

Stayton Christian building a band, piece by piece

Christian School hopes to introduce new class this fall

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STAYTON — It's time for Stayton Christian School to begin something new.

That certain something, said Stayton Christian Administrator and Principal Tom Truka, is a concert band.

The school has participated in choral singing and hand bells for music classes in the past, but a band, said Truka, is an entirely novel idea for them, aimed at diversifying the interests and skills of their students. Elective classes, such as the band class, are decided upon by the overall student and teacher interest. Many students were interested in the band idea, said Truka, so the school decided to implement the program.

In September, rehearsals will begin for children in grades four through eight, under the direction of George Callen, who has led numerous youth bands in the area over the last several years. Callen has taught music to numerous students throughout the area during the last several years with significant success at band competitions. And while Truka said that the Stayton Christian School's band will not compete this year, Callen is "very credentialed." According to Truka, the band program will be an elective class for students, and he strongly encourages as many fourth through eighth graders as possible to participate.

"There's enough data to support the educational importance of music in helping kids learn," Truka said of the impending program. "It challenges kids to use their thinking skills, and it creates a desire or need for discipline, which all translates into the academic classroom."

As of late, with the exception of three larger instruments, students will be required to provide their own instruments to play. Children and parents have the option of renting to own, a concept that Callen encourages, and the band will require some sort of financial commitment.

"We've opened this opportunity to include home-schooled students," he said, "and the budget strength isn't enough to support the financial obligations of the full program. That's why the children must assume responsibility for the instruments."

The school is currently working toward a community fundraiser, not yet scheduled, to help with the financial burden of buying equipment and other expenses.

"We've got some volunteers to donate instruments, but we don't yet have any money

donations,” Truka said. “We’re looking and asking for as much community support as possible.”

Callen said that band practice will begin Sept. 4, and will meet twice per week for each class. Students will start by developing rudimentary music skills, and move to arranged work from “classical canon to boogie blues to marches,” Callen said.

“I’m already excited,” Callen said. “I’ve got such wonderful kids, and I respect them so much.”

And while Stayton Christian’s new band doesn’t plan to compete in the near future, but instead work more on coordination, Truka is also excited about beginning the program.

“The kids will build self-esteem, and will discover that the rewards are huge,” Truka said. “We’re trusting God for the very best.”

Truka encourages anyone in the community who has questions or is interesting in making any sort of donation to the program to contact him at (503) 769-7578.