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Ms. Skinner

ELA 12

4/10/14

Strings of Life

Looking back at my life, amid all the accomplishments and mistakes I have made, joining the guitar program at Lindsay High School is genuinely the best decision I have made through high school. Making music not only influences myself and my behavior; but, those surrounding me as well. With the LHS Guitar Program, I have been able to expressively play guitar for my family, colleagues, and anyone around; playing music in a way in which I am not afraid or embarrassed to play in front of people.

8th grade year at Steve Garvey Junior High I had joined guitar class as an elective and was under the directive of Mr. Anthony Toddey. He showed me the fundamentals of guitar and the basics of reading tablature. It was 8th grade that I performed for the first time in front of a live audience; I also performed a duet with my present Honors Guitar member, Joseph Ochoa. Becoming more comfortable in playing in front of a crowd, I also performed for the 8th grade Talent Show and our 8th Grade Graduation. Coming into freshman year at Lindsay High, I had chosen my two electives of Spanish 1 and Beginning Guitar; it was this year that I would be under the teachings of my present guitar teacher, Nancy Wills. Having little experience already with guitar, I was able to learn new guitar techniques, such as rumba or broken arpeggios, not only easier but faster as well. I finished Beginning Guitar in one semester and moved straight into Intermediate the second semester of freshman year. My friend Joseph Ochoa, already being in the Honors Guitar Ensemble, would tell me that Ms. Wills saw potential in me and that if I kept working hard I too could be a Honors member. The rest of freshman year, I worked hard and made it my goal to be in the Honors Guitar Ensemble.

Sophomore year came and it was my time to audition for a place in the Honors Group; I played a song that I had to learn in less than two weeks and it was not fully in my hands. I performed it in front of the advanced guitar class, I messed up quite a bit and I become nervous. I felt I didn’t do so great and that I would not be a part of the Honors Group, my heart sunk and I thought I had failed; but the following week, Ms. Wills invited to the Honors Group meeting and it was there I was “inducted” into the Honors Group and given my very own Honors Guitar (which I still have today). The excitement, the accomplishment, the happiness, I felt could not be described, I had made it into the 8 player Honors Guitar Ensemble. Aside from having advanced guitar class, Honors practice was held twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays; so, this meant learning songs for Advanced and songs for Honors. This was a bit challenging for me at first, especially because the Honors songs required me to play in lower positions I was not yet used to on the guitar. The more I practiced, the better I got; the better I got, the more I performed. I was playing solos, duets, ensembles, all for audiences ranging from 2 to 100.

Performing with the Honors Group has been such a memorable experience for me; playing and making music with friends for others to enjoy. With the Honors Group, we have played at various events such as Scicon Wildflower BBQ, Art Museum Show, Lindsay Theatre, Farmer’s Market, CMEA Regional and State competitions, Visalia’s Dia De los Ninos, Porterville Committee Dinner at Veteran’s Memorial; all of these events we played and people enjoyed our music. Although I am not pursuing a major in music or guitar in college, knowing how to read music, play and perform, is something I am really glad I learned and I thank it all to my teacher Nancy Wills. Anytime I feel depressed or sad and need a little pick up, playing guitar and hearing the melodies I play come together puts me in a better mood. I do not regret ever joining the Guitar Program; music is definitely something I want my kids to be a part of. Music will forever hold a part of my life and I will pass it on to those around, especially those in dire need of it.