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Jazz Goes to School Kick's Off Sixth Year in Eagle County Schools

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The Vail Jazz Foundation's (VJF) Jazz Goes to School program kicks off its sixth year in Eagle County Schools the week of November 3, 2003.

This program offers an innovative and fully integrated approach to teaching music and social studies at the elementary school level. And best of all, the kids think it's cool!

The program is presented by the VJF to all fourth and fifth graders in the public schools of Eagle County, plus the Eagle County Charter Academy, Vail Mountain School, Eagle Valley Christian Academy and St. Clare of Assisi. This year, Jazz Goes to School will reach over 1,000 students as the program continues to expand to serve the ever-increasing student population. The 2003-2004 Jazz Goes to School schedule is as follows:

- Session #1: November 3 – 6, 2003
- Session #2: January 5 – 9, 2004
- Session #3: February 23 – 27, 2004
- Session #4: April 12 – 13, 2004, Vilar Center for the Arts

Jazz Goes to School is a fun and interactive program, formatted as a sequential series of four 45-minute lessons that are presented during the course of the school year. The curriculum, fully integrates jazz music education and social studies subjects, such as world/American geography and history, and has been embraced by school administrators and instructors, parents and the students. The program creates an awareness at a younger level, thus creating future audiences and potentially, future jazz musicians. Kim Kohlhofer, Avon Elementary Music Teacher, advised us: "I have many students who have gone on to play instruments and enrich their lives because of their experience with "Jazz Goes To School".

Up to five professional musicians present a lesson that includes age-appropriate discussions of the history of jazz and the fundamental elements comprising jazz. In addition there are demonstrations of the playing of instruments generally used in jazz and of famous jazz compositions and popular children's songs in jazz style. In every lesson students learn through participation by playing a variety of drums and percussion instruments to understand jazz rhythms; singing and clapping to demonstrate concepts such as call and response; and playing special melodic instruments in order to experience improvisation. Formal lesson plans, post-lesson plans and visual aids are provided to each of the school's music instructors to help reinforce the lessons taught in each session. By blending these subjects in a lesson plan, the educators link various social studies subjects that students are exposed to in their regular curriculum to the history of jazz in a unique and stimulating manner.

Local jazz musician and professional jazz educator, Tony Gulizia (keyboard and vocals), directs the Jazz Goes to School program. Tony's brother, Joey (drummer) is also a professional jazz musician and educator, co-presents the sessions. Other professional musicians and clinicians who assist the Gulizia brothers include – Kirk Garrison (trumpet), Andy Hall (bass) and Roger Neuman (saxophone).

The fourth and final session scheduled for April 12 – 13, 2004 and will feature the 6th Annual Jazz Goes to School Student Concerts at the Vilar Center for the Arts in Beaver Creek for all elementary school students participating in the program. The Student Concerts demonstrate all of the concepts taught in the first three classroom sessions and featured music written and/or performed by the greatest jazz musicians in history as well as blues tunes written by the fifth grade students.

Jazz Goes to School is an interactive learning experience that is an extremely valuable enhancement of the basic school curriculum that would not otherwise be available to the students in the Eagle County public schools without the support of the VJF. Jazz is America's gift to the world and the Vail Jazz Foundation's mission is to perpetuate jazz music through live performances that showcase the artistry and talent of great jazz musicians, and through jazz education, with a focus on young musicians and young audiences. By taking jazz into the schools, we hope to create an awareness at a younger level, thus creating future audiences and potentially, future jazz musicians.

Jazz Goes to School is sponsored by: Jazz Goes to School is sponsored in part by Alpine Bank, Buckman/Blount Community Use Fund, City Market/The Kroger Foundation, Colorado Mountain Express, Eagle County RE-50J School District and PTOs, Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation, Taste of Vail, Town of Vail, Vail Valley Foundation, Vilar Center for the Arts Beaver Creek, Walmart Foundation and the Colorado Council on the Arts—a state agency funded by the Colorado General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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