

Symphony benefits all ages - Highland Community News: Business

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The Highland Area Kiwanis Club learned of the San Bernardino Symphony's active efforts to introduce the community's students, children and families to the entertainment and culture of symphonic music through a variety of programs aimed at attracting and educating young audiences. San Bernardino Symphony Executive Director Anne Viricel, club member and Highland resident, shared that attracting young audiences is beneficial to the symphony, the community and its young people.

"This can make a big difference because kids who participate in the arts outperform their non-participating peers three-to-one in their academics," Viricel said. "The arts tend to open up students' world views."

To help make these benefits accessible to local students, the Symphony has developed several programs in partnership with San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and local businesses.

With a grant from San Manuel, the Symphony is able to host two student shows in which kids are bussed from local schools to special concerts at the California Theatre.

A Music in Schools program takes symphony docents and instruments to San Bernardino City Unified School District third grade classes taking "instrument petting zoos" to the schools. The program has visited over 150,000 students since its start.

"Since we've started this program there has been a five percent uptick in participation in the schools' music programs directly related to instruments," Viricel said. "This is really good and while we can't take all the credit we can take some of the credit."

Viricel also pointed out that having the Symphony playing in the historic California Theatre also helps the community develop pride of place and opens families' eyes to the potential of culture and art that can be experienced locally.

The club also reviewed its participation in the Highland Citrus Harvest Festival and its annual Festival Car Show.

This year's show had 43 cars entered – 15 more than last year – and raised \$875 profit for the club's student-focused service projects.