

Raising the musical bar

New band program aims to develop young talent

By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Music teacher David Di Giorgio is hoping students will put the gift of music high on their Christmas wish lists this year.

It's a gift he's more than willing to help give through a new band program he's starting in the new year.

Di Giorgio, music director at E.C. Drury High School, is the mastermind behind P(REP), a band program being offered through the school for kids in Grades 7 and 8.

Through P(REP), students will receive 16 weeks of music instruction.

They'll meet every Monday from January 18 to May 31 from 6:45 to 8:30 p.m. in E.C. Drury's music room and rehearse with teachers and senior high school musicians.

As a grand finale, the band will perform at E.C. Drury's annual Bohemian Fair in June.

"It's my response to really trying to provide more quality arts programming in town, increasing the love for music and spreading the sense of community here," Di Giorgio said, explaining he wants to help "raise the bar" for young musicians in town.

Experience not required

Students already learning an instrument through their elementary school bands are invited to participate, but so are students who have never before picked up an instrument, but who are eager to learn.

"I want to make music available to more people in Milton," Di Giorgio said.

By the end, everyone will play at the same level, he said, and — the clincher — they'll sound good.

"I want kids to know that anything is possible and they can do high level performing."

Di Giorgio experienced first hand a similar band program run by a friend in Brantford



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INSTRUMENTAL IN STARTING NEW PROGRAM: E.C. Drury High School music teacher David Di Giorgio eagerly awaits next month's start of his P(REP) band program.

and said he was amazed at how good the students — who'd only been playing for six weeks — sounded.

"It's a model that really works," he said, explaining there's a high student-to-instructor ratio.

The cost is \$130, which works out to less than \$4 per hour, plus the cost of renting an instrument — approximately \$12 per month — if students don't already have one.

The money will go toward E.C. Drury's

music program for things like new instruments, bursaries and scholarships.

The mentorship opportunities the band will provide for high school students will be invaluable, Di Giorgio said.

After the first year, Di Giorgio said he hopes to expand the program to include kids in Grades 3 to 6.

"We all have music inside us. It's just a matter of tapping into it."

Students can register on-line at

<http://ecd.hdsb.ca> until Monday, Jan. 11 or sign up at an information session being held that same day at 6:45 p.m. in the music room at E.C. Drury.

Rentals can be arranged that night through St. John's Music.

For more information about the program, contact Di Giorgio at (905) 878-0575 or digiorgiod@hdsb.ca.

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