



HPSD students perform live on stage at first ever AXEtremafest event in Kinuso

For immediate release
May 25, 2010

KINUSO, AB – Ever wonder what it would be like to step onto a real rock 'n' roll stage for the very first time and perform in front of live audience?

Well, that's exactly what three talented students from High Prairie School Division (HPSD) will be doing next month when they compete at the Supernova Battle of The Bands city finals taking place at the Hydeaway in Edmonton June 19, 2010.

The students – Meagan Houle and Madison Laliberte of Georges P. Vanier School in Donnelly as well as Steven McDonald of Kinuso School – earned the distinctive privilege and honour to compete in the provincial capital next month after emerging as the top three performers at HPSD's first ever AXEtremafest competition, held May 13, 2010 at Kinuso School.

"It went extremely well," says event organizer Ross MacDonald, teacher/programmer at Kinuso Outreach School. "AXE Music in Edmonton provided the stage, lighting and sound equipment and our students provided the talent. They (students) all did a fantastic job of performing on stage!"



Steven McDonald of Kinuso School.



Meagan Houle of G. P. Vanier School in Donnelly.

The competition included a talented cross-section of student performers from several local communities. Representing Kinuso School was McDonald (on 12 string electric acoustic and six-string electric guitar) as well as Social Enemies – a band consisting of Eli Beaver on vocals/guitar, Clinton Beaver on bass/vocals, Brendon Hunt on drums and Marc Delorme on guitar/vocals.

They were joined on stage by G.P. Vanier School performers Leah Pettyjohn and Jamie Russett (vocals and keyboard), Laliberte (guitar/vocals), Chelsea Doran (keyboard/vocals), Houle (keyboard/vocals) and Kaitlin Freeman (guitar/vocals) and High Prairie Cory Lamouche (electric guitar) from Prairie View Outreach School.

Taking first place overall at the competition for Donnelly was Houle, whose exceptional performance earned her the Canada Day opening day spot at Saw Fest in Slave Lake on July 1, 2010. McDonald and Laliberte

have also been invited to perform at Saw Fest.

All three HPSD students have also been invited to perform at the North Country Fair, hosted by the Lesser Slave Lake North Country Community Association from June 18 to 20.

"These events represent an excellent opportunity for our students to showcase their skills and receive additional on-stage exposure," says MacDonald, whose hard work behind the scenes to bring AXEtremafest to Kinuso stems from a personal love for music and the music industry.

“I was looking for deals on guitars and drums for the school on the AXE Music website when I came across their offer of \$250,000 dollars worth of free music equipment (including sound tech personnel) to any school wanting to host a Battle of the Bands event,” he recalls. “That’s when I said myself, wow, this would be the chance of a lifetime for many of our students. So, I picked up the telephone and called Edmonton.”

Upon confirmation of the venue by AXE Music, MacDonald took it one step further by approaching local music industry professionals (including 92.7 Lake FM morning DJ Paul Allan in Slave Lake) and Ian Cameron (owner of Cameron Productions and a key organizer of Slave Lake’s annual Saw Fest event) to see if they would be interested in supporting the competition as judges.

“Having actual music industry professionals present as judges was definitely a bonus for the kids,” MacDonald says, adding that it gave students the local attention they deserved. “I’ve always been passionate about giving kids the opportunity to demonstrate their individual talents and skills and this venue was a perfect fit.”

He hopes the recent success of the Axetremefest competition at Kinuso School and its growing popularity among students paves the way for the start of a new and exciting era of music in HPSD.

“I would definitely like to see this become an annual event which can be hosted by our schools in Donnelly, High Prairie and Slave Lake from year to year,” MacDonald says. “Believe me, they (students) will be expecting something similar next year.”

MacDonald envisions the event possibly becoming a split show with an HPSD Idol-type of gig mixed in with AXEtrementefest.

“I really think there’s an excellent opportunity here for us in High Prairie School Division to do something truly special and unique to promote and recognize the incredible talents of our students.”

The top school to emerge from next month’s Battle of the Bands event in Edmonton receives \$10,000 worth of equipment courtesy of Axe Music and moves on to compete at the National Battle of The Bands event sponsored by Supernova. The winner is determined by Internet voting.

Special thanks go out to everyone who helped make Axetremefest a success.

-30-

***For more information please contact HPSD No. 48 Superintendent Mrs. Laura Poloz
or HPSD Communications Officer Kevin Laliberte at 780-523-3337.***



Madison Laliberte of G.P. Vanier School.