

LEARNING

Peace Train pulls into the school station

POMFRET — It isn't often that the students of Pomfret Community School are treated to a high energy Afro-pop-jazz fusion concert by Grammy-nominated artists. Nor is it often that they have the opportunity to interact with Nelson Mandela's cultural ambassadors. Yet on Thursday, March 19, in an epic event sponsored by the Pomfret Community School PTO, students at the school did both.

South Africa's Sharon Katz and The Peace Train, a high-energy quintet that combines traditional African rhythms and harmonies with contemporary lyrics and hybrid pop music, made a huge splash and a lasting impression on the students at PCS. Katz and her crew literally rocked the school with two full-fledged rock concerts, culture and dance workshops, and an enduring message of peace that she imparted through personal stories and Zulu dance intertwined with her intoxicating South African-inspired music.

Katz, a white South African native, formed The Peace Train in 1993 in reaction to the racial separation laws of South Africa's racist Apartheid government. Originally, The Peace Train was truly a 14-car train that brought nearly 150 South African children of all races on a two-week singing tour of the country with the intention of breaking

down Apartheid barriers, healing deep-seeded wounds and celebrating Nelson Mandela's release from 27 years in prison. Katz's message of peace, equality and conflict resolution has since spread worldwide, from Johannesburg, to Israel, to inner-city Philadelphia, transported and punctuated by her uplifting and empowering music.

Working with the sixth and fourth grades at Pomfret Community School, Katz and her band shared South Africa's stories of inequality during Apartheid, taught songs from the Xhosa and Zulu languages, and even got students moving to the intricate steps of the Gumboot dance, which originated with the mine workers in the gold mines of South Africa. These students then performed in both of the band's afternoon concerts at the school.

"It was awesome!" said one sixth-grade participant. "I never knew dancing could be this fun! No one wanted it to end."

In addition to the very talented Katz, The Peace Train's dual concerts at PCS highlighted a bassist, a drummer and two highly engaging vocalists who also performed spell-binding Zulu dances in authentic costume. Contrary to the tradition of school assemblies, the band had the entire school, students and teachers alike, out of their seats,



Sharon Katz and The Peace Train perform at Pomfret Community School. Courtesy photos

dancing, singing and reveling in the Peace Train's universal message. Songs like "You're Terrific" and a Zulu-entitled number with lyrics meaning "I Am So Proud of You" empowered students not only to respect themselves and others, but also to realize that they, too, could make difference in the world. Judging from the record number of autograph requests after the performances, it was clear that The Peace Train's message and music resonated with students and staff, alike.

"It was really moving," said PTO

President Melissa Zahansky, "to see kids who don't necessarily engage in school assemblies completely lose their inhibitions and dance and sing. Sharon's music touched kids in a way that surprised kids and their teachers."

Brenda Bullied, a PTO director, added, "Our PTO works hard to raise the necessary funds to bring in quality enrichment programming, and it is incredibly rewarding to see such an instant and deeply felt response. There wasn't a single person in the room sitting still."

Herklots Scholarship established at QVCC

DANIELSON — The Quinebaug Valley Community College Foundation Inc. is pleased to announce the establishment of the W.H.G. Herklots Family Scholarship in the amount of \$50,000 by the estate of Susan D. Lillie.

Susan D. (LeGrende) Lillie lived in Sterling and graduated from Killingly High School with the Class of 1929. Lillie earned her way through Wheelock College, working as a governess, and taught for 44 years in the Hamilton-Wenham School System in Massachusetts. She was married to Rupert B. Lillie, a landscape architect, teacher and historian.

Lillie was a lifelong advocate for students. She was credited with establishing the Wenham Playground and taught the art of weaving on weekends to youth at the Wenham Historical Society. In retirement, Lillie spent time mentoring students with learning difficulties. It was her wish to support persevering students in northeast Connecticut who are pursuing academic degrees in fields of liberal arts and sciences at QVCC, especially those making notable progress despite significant personal obstacles.

The scholarship is established to honor her family, William H.G. Herklots, his wife Frances and children Adriaan, Robert and Betrix, who were residents of Brooklyn. Herklots and his wife edited and published the Windham

County Transcript newspaper for 30 years. Both received honors for their leadership in regional and local civic affairs. Brother Adriaan R. J. Herklots, Ph.D., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., was the successor publisher; Danielson Chamber of Commerce president and was instrumental in the establishment of QVCC.

The mission of the QVCC Foundation is to raise funds so that all residents of Northeastern Connecticut are provided the opportunity to attend QVCC regardless of income and to support educational excellence, technological advancement and professional development at the College.

For additional information, contact QVCC Director of College Development Monique C.K. Wolanin at (860) 412-7328.

School Menus

Woodstock Middle School

Monday, March 30: Cheeseburger with lettuce and tomato on wheat roll, Tater Tots, fruit, milk.
Tuesday, March 31: Chicken Caesar salad, dinner roll, fruit, milk.
Wednesday, April 1: Mozzarella sticks with marinara sauce, tossed salad, fruit, milk.
Thursday, April 2: American chop suey, green beans, fruit, milk.
Friday, April 3: Pizza, garden salad, fruit, milk.

Woodstock Elementary School

Monday, March 30: Hamburger on a roll, vegetable sticks and dip, fruit, milk.
Tuesday, March 31: Chicken Caesar salad, wheat roll, pudding, fruit, milk.
Wednesday, April 1: Mozzarella sticks with marinara sauce, tossed salad, fruit, milk.
Thursday, April 2: Ziti and meatballs, zucchini, low-fat cookie, fruit, milk.
Friday, April 3: Pizza, broccoli, fruit, milk.

Pomfret Community School

Monday, March 30: No school; Professional Development Day.
Tuesday, March 31: Chicken strips, chicken noodle soup, vegetable sticks, fresh fruit.
Wednesday, April 1: Taco salad with cheese, lettuce, tomato and salsa; wheat bread; fresh fruit.
Thursday, April 2: Cheese pizza, garden salad, fresh fruit, cookie.
Friday, April 3: Mozzarella sticks with dipping sauce, bread and butter, salad, fruit.

St. Mary's School

Monday, March 30: Hot dog in a bun, macaroni and cheese, corn, fruit, milk.
Tuesday, March 31: Ham grinders, chips, carrots, fruit, milk.
Wednesday, April 1: Breaded chicken, mashed potatoes, corn, fruit, milk.
Thursday, April 2: Grilled cheese, chicken noodle soup, crackers, fruit, milk.
Friday, April 3: Cheese or three-cheese pizza, salad, JELL-O, fruit, juice, milk.

Harvard H. Ellis Tech

Monday, March 30: Chicken and rice, vegetable blend, mixed fruit, milk.
Tuesday, March 31: Turkey or beef hot dog in a bun (2), oven-baked potatoes, pears, milk.
Wednesday, April 1: Pasta with meatballs, garden salad, mixed fruit, milk.
Thursday, April 2: Beef and cheese with lettuce and tomato in a tortilla (2), peaches, milk.
Friday, April 3: Cheese pizza, side salad, assorted fruit, milk.

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