



## GATE Orchestra plays for holiday audiences

By LOREEN BERLIN / GUEST WRITER

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The Anaheim Union High School District's Gifted and Talented Education Orchestra performed its Christmas program Dec. 11, 2013, at Orangeview Junior High School.

There are 200 elementary, junior high and high school students in the after-school music program who are not only budding musicians but are disciplined, polite and courteous.

The Orangeview cafeteria was packed with parents, family and friends. With that many people in one small room, you'd expect to hear lots of noise; however, there was very little talking, as everyone listened intently.



The children are directed by four full-time musicians who also teach music through local schools. They are Julie Metz, beginning strings and the GATE program director; Greg Adamson, intermediate strings; Darlene Alfuso, beginning strings; and Kihae DeFazio, advanced strings.

DeFazio's advanced stringed students, who are in high school, missed the Christmas program as they had been asked to perform at the Old Ranch Country Club in Seal Beach that evening – a kudo to the young musicians and their director.

All of the students performed during the West Anaheim Neighborhood Development Council's 13th annual Holiday Magic Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at Twila-Reid Park, welcoming the Christmas season with music and Santa.

"I love this program," said parent Joy Adair, whose daughter Ashley, 12, plays in the GATE Orchestra. "She has learned more in this short time in the orchestra, since school began in September, than in her regular schooling. Julie Metz is so inspirational."

The GATE program became a nonprofit in December 2011 and now raises money through its snack bar. Being a nonprofit also allowed it to receive a \$5,000 grant recently from the Leo Freedman Foundation of Anaheim.

The GATE Orchestra provides beginning through advanced instruction on such stringed instruments as violin, viola, cello and bass to public-school students, grades four through 12, living in and around Anaheim.

Through the two-hour after-school instruction, Metz said, those who might not otherwise have access to a musical education are actively prepared to participate in school and community orchestras and perform in public venues.

Last year, because of the success of the GATE Orchestra program, children had to be turned away because of full enrollment in the beginning class, Metz said.

For AUHSD GATE Orchestra information, visit [juliemetz.com/auhsgate](http://juliemetz.com/auhsgate).

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