

NORWOOD NEWS

Bronx Music Teachers Look to Take \$20,000 Grant a Long Way

[December 7, 2019](#) [Archive](#), [Blog](#), [Culture](#), [Latest](#), [News](#), [Schools](#) [1 Comment](#)

By **JOSÉ A. GIRALT**



GARY AXELBANK (FAR LEFT), publisher of [thisistheBronX.info](#), and Bronx music legend Bobby Sanabria (far right), help Julio Batista (middle, wearing tie), president and general manager of Teddy Cars present a check for \$20,000 to 10 music programs in the Bronx. The presentation took place at the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center in the Norwood section of the Bronx on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019. Photo by José A. Giralt
This was music to these young teachers' ears.

The next generation of young musicians from the Bronx is getting a \$20,000 grant from Edenwald-based Teddy Cars. The automobile dealership on Boston Road announced it is distributing the funds equally among 10 school music programs.

The Teddy Cars Bronx Music Program is a year-long campaign aimed at providing funds to a diverse group of school music programs in the borough, where funding for music programs is sorely needed.

The money couldn't come sooner for Bronx teachers, who already envisioned what they plan to do with the funds.

Travis Washington is a music teacher at PS 72 Dr. William Dorney School in Throgs Neck. In his years teaching, Washington has noticed the positive correlation between music programs and academic performance.



AFTER A MUSICAL serenade, Gary Axelbank, publisher of thisistheBronx.info, interviews students from Baychester Academy where they, along with nine other music programs in the borough, were presented with a check for \$20,000 from Teddy Cars dealership to promote music education. The event took place at the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center in the Norwood section of the Bronx on Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019.

Photo credit: José A. Giralt

“A lot of them [students in music programs] will turn their behavior around and do better in school, and they’ll work harder to do choir,” said Washington. He plans to use a portion of the grant to purchase risers where his choir students can stand as a way of being in full view of parents during performances. It’ll also help with the acoustics.

But most importantly, Washington predicts the risers can boost his students’ self-esteem. “It’s really important that when they get on stage finally, they have that moment to shine, that they can be seen,” Washington added.

Educators at the Dec. 5 event—hosted by Gary Axelbank of thisistheBronX.info at Mosholu Montefiore Community Center—complain that arts programs in public schools are perpetually underfunded. Even with high-profile talent involved—such as multi-Grammy nominated salsaer Bobby Sanabria, co-director of the Bronx Music Heritage

Center, a partner school through Jazz at Lincoln Center's Jazz Academy—funding for music programs can be tough to secure.

For Sanabria, a Bronx native, the borough is loaded with potential musicians.

“We [the Bronx] have produced six National Endowment for the Arts jazz masters. That’s the highest award a jazz musician can get,” Sanabria said.

He added, “I’m really impressed that you [Teddy Cars] did this, because you could have given the money to any other worthy cause ... but I think the most worthy is the arts because it defines us as human beings. It gives us character, and boy do we need character right now.”

In the Concourse neighborhood, students enrolled in the afterschool enrichment program at PS/MS 218 that’s operated by WHEDco see the benefits beyond just playing instruments.

Sixth-grader Guadalupe Molina plays the piano and is expanding her interest in music to include guitar, flute and drums. She says that playing music has improved her academic performance.

“Music started giving me a power that I can do it [especially if it is] something I can’t even do well,” Molina said. “For example, if I listen to music before a quiz ... I can concentrate so well.”

Link: <https://www.norwoodnews.org/id=30330&story=bronx-music-teachers-look-to-take-20000-grant-a-long-way/>