**Local Hero makes a joyful Noise**

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Kim Butorac, founder of Music of the Heart Organization, and owner of Premier Charter Network, Inc., celebrates the launching of her first music school for youth in a remote village of Haiti called L'Asile. Founded and established in 2011, Music of the Heart, a Christian based Nonprofit, assists local children in Haiti in learning various instruments such as the clarinet, trumpet, saxophone, percussion, and string. The primary areas of focus are the more remote villages of the South Peninsula. As a 501c3 tax-exempt organization, Music of the Heart assists and supports in the establishment and maintenance of music programs throughout this region.

“To see the joy on the faces of the children,” says Butorac, “and having an eight year-old play a clarinet solo after just a six months, or to see the musicians in the new band uniforms, is a joy without measure.” Starting with a small cadre of supporters who shared her vision and commitment, Butorac has been able to work with the locals in providing music, music lessons, instruments, band uniforms, and other necessities. Music of the Heart also provides food, clothing, basic hygienic needs, and school supplies to the children and their families who participate in the program.

Music of the Heart is built on the motto “changing lives through music”, realizing that the power of music is transformative. With a small group of children, ages 7-15, Music of the Heart has supplied local teacher jobs, instruments, band uniforms and a pride and dedication that are priceless.

It is operating on the same premise as the Venezuelan model “El Sistema” and Opus 118 the Harlem School of Music, that participating in musical activities alone and in groups is life changing for young people, especially children in impoverished areas. Not only is music life changing, but by exposing a child to beauty, and putting the ability to create that beauty within their hands a child’s spirit and outlook are changed hopefully forever.

Haiti has a long history of political unrest, extreme poverty, and earthquakes. In addition, the super storm Sandy has had a tremendous and devastating influence upon this area. And yet, children endure. Providing them the gift of music, not only under girds them, but inspires the teachers, donors, and locals who become involved in this process and ultimately passionate about providing Music of the Heart to the heart of Haiti’s children. Some of the students walk two hours each way to school every day and just to practice together. It changes at least a part of their life from survival to thriving. The instruments become a badge of courage.

The challenge is to secure instruments and supplies to meet the demands of the children who want to beat a drum, blow a horn, or learn how to play a violin. The program relies on donations and in-kind contributions to make certain that supplies and instruments arrive at their pre-determined destination. When possible, no child is turned away, the only limitation is the amount of instruments available, donations to support the program and volunteer time.

In Venezuela, the program was started with 11 children, and has grown to be recognized throughout the world, playing in Carnegie Hall. There are no limits to what can be accomplished with the passion of an individual like Kim Butorac. We salute this local hero and the joyful noise that she is bringing to the children of Haiti. Supporters, donors, and partners can contact Kim Butorac at 612-618-5669,

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