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CMA Makes Association's Largest Music Education Donation to Date

More Than \$1 Million from 2009 CMA Music Festival to Benefit Music Education Programs for Nashville Students

December 9, 2009

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – CMA is donating \$1,066,632 to benefit music education programs for Nashville's 75,000 public school students from 2009 CMA Music Festival through the "Keep the Music Playing" campaign.

To date, CMA has now donated \$3,312,053 in support of music education in public schools. This money has been used to build music labs and purchase more than 2,500 instruments, and much needed supplies in Metro Nashville Public Schools through a partnership with the Nashville Alliance for Public Education.

The total also includes an endowment gift for the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's "Words and Music" program, which assists language arts and music teachers with classroom instruction in the basics of songwriting. The amount also includes a donation in July to cover travel costs for 40 students from W.O. Smith/ Nashville Community School of Music to attend a Country-themed music event at the White House, hosted by President Obama and the First Lady.

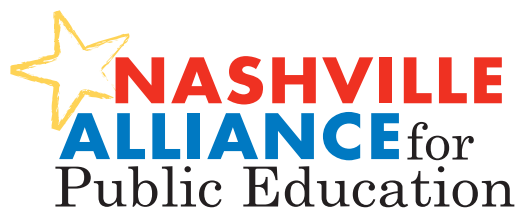
Kellie Pickler was on hand to make the check presentation and introduce some of the student performers.

"I'm so thrilled to be part of a community that gives back and being able to help put instruments in the schools is so important," she said. "And it's extra special that we're doing this at Christmas time, so the kids in Whoville can ring their jing tingers, blow their floo floobas, and whack their Who wonkers, or play whatever they most enjoy playing here in Music City."

"CMA Music Festival is for the kids," said Steve Moore, Chairman Elect of CMA's volunteer Board of Directors. "Every artist I have ever worked with started their career with a dream. Many Nashville students have dreams of their own and it's our responsibility to nurture these young performers and provide them with the resources and opportunities so that one day, they may be head lining concerts halls on their own."

CMA announced the donation during a special concert event Tuesday night at the Schermerhorn Symphony Center to announce the "Keep the Music Playing All-Stars," representing the best elementary, middle, and high school performance groups selected from 137 Metro Nashville Public Schools. The event was presented by the Nashville Alliance for Public Education with CMA and the Nashville Symphony. Prior to the concert, Ingram Industries and SunTrust sponsored a private reception for the board of the Country Music Association, Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, Nashville Alliance, Nashville Music Council and Education committee, and Nashville Symphony.

"We are proud of the 'Keep the Music Playing' program's success, and we want to celebrate it with all the people who have helped make it happen," said Pam Garrett, Executive Director of the Nashville Alliance. "This concert will put on display the many musical talents of Metro Nashville's public school students, and it is direct proof of how students can reach their potential when provided with the necessary resources. A million thanks to the Country Music Association for putting our public school music program on the right track to be one of the best in the world."



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The presentation also featured the Mayor of Nashville Karl Dean, Director of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools Dr. Jesse Register, and the President/CEO of the Nashville Symphony Alan Valentine.

“CMA is putting instruments in the hands of our students,” said Mayor Dean. “It’s proven that children who participate in the arts do better in school and are more likely to graduate. Year after year, CMA’s support for music education in Nashville is helping us achieve our ultimate goal in Music City, and that’s to provide all of our students with the opportunity to succeed.”

“This type of community support is so important to our students,” Register said. “Without the help of the CMA and Nashville Alliance, many of our students simply would not have musical instruments. This partnership is opening doors and exposing students to interests and talents that might otherwise go unnoticed. And for that we are extremely grateful.”

Valentine, added, “Music education is at the very core of the mission of the Nashville Symphony, and we work in partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools, the Country Music Hall of Fame, the W.O. Smith Community Music School, and many others on a nearly daily basis to help improve music education in our schools and to provide opportunities to the young people of our community. One of the most significant and wonderful things about this donation, is that it will provide far reaching support for music education, benefiting not only our school music programs, but also the many programs made possible through these important community partnerships.”

Artists perform at CMA Music Festival for free. To show its appreciation for their dedication and time, CMA donates half the net proceeds from the Festival to charity on their behalf. When the program began in 2001, it was known as CMA’s “Cause for Celebration!” From 2001-2005 CMA contributed more than \$800,000 to more than 100 worthy causes. In 2006, the CMA Artist Relations Committee led by Kix Brooks of Brooks & Dunn, decided to channel those financial resources into a single cause: music education. Music makes a difference. Last year, Metro public schools’ performing arts students had a 98 percent graduation rate.

“Every penny donated by CMA Music Festival directly impacts Nashville area public school students whether through the instruments provided or the enhancement of music education programs such as ‘Words & Music,’” said Moore.

CMA also has a commitment to recognizing excellence and is pleased to announce the “Keep the Music Playing All-Stars” (as selected by Metro Nashville Public Schools Coordinator of Performing Arts Carol Crittenden): Cumberland Elementary Percussion Ensemble, Hillwood High School Percussion Ensemble, Hume-Fogg High School Silver Jazz Band, John Overton High School Wind Ensemble, McGavock High School Capital Sounds, Mt. View Renaissance Kids, Nashville School of the Arts Swing Thing, Oliver Middle School Advanced Concert Band, and Pearl-Cohn High School Chorus.

“The musical groups that are represented at ‘Keep the Music Playing’ concert are performing at exceptional levels because of great teachers, wonderful students and the instruments donated by the Country Music Association,” Crittenden said. “Without the instrument donations, the quantity and quality of these programs would be diminished. The partnership that we share with the CMA and the Nashville Alliance has given us the ability to positively impact the lives of more students than ever before.”



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The Nashville Alliance for Public Education was established in 2002 by a group of corporate and civic leaders with the goal of improving public education for Nashville's school children. Working in tandem with the Metro Nashville Public School Board and the Director of Schools, the nonprofit group identifies areas of need and channels private community resources toward those programs and schools, which serve Metro Nashville's more than 75,000 public school students in 137 Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools.

"Every student should have the opportunity to receive music education," said Moore. "CMA continues to work towards that goal. With the help of Mayor Dean, Jesse Register, the staff at Metro Schools, and Pam Garrett and the Nashville Alliance, as well as all the artists who perform and all the fans that purchase tickets for the Festival, we are moving closer to fulfilling that goal."

Today's announcement is the latest development in CMA's ongoing support for music education. In September 2008, CMA announced a \$1 million dollar endowment, spread over a five year period in \$200,000 annual increments (2008-2012), to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum for their "Words and Music" program. "Words and Music" is designed to assist language arts and music teachers with classroom instruction in the basics of writing song lyrics. Teachers are provided with lesson plans, including a 10-song CD and accompanying lyric sheets licensed especially for the program. The Museum pairs students with volunteer professional songwriters who add melody to their compositions.

In July, CMA contributed more than \$11,000 from "Keep the Music Playing" to cover travel expenses for 40 students from W.O. Smith/Nashville Community School of Music to travel to Washington D.C. for a Country Music-themed event at the White House featuring Alison Krauss and Union Station, Brad Paisley, and Charley Pride. CMA Music Festival is an unparalleled music experience celebrating America's music. The event brings the community together with fans from around the world.

Now in its 39th year, CMA Music Festival will be held on Thursday through Sunday, June 10-13, in Downtown Nashville. Dubbed the "crown jewel of Country Music Festivals" by USA Today and winner of the International Entertainment Buyers Association's 2004, 2006, and 2008 LIVE! Award for Festival of the Year, the event features four jam-packed days of music with concerts, autograph signings, family activities, and more.

Tickets for 2010 CMA Music Festival are available now. To order, call 1-800-CMA-FEST (262-3378); visit www.CMAfest.com to download an order form to fax or mail; visit www.ticketmaster.com to buy online or charge-by-phone at 1-800-745-3000. Prices do not include applicable handling fees. Ticket prices are subject to change without notice. All sales are final and non-refundable.

For up-to-the-minute information about tickets, travel information, schedules, artist appearances, and more, visit www.CMAfest.com and sign up for the CMA Exclusive e-news.