

SLO Symphony helps bring music to schools

BY ANDREA STONER

I applaud Deb Spatafore and Adrienne Dickinson for their recent letters regarding the importance of arts education and the need to reach students at an early age.

High school choir numbers down? Band canceled? It's not surprising that interest is waning in the upper grades, when there is no longer a musical "farm team" in the primary grades to "feed the majors." But it's not just about filling the stage with young performers; it's about how arts education and experience inspires learning, enhances our lives and creates better people.

At the San Luis Obispo Symphony we are proud to offer music education programs for grades K-12 serving 16,000 students annually through programs like the Music Van, Strings in the Schools, Everyday Etudes and our annual Children's Concert. While these programs provide an opportunity for children to experience and perform live, classical music, they are not capable of replacing a standards-based K-12 music education, mandated by the state of California.

The Symphony is honored to work with all of our county school districts in reaching students with our current programs, but that's not enough. We will contin-

ue to advocate for a standards-based K-12 music education in every school for every child, and we ask parents, teachers and administrators to join us in this effort. We look forward to pairing our programs with a solid foundation of music education set by our schools to one day give all students the opportunities they deserve.

"Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul."

— Plato

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