Without skipping a beat...
On September 25, Accent Pontiac launched its second year of programming! This year, we are serving approximately 170 students during our in-school and after-school programming. In-school bucket band is offered twice per week; Performance Bucket Band is offered twice per week after school; Introductory Brass is offered twice per week after school; and Intermediate Brass is offered four days per week after school. We look forward to presenting performances and taking our students on field trips throughout this year.

I chose to keep my child at Walt Whitman Elementary School this year because it’s the only school in the area with the Accent Pontiac music program. – Accent Pontiac Parent

A note from our director, Tina Rowan
Accent Pontiac, an El Sistema-inspired social change through music program, is not the first program of its kind. Our students are part of a large network of students in similar programs around the country and world. While no two El Sistema programs are exactly the same, they all work towards the same goal: providing opportunities for success and bringing joy to the lives of youth in impoverished areas through the use of music.

This summer, I was able to meet teachers, staff, and students from other programs at the National Take a Stand Symposium in Los Angeles, California. Many programs have been running for over 10 years and it was easy to see how these programs are positively affecting children’s lives. The students I met were passionate, motivated, team-players that wanted to be involved in the conversations about these programs. The students I met are leaders that will make a positive impact on the world. For more information on the El Sistema mission, visit their website www.elsistemasusa.org

While our students have only been playing their instruments for less than a year, I can envision them as part of this amazing group in future years. I already see this leadership beginning to shine and develop in several of our students. I am so excited to continue to make music with our children, and help them develop into strong, compassionate adults.

It is incredible to see how much our students have done in so little time. I am excited to know that this is only the beginning of what we hope will bear fruit for many years in our community. – Fernando, Kirk in the Hills Pastor for Missional Renewal

Staff update
Four new staff members have joined Accent Pontiac’s team this year: Jim Territo as lead introductory brass teacher; Greg Lubbers as lead intermediate brass teacher; Chris Jackson as site coordinator; and Patricia Franks as school liaison. Find out more about our new staff members at accentpontiac.org. We are thrilled that all of our staff members from last year are continuing on Accent Pontiac’s team.

We’re officially 501(c)(3) approved! Please go to our website for information on how to donate.
Program Highlights
June 24: End of Year Showcase
All Accent Pontiac bucket band and brass students performed at an End of Year assembly for the Walt Whitman school community, family members, Pontiac community members, and Kirk in the Hills members.

June 26: Performance at Kirk in the Hills
A select group of Accent Pontiac bucket band students performed for the welcome reception of Rev. Fernando Rodriguez, Pastor for Missional Renewal at Kirk in the Hills.

July 24 - 28: Summer Program
Nineteen Accent Pontiac students participated in a weeklong full-day summer program at Kirk in the Hills. Each day, students took classes in bucket band, brass, movement, and creative composition. At the end of the week, students performed what they had learned in the summer program for their families and Pontiac and Kirk community members.

September 5: First Day of School
The Motor City Brass Quintet played at Walt Whitman as students and families arrived to school on the first day.

September 10: Kirk in the Hills Homecoming Picnic
A group of Accent Pontiac bucket band students performed at the Kirk in the Hills Homecoming picnic. After the performance, our students and bucket band teacher invited family members and Kirk members to join them in the bucket band!

Listening is Key
Listening with purpose is an important part of appreciating and understanding music. One common practice for addressing this foundational skill in Bucket Band is “Call and Response.” The teacher or leader calls out a pattern, such as, “boop beedy boop boop” in a steady rhythm of four beats. The children then collectively repeat the pattern exactly as they heard it in the same steady rhythm of four beats. Next, the teacher varies the pattern slightly (“beedy boop beedy boop”), and again, the children repeat the pattern exactly as they heard it.

Many patterns are “called” and the children “respond” by repeating the same pattern. Very often, children will be asked to repeat the pattern alone, and they take turns until all have had a chance to respond to the teacher’s pattern. The activity moves quickly, so there is no time for attention to stray. In this way, children learn to focus upon the teacher and the sounds they are hearing.

Once the children can verbally repeat the patterns they hear, they are ready to use drumsticks and buckets, rather than their voices, to repeat the patterns. They have quickly learned that it all begins with careful listening! Look for listening activities and games to play with your child in Accent Pontiac’s next newsletter!

October 25: Detroit Symphony Orchestra Field Trip
October 26: Trunk or Treat Pontiac Performance
October 28: Performance: Flagstar Strand Theatre
November 14: Introductory Brass Class Launch
December 4-8: Immersion Workshop
December 19: Parents Showcase

For more information:
Tina Rowan, Artistic/Program Director | e: trowan@accentpontiac.org | p: (734) 846-2159