Let The Music Begin!
When the school buses rolled up to the front doors of Walt Whitman Elementary school on September 6, 2016, students saw something they had never seen before on their front porch: a string quartet welcoming them back to school! That was Whitman’s introduction to Accent Pontiac, a Social Change Through Music program, sponsored by Kirk in the Hills. Throughout the first semester, students experienced a number of musical events, including a trip to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and a week-long intensive Bucket Band workshop.

In January 2017, Accent Pontiac launched its Pilot Program, which consisted of three types of instruction: Bucket Band, Brass Class, and Community Time.

Approximately 85 students participated in the program during this Pilot year. In 2017-2018, Accent Pontiac will expand to include additional students at Whitman and in 2018-19, it plans to add an additional elementary school. Long-range plans involve all schools in the Pontiac School District.

A Note from Artistic/Program Director Tina Rowan
What a year this has been for Accent Pontiac and the students at Walt Whitman Elementary School! This year, we served 85 students in bucket band, 30 students in brass class, and 8 students in community time. In this year of learning music skills - rhythm, pitch, form, and embouchure - our students also learned life skills. They learned respect - for their instruments, for their teachers, and for themselves. They learned to cooperate with one another - as a musical ensemble is not complete without each person and part. They learned to be active contributors - taking initiative to create words to their songs, play solos, and compose their own pieces. Our kids are amazing! I truly believe that Accent Pontiac is making a positive impact in the lives of the students at Whitman Elementary School. Thank you for your support of our program and students.

“I have been involved in many of the Kirk’s efforts to help children in Pontiac over the years, but all of this pales in comparison to our new venture to engage these kids in a more sustained and transformational way through Accent Pontiac.” – John King, Kirk in the Hills Elder

“I am thankful that Ms. Tina lets me be in the Accent Pontiac after school program.” – Kiara, Student
A Year in Review - Program Highlights

Field Trips
Our 2nd grade bucket band students enjoyed two field trips to Orchestra Hall in Detroit this year: a Detroit Symphony Orchestra education concert and the Sphinx Honors Concert.

“The kids at Whitman love Accent Pontiac. We are so thankful that you do what you do.” - Lisa Dreasky, Whitman Staff

Intersession Workshops
Accent Pontiac led week-long intensive music workshops during the two Pontiac School District Intersession weeks. Both weeks ended in a school-wide performance, open to family and community members.

Student Performances
As part of our philosophy, we schedule frequent performances for our students to showcase their progress. In addition to the performances during the intersession weeks, our bucket band students performed during lunch on Count Day, and our brass and bucket band students performed at the Let the Music Begin Auction at Kirk in the Hills. Students also performed for the kindergarten and first grade classes. Upcoming events include an End of Year showcase and a performance at Kirk in the Hills.

Guest Performances
As part of developing a musically-minded community and creating excitement for our program, Accent Pontiac brought in guest musicians to perform for the students on the first day of school, Count Day, and the Whitman Winterfest.

Just For Parents
So your child is in the Bucket Band and has begun to play the trumpet or euphonium.

What can you do to help?
First of all, this is an exciting opportunity! You can share that excitement by listening and asking questions about the things your child is learning.
- Ask to hear what pieces the class is working on.
- Ask about new skills they are learning.
- Ask about how they practice older skills.
- Talk about the instrument with your child.
- Encourage respectful treatment of it.
- If you play an instrument, get it out!
- Share your experiences – old and new.
- Attend or watch performances and discuss them.
- Talk about practicing and working toward improvement.
- Set aside special times to praise your child.
- Notice when (s)he is concentrating and trying hard.
- Most importantly, be your child’s biggest fan.

“Tina Rowan, Artistic/Program Director
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For more information:
www.accentpontiac.org
www.facebook.com/accentpontiac
www.vimeo.com/accentpontiac

“My son always comes home talking about how much he loves the Accent Pontiac program. Thank you for getting him involved!” – Alishia Jones, Parent

“I am so happy that my child, De’Onnie, has the chance to be part of Accent Pontiac. I see great things happening for this program!” – Ebony Simms Peoples, Parent

Upcoming Events

June 23, 2pm: End of Year Showcase
June 23: Showcase Celebration
June 25, 10:15am: Performance at Kirk in the Hills
July 24-28: Summer Program