

PSF Student Gives Back Through Music

Piano Santa Foundation student Otso Barron, 14, is a busy guy. He plays piano, soccer, enjoys backpacking and camping, and swims in the summer. He is also no stranger to volunteering in the community, spending time packaging food for the Oregon Food Bank. But last December, Otso took on a new volunteer challenge: he accompanied the Beaverton Intergenerational Women's Choir for a music performance at the Providence Center for Medically Fragile Children's Christmas Pageant.

The Center is a pediatric skilled nursing facility, providing 24-hour care to medically fragile young people ranging in age from infancy to 21 years. "I liked bringing music to the children that live a really hard life. It felt like I gave something personal to them."

Since Otso had never accompanied a solo performer before, much less a group of musicians, he was understandably nervous. "I had to constantly pay close attention to the choir, and make sure I was supporting them. I was not center stage, they were, and had to play accordingly." But, he says, the end result was worth it. "It was an



Otso Barron, age 14

amazing experience."

He worked closely with his piano teacher, Steve Aman, and the choir's director, Crystal Atkins, to prepare for the performance. That included extra piano lessons, as well as working with the choir to learn all the cues. He was given the pieces that the choir was singing about three weeks before the performance, and practiced their music almost every night leading up to the concert. He finally met with the choir for the first time during the warm up before the performance, where they went through the full program twice!

Otso credits PSF with helping to build up his skills and confidence.

"I feel like the program has given me more confidence in my piano skills, and confidence in performing live in front of people. Also, meeting with my mentor and sponsor, we end up having discussions about music that I otherwise probably wouldn't have."

And would he volunteer with organizations like the choir again? Definitely, Otso reports. "[They] invited me back to play with them in the spring, which I am looking forward to."

PSF Board Announces Annual Matching Gift Challenge

The PSF Board of Directors is excited to announce that they are matching all gifts made to PSF by May 31, 2017 up to a total of \$2,000!

Donations will help place a refurbished, tuned piano into a young student's home, and provide an inspirational program which includes mentorship, weekly practice logs, and multiple public performance opportunities throughout the year.

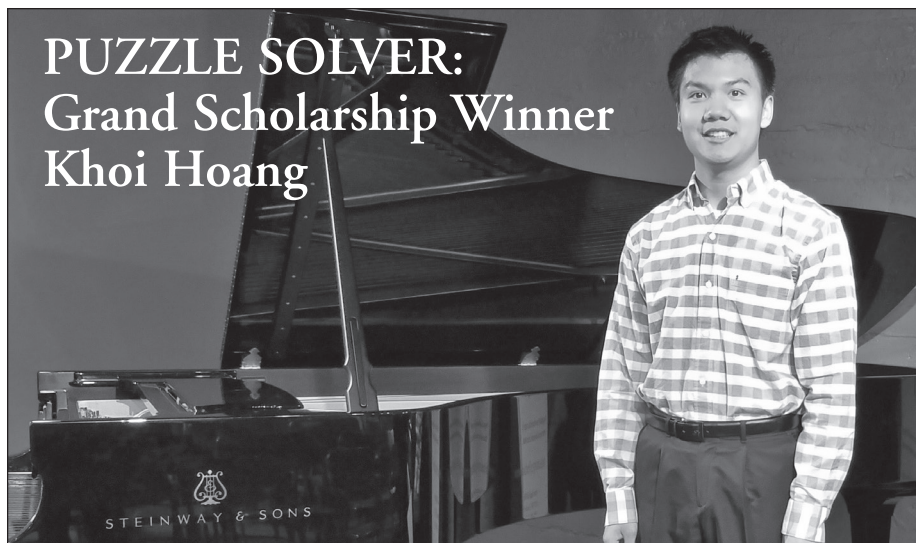
"I know, as a music educator, that the individual growth that happens through music education is transformative for

young students. Our small organization, with the generous support of our Board Members, volunteers and supporters, changes lives - and I'm proud to be part of it," says PSF Board President Claudine Elzey.

While the matching gift challenge lasts, gifts of any amount will be doubled to help young, aspiring piano students who have the motivation but not the resources. This is a great opportunity to make a huge impact in a young musician's life.

Use the enclosed envelope today to send your support for tomorrow's musicians!

PUZZLE SOLVER: Grand Scholarship Winner Khoi Hoang



2015 Grand Scholarship Winner Khoi Hoang at the 2017 PSF Spring Recital

Playing piano and violin isn't enough for 2015 PSF Grand Scholarship winner Khoi Hoang: he's also into "speedcubing." Developing that skill, solving the Rubik's Cube as fast as possible, has been one of his hobbies for the past two years. "I learned how to solve [the cube] from my cousin after his family moved to the U.S. from Vietnam about five years ago. He had brought a Rubik's Cube with him, and at the time I was amazed at how he could solve it."

It seems like Khoi has always been up for a challenge. At the young age of 4, he had his first informal piano lesson at the daycare that he had been attending since he was 3 months old. "I am still in touch with my first piano teacher. She was a nun and my babysitter," Khoi recalls. "My favorite memory when I first played piano was when she would feed me some delicious chicken during or after I finished playing a song."

Khoi's current teacher, Debra Sostrin, particularly admires his passion, motivation, and commitment. "He displays a vivid interest in all areas studied: harmony, musical style and structure, musical history, etc." In 2015, when he was 13 years old, Khoi was awarded the PSF Grand Scholarship; he won over the judges with his technical abilities and artistry. "Being part of the Scholarship program

has helped me so much with my growth as a pianist."

And now, as a 15-year-old, Khoi relishes every opportunity to perform and improve his skills. He has consistently received "winner" ranking at the OMTA Romantic and Ensemble Festivals, and volunteers as church choir pianist at two local Vietnamese churches.

For the past two years, he has also performed in the "In Good Hands" concert with Cascadia Composers. This program partners local music students directly with local composers. "I immediately got interested when my teacher told me that we could get to meet the composers that composed the piece we chose," Khoi says. In consecutive years, Khoi performed "Fantasea" and "Autumn Winds," both by composer Lisa Marsh. "The part I enjoyed most about this experience was actually getting to meet the composer. I met with Lisa Marsh, and we discussed about our personal interpretations and opinions about the piece."

Khoi also performed "Autumn Winds" at a recent PSF student recital. "I was really impressed with the maturity of Khoi's playing," comments PSF Executive Director Sandra Phadke. "I'm excited to see what he does next!"

For a full bio and a link to a performance video of an excerpt from



PSF Program Basics

PSF was created in 1994 to provide music education opportunities for children, particularly in underserved populations, in the Portland metropolitan area. The three main focuses of our programming are

- (1) **Scholarships:** placing pianos in students' homes,
- (2) **First Step and Second Step Keyboard Programs:** offering group piano lessons to elementary-aged children, and
- (3) **Community Placement Grants:** placing pianos with deserving community organizations.

In support of these programs, we provide in-home piano tunings and maintenance, offer educational opportunities, and sponsor student recitals throughout the year. Please see our website for information.

PSF Board & Staff

Founder Mark Mention
Executive Director Sandra Phadke
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The Piano Santa Foundation

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"Autumn Winds," please visit our website at www.pianosanta.org.

By the way, Khoi's speedcubing times have also been steadily improving over the past two years... his personal best is now 13.988 seconds.

Join the PSF Board of Directors!

For over 20 years, PSF has been placing pianos in the homes of students in the Portland area. Our Board of Directors is a small, dedicated group of people who believe deeply that every student who wants to play piano should have the chance to learn.

Please join us!

We are looking for volunteer Board members who care about our mission of enriching life through music and can commit up to 5 hours a month.

Why should you join the Board?

- You love music!
- You love kids!
- You can commit to up to 5 hours a month!
- You want to give back to the community!

To find out more about this rewarding opportunity, please e-mail us at info@pianosanta.org or give us a call at 503-245-6269.



PSF Board Members Claudine Elzey, Phillis Whitmore, Ajit Phadke and Davina Doby

PSF Needs a New Office

PSF is looking for new office (and storage) space. We need, ideally, 250 – 400 square feet in a street level location (it's hard to move a piano up stairs!).

If you have a lead for a potential new home for us, please send us an e-mail at info@pianosanta.org.



GRACE NOTES

Our heartfelt thanks go to the following individuals, businesses, and foundations for their support of PSF programs, as well as to the many anonymous donors who have made generous contributions. Your support makes all the difference! If your name is missing from this list (and you wish to be added), please call our office, and we will be sure to make the correction in our next edition.

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enriching life through music

PSF Students at the 2016 Holiday Recital



Upcoming 2017 Events

Fall Showcase
September 23, 2017, 10:30am
Classic Pianos
3003 SE Milwaukie Ave.

Holiday Recital
December 2, 2017, 10:30am
Classic Pianos
3003 SE Milwaukie Ave.