



## RMSS senior high band students take ownership of Coffeehouse project

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*SLAVE LAKE, AB* – Teamwork, leadership, citizenship and dedication. They're four words which accurately describe the outstanding work of grades 10, 11 and 12 band students at Roland Michener Secondary School (RMSS) in Slave Lake as part of their annual Coffeehouse project.

“Coffeehouse is a student-driven project, whereby students learn about the production end of music,

including everything from marketing, stage management, artist arrangements, decorating and the concession, to front-of-house management, lighting, sound management and sound checks,” says RMSS Band Teacher Ellen Criss.

“They (students) coordinate it from start to finish. It's their show and they take ownership of it.”

This year's project involved the coordination of two separate Coffeehouse events, the first of which was held on March 28, 2010 as part of a fundraising venture to generate proceeds and awareness in response to the devastating earthquake which struck Haiti this past January.

More than a dozen students from the school joined forces with the community on that evening by helping to raise in excess of \$600 in financial support for the Yéle Haiti Foundation – a registered non-profit charitable organization in the USA which is inspiring change in Haiti through programs in education, sports, the arts and environment.

“With the support of the community, we managed to raise \$617 for Yéle Haiti through admission, concession sales and our bake sale,” says RMSS senior high student Alison Deas, who coordinated the successful event with the help of fellow students Georgia Keaveny and Jennie Hunter. “Overall, we were really pleased with how well the evening went.”



James Turnbull on guitar and Ashley Scribner



**Alison Deas**

Senior high students also played a number of musical pieces at the Coffeehouse function, which is traditionally set up as an informal evening for band students to get together and showcase their amazing musical and vocal abilities live on stage.

A second Coffeehouse event entitled “All You Need Is Love” was held at the school on the evening of June 2, 2010 in celebration of music from the 1960s era and proved to be sweet music to the ears of everyone in attendance.

“We had a wonderful response from the community,” says Criss, adding that the last performance of the evening consisted of a medley of “Sixties Superhits” in addition to “What a Wonderful World” and several popular songs from the Beatles.

Key individuals who helped contribute to the success of the Coffeehouse events this year included: Nick Borchert, James Turnbull, Chelsea Mitchell, Alison Deas, Megan Johnston, Ivan Snedden, Neil Deas, Ellen Criss and Eric Williams.

Proceeds raised from the Coffeehouse projects each year are traditionally used to support the RMSS band program. Criss notes that fundraising is, of course, secondary to the goal of students successfully completing the project by taking on the various committee responsibilities.

“All students take part in the project, whether it involves performing on stage, set up, clean up or running errands.”

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***For more information please contact RMSS Band Teacher Ellen Criss at 780-849-3064 or HPSD Communications Officer Kevin Laliberte at 780-523-3337.***