keith of Fox New 26 news.

The honorees include: Marie Taylor Bosarge, Founder and President, Music Doing Good; Ashley Turner, CEO, Busy Bee Wellness Center; Mrs. Audrey Hoffman Lawson, First Lady Emeritus of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church; Mary Marks Guillery, retired educator, founding member of Friends of Houston Ebony Opera Guild; CleRenda McGrady, creator of The Project P.U.S.H.™ Symposiums and Programs; Jacquelyn Aluotto, producer, director, documentarian, activist for the homeless; Jade Simmons, Founder, School of Emergence, Inaugural Spotlight Artist for Music for Autism; Kamryn Johnson and Sanija-Symone Scott, actresses, models, speakers, writers for empowering other children; Karen Carter Richards, CEO and Publisher, Forward Times Publishing Company, Inc.; Dr. Lason Mackey-Hines, Peer Review Facilitator, US Department of Education; Marilyn Richmond-Johnson, USA Colonel (Ret), Memorial Hermann Operating Room Nurse; and Theresa Roemer, CEO of Theresa Roemer, LLC, home goods companies and fitness expert; Maria Rios, President and CEO, Nation Waste, Inc.; Deavra A. Daughtry, President and CEO of Excellent Care Management; Mia K. Wright, Co-Pastor and Director of Ministry, The Fountain of Praise, motivational speaker and work/faith/life balance coach.

SWEET SIXTEEN – BUFFALO SOLDIERS MUSEUM HONORING NOTABLE HOUSTON WOMEN

Anne Halliburton Stewart is the newest official board member of Music Doing Good, although she has been a major supporter and contributor for the last couple of years. Born in Natchez, Mississippi, Anne attended Texas Women’s University, where she studied Occupational Therapy. She has always been an ardent champion of her favorite causes including advocating for children, supporting the arts, literacy and protecting and caring for animals. She also completed advanced training at the Neuhaus Education Center and had a private practice for eight years working with children with unique learning styles. Anne created and chaired the first fundraising luncheon for Be a Resource for CPS Kids (BEAR).

Anne has served as a board member for the following organizations: ArtX, Christian Community Service Center, Golden Retriever Rescue Houston, Habitat for Horses, Main Street Theater, Neuhaus Education Center Advisory Board, Spaulding for Children, The Junior League of Houston and UT Health Development.

Anne is also an owner of Stewart Cellars, an exclusive winery in Napa Valley, California. Their ambition is to respect the dirt, start with the best fruit, drive hard for perfection and embrace the elegance of the human touch.

WHAT’S ON OUR PLAYLIST?

Given the theme of mentoring, our playlist consists of songs that you were introduced to you by a teacher, parent or coach.

2016 ISSUE 2 PLAYLIST

MENTORS

Aaron Kaufman
“Drive My Car”
The Beatles

Aisha Ussery
“Music Forever”
Hubert Laws

Helen McDonald
“Canto Della Terra”
Andrea Bocelli

Julie Lambert
“American Pie”
Don McLean

Lisa Elliott
“Aquarius”
Fifth Dimension

Kenneth Gayle
“Cosi Fan Tutte”
W.A. Mozart

Marie Bosarge
“He’s Got The Whole World In His Hands”
Nina Simone

Phillip Hall
“Something ‘Bout Believing”
Duke Ellington

Ray Younkin
“Teach Your Children”
CSN&Y

Rodney Waters
Davidsbündler-tänze, Op. 6
Robert Schumann

Anne Halliburton Stewart
QUARTERLY NOTES

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STUDENTS REHEARSE FOR THE PRODUCTION OF “ON BROADWAY”