



east bay community action program
THE BRIDGE TO SELF-RELIANCE

PRESS RELEASE

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Newport 4th Graders Learn to Play and Appreciate the Guitar

Fourth graders at the Claiborne Pell Elementary School in Newport who participate in The Guitar Club have had the opportunity this year to learn to play the guitar, perform, and attend performances by professional musicians. The Guitar Club is an after school program offered by the Newport Family and Child Opportunity Zone, a division of East Bay Community Action Program (EBCAP).

Support for The Guitar Club in the form of a donation of 10 child-sized acoustic guitars came this year from the Newport Festivals Foundation. “These guitars are a significant upgrade from the motley collection that students have used in the past and have really aided in their ongoing development as musicians,” said Mark McKenna, Family Service Coordinator, who co-facilitates the group along with Don Farias, Parent and Program Facilitator. Year-long after school instruction and practice culminated in a performance by the club members for the Pell School community and the public this year.

Through the generosity of the Park Theatre and John McLaughlin, Guitar Club participants attended a concert that was part of the final tour of the legendary guitarist John McLaughlin and the Mahavishnu Orchestra at the Park Theatre in Cranston in November. And in April, club members, through the generosity of the Narrows Center for the Arts in Fall River, attended a show featuring the award winning blues guitarist Ana Popovic and her band. “Ana graciously met with all the students after

the show for photographs, an autograph session, CD giveaway and she even allowed some of the students to play her guitar,” noted McKenna.

NFCOZ, a division of East Bay Community Action Program, is designed to expand learning opportunities for students. Out of school time programs offered by NFCOZ are supported by funding from the 21st Century Community Learning Center program, administered by the Rhode Island Department of Education. More than 650 students participate in programs offered before school, after school, in the evening, during school vacation weeks, and in the summer each year through this program. EBCAP provides a wide array of services to residents of the East Bay including Medical, Behavioral Health, Dental, Head Start, Family Support and Youth Services. For more information please visit www.ebcap.org.



Guitar Club members from the NFCOZ after school program at Pell Elementary School in Newport show their thanks to Newport Festivals Foundation for the donation of ten child-sized guitars. From left: Giovoni Mello, Nory Whitaker, Jack Griffiths, Jessica Gomez, Ronan O’Mahoney, Zoe Forgue, Mia Hanson, Kimberly DeMedeiros, and Kira Parsons.



Following a concert at the Narrows Center for the Arts in Fall River, MA, Guitar Club members met Blues Guitarist Ana Popovic (center). In photo from left: Daysi Gomez, Jessica Gomez, Ronan O'Mahoney, Mia Hanson, Ana Popovic, Giovoni Mello, Kira Parsons, Zoe Fogue, Kathleen Medeiros, Hannah Pereira, Kimberly DeMedeiros, and Nory Whitaker.