



Greenville choir members get ready to take the field.

Taking little voices to the big league

A small town student choir from Southeastern Missouri drew major league attention this past fall when they were selected to sing the national anthem at Busch Stadium.

The Bearytones, an afterschool choir group led by Greenville R-2 music teacher Tracy King, made the 122-mile trek to St. Louis for the Sept. 25 event. The group is comprised of 65 members – fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-graders.

“This was a first for me and for the district,” King says. “It was the first time this community has had something like this happen. The community really pulled for us. These kids are great and I knew they could do it, plus the principal is a big sports fan so that helped.”

The idea to sing at Busch Stadium began when King’s son was given the same opportunity a few years ago when he was attending a school in Farmington. Seeing how it created such a positive effect on the children, King realized it was something she wanted to do with her students.

“I contacted the Cardinals organization and they asked me to select a few dates that would work for us,” she says. “We were so fortunate that due to scheduling they were able to get us in.”

To offset travel costs, King and her group began selling tickets to the game at a discounted price. They sold approximately 400 tickets. And the community went on fire.

“We probably had 450 attend the game from Greenville,” King

says. “Many parents pulled their children out of school to attend because their other child was in the choir. It was an exciting time for us. To represent the community like this was really special, and it’s not something that happens very often.”

Once at the stadium, the choir was ushered into a holding area. In less than an hour, the children would start the journey out of the tunnel.

“They directed us to walk down this tunnel and make a 90-degree turn,” King says. “Once around that corner, the field opens up in front of you. I think every student gasped. It was a moment every teacher would want to remember. I’m sure each of those students will remember the grandeur and something so enormous.”

When the group had finished singing, they posed with the Cardinals mascot, Fred Bird for a group photo and were then led off the field. Several of the boys were able to get a parting gift.

“As we were leaving the field and walking by the dugout David Freese gave several of the boys high-fives,” King says. “One boy even went home and put on a batter’s glove and refused to wash that hand for four or five days. I’m pretty sure he was finally forced to wash the hand.”

Fortunately, the day turned out to be clear and bright, and the group enjoyed their time at the ballpark.

“They did a great job,” King adds. “I am so proud of each of them. To get the opportunity to represent the community like this was really special. I hope this sticks with each child for the rest of their lives.”

HONORS



While some smaller school districts can't compete with the opportunities larger schools can offer, it's that gap that King wants to help close.

"I feel called to smaller districts," she says. "I grew up in the area. I don't like students to be limited by geography. It's my goal to change perceptions about the smaller schools."

King has been a music teacher for the past 18 years, three of those years at Greenville, but she has always stayed in the southeastern part of the state.

"Growing up I always wanted to be a music teacher," she says. "I can't imagine doing anything else."

In addition to teaching classes, King also runs a Web blog. The site informs visitors about what the class is doing.

"We get visited more by teachers than by parents," King says. "It's a way for visitors to be connected to the classroom. It strengthens the program. It's a resource for teachers to help generate ideas. I mean, we use props and manipulatives in the classroom. We dance with scarves, and I don't see a lot of choirs doing this type of stuff."

The site can be visited at <http://mrskingrocks.blogspot.com>. She also has a teacher resource site at www.musicbulletinboards.net.

And, just in case you're still wondering about the name Bearytones. The school mascot is a bear, of course.

— Anthony Zuccarini

Missouri Southern State University student **Logan Alumbaugh** was recently crowned homecoming king.

Alumbaugh was sponsored by the Kinesiology Club. He is the son of Ron and Terri Alumbaugh of El Dorado Springs. He is a senior pursuing a major in physical education. In addition to being a member of the Student Missouri State Teachers Association, he is involved in Student Wellness Awareness Group and the Recreation Center Staff. He hopes to teach and coach after graduation.

Pam Stringer, Nixa R-2, has been named the 2013 Missouri Business Educator of the Year K-12. The Missouri Business Education Association presented the award at its annual conference. The award recognizes educators who have made significant contributions to business education and who have served in various capacities in the MBEA and other professional organizations. Stringer is a business teacher at Nixa High School, as well as adjunct professor of business at Evangel University.

Five \$500 grants were awarded at the TEPS dinner in September. They are:

Debbie Staats, Lebanon R-3
Ryan Kayden, Purdy R-2
Warren Soper, Reeds Spring R-4
Kelsey Lee, Westview C-6
Sarah Neef, East Newton R-6

Katy Schwartz Drowns, St. Joseph, recently received the Star of the Classroom Award from the Missouri State Lottery and Kansas City Chiefs. Drowns won the award for her commitment in working with children.

Sarah Adams Schwartz, Spanish teacher at Reed Elementary School in the Ladue School District, has been awarded a fellowship from the U.S. Department of State to participate in the Educational Seminar: 2012-2013 Uruguay Educator Exchange Program. Schwartz is one of 10 educators in the U.S. who have been selected to participate.

Kelly Ogle, Odessa High School Spanish teacher, was awarded an Odessa R-7 Public Foundation grant. She will use the grant to purchase SMART Boards for her classroom.

Amy Herrman, Rolla 31 High School, and Shane Dublin, Bolivar R-1 Middle School, were honored at this year's Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals conference. Each was awarded \$500 that may be given to a student in their school.

The Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals recently honored several MSTA members for having students who are excelling academically. Those honored were:

Jeremy Watt, Putnam Co. R-1 High School
Jason Whitt, Fulton 58 High School
Stephen Hunter, Troy Buchanan High School, Troy R-3
Tim Davied, Webb City R-7 High School
Dave Adams, Blue Springs R-4 High School
Brett Thompson, Camdenton R-3 High School