

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Upper Darby students perform at 22nd annual Arts and Education Gala

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UPPER DARBY » The 22nd annual Gala of the Upper Darby Arts and Education Foundation (UDAEF) was held Jan. 25, before a “sold out” audience at the Upper Darby Performing Arts Center in Drexel Hill.

Hundreds of students of all ages performed and drew eight different standing ovations during the concert. To the apparent delight of the huge audience, Upper Darby District Music Supervisor Barbara Benglian was saluted for her 50 years of teaching excellence. The finale featured over 800 students on stage.

Founded by Joseph Batory, Upper Darby’s Superintendent of Schools from 1984-1999, the Gala has now raised more than \$2.5 million, all of which has been returned to Upper Darby teachers via over 1200 mini-grants for educational purposes which might not have otherwise been financially possible. It is estimated that over the past 22 years that 250,000 Upper Darby young people have benefited from this Foundation. There are over seventy languages spoken by families in the Upper Darby School District.

Added to this, the annual Gala continues to bring the magical joy of music, the universal language, to many thousands of Upper Darby residents.

TCF provides support for Delco families in need

Applications are being accepted for three grants supported by The Community’s Foundation (TCF) to provide



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Over 800 students in the Upper Darby School District crammed the stage for the grand finale of the Upper Darby Arts and Education Foundation Gala last Saturday night.

“just that little bit extra” to Delaware County residents in times of need.

The TCF grants available for Delaware County individuals include the Margaret Lindgren and Kathleen Pastor Grants that provide assistance to single mothers experiencing financial hardship because of an illness in the family or a loss a loved one. The fund was established by the family behind EVCO industries in Holmes, in memory of Margaret Lindgren and Kathleen Pastor, two beloved mothers known for their generosity and outreach to others.

A past recipient of the Lindgren/Pastor Grant helped a Delaware County mother of two elementary-school-age kids who faced a large bill resulting from major water damage to her basement. Her husband had recently died from a massive heart attack, and the grant helped alleviate some added stress during the 2019 holi-

days.

Another grant is the Pay-It-Forward/Sunshine Grant that assists people with health costs that result from an unexpected event, such as an accident or a house fire. TCF created these grants, in partnership with community members, after encountering many people in the community facing uncovered health care costs because of such circumstances.

A past recipient is a local business owner fell 40 feet off scaffolding at work, suffering a spinal cord injury that left him in a wheelchair with limited use of his limbs. His insurance did not cover the full costs of his treatment, and the grant went toward his mounting health care bills.

The third grants available are the Play for the A’s Grants which assist the families and loved ones of Alzheimer’s and dementia patients, most commonly by sending professional aides to provide them

with much-needed breaks. Family caregivers are given the gift of time, typically for outings such as dinner with friends or attending religious services. This program was created by Jef Hewlings, head coach of the boys lacrosse team at Strath Haven High School in Wallingford. Just recently, the grant allowed a Delaware County grandmother to take a break from the stress of 24/7 caregiving of her husband to spend quality time with her grandchildren at a holiday show.

To qualify for any of these three TCF grants, recipients must live in Delaware County. Awards are decided on a case-by-case basis and are designed to provide “just that little bit extra,” in money or support, to people in times of need. Anyone can fill out an application at <https://tcf-helps.org/grants-for-individuals/>. Applications are welcome from the person in need or a friend, family



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Johnathan Kolleh, left, and Carissa Battle, right, of Drexel Hill, each plant a big kiss on their daughter Gabby Battle, a fifth grade student at Aronimink Elementary School, after her excellent performance playing the flute at the 22nd Annual Upper Darby Arts and Education Gala held at the Upper Darby Performing Arts Center Saturday night. Little sister Skylar Battle is all smiles after seeing her big sister Gabby shine.

member or other advocate who knows of a deserving recipient.

“All three of these funds were founded by residents of Delaware County. They saw a need in their community; they raised money to meet that need; and now they are giving grants to local individuals or families in their time of need. Civic engagement is powerful. When neighbors help neighbors, the whole community flourishes,” said Heather Finnegan, TCF’s executive director.

Each of the three programs operates as a program of The Community’s Foundation (TCF). TCF offers administrative and fiduciary services to a variety of community-minded groups across Delaware County as a means to empower everyday citizens to take philanthropy into their own hands. For more information about these grants, contact The Community’s Foundation at info@TCFhelps.org or call 610-461-6571.

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