



Anaheim GATE Orchestra receives \$5,000 grant

By **LOREEN BERLIN** / GUEST COLUMNIST

The Anaheim Union High School District's Gifted and Talented Education Orchestra recently received a \$5,000 grant from the Leo Freedman Foundation of Anaheim.

"We are so grateful to the foundation," GATE Orchestra Director Julie Metz said. "With the grant, we will be able to expand our program to more children in the community."

The GATE Orchestra provides beginning through advanced instruction on stringed instruments, such as violin, viola, cello and bass, to public school students in grades 4 through 12 who live in and around the city of Anaheim.

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

The mission of GATE Orchestra, a nonprofit organization, is to instill a lifelong appreciation and enthusiasm for music.

"The Orchestra recognizes the importance of music education on the students' social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. ... The Anaheim community has embraced the GATE Orchestra program, helping to continue to raise money through a variety of programs, including snack bar sales," Metz said.

Former GATE Orchestra student Anthony Truong, who studied the violin in the Savanna School District, has returned as a teacher's assistant to give back to his community.

"These music programs were the reasons I came to school," Truong said.

At the secondary level, Truong learned to play viola and cello and began creating compositions, one of which was performed by the GATE Orchestra a few years ago.

"Last year, Anthony started college as a composition major and came to me saying he wanted to volunteer his time to the GATE Orchestra program in order to pass on to the young students what he has learned," Metz said.

The GATE Orchestra trains 200 students per year, but it tries to keep the student-to-teacher ratio low.

"Unfortunately, because of the success of the GATE Orchestra program, we had to turn away children last year due to full enrollment in the beginning class," Metz said. "Our goal for the 2013-2014 school year is to make two separate beginning classes in order to lower the student-teacher ratio."

To accomplish that task, the group needed to employ a second beginning strings teacher and assistant.



Members of the beginning Anaheim Union High School District's Gifted and Talented Education Orchestra practice for up-coming performances.

“With the help of more specialized teachers and assistants, we will be able to make a larger impact on our students through smaller group lessons, more concerts for the community and level-appropriate repertoire,” Metz said.

The \$5,000 grant from the Leo Freedman Foundation this year is set to help with that goal.

For more information on the GATE Orchestra, visit julielmetz.com/auhsdgate.

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