

# URBAN HARPIST



Volume III, Issue 1

Spring 2013

Greetings, friends of the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble! Our program is thriving, as are our students, and we couldn't be more proud. Thank you for your continued support as we grow and change as all organizations must do. We are happy to be holding our spring concert for the first time at the Southwest Arts Center, a move we hope will expose more people to our students and their beautiful music.

We are still receiving positive feedback from around the country, five months after our story aired on national television. We were featured on CBS Sunday Morning, and the segment told our story from our early days at Brown Middle School to the present. Byron Pitts caught up with two of our alumni, Mason Morton in Boston and Desmond Johnson at Georgia State.

Most importantly, our current students got to tell the world what it means to them to play the harp. Calls, emails, Facebook posts, invitations to perform, and, yes, checks have been coming in ever since.

I can assure you the fame has not gone to our heads. We remain a small and humble organization with big dreams and big hearts. No one has a bigger heart than Carolyn Lund, our teacher, who continues to bring out the best in our students every day.

Our fundraising efforts have benefitted from the City of Atlanta's power2give gift matching program. We are solid financial ground, with an annual budget of \$70,000. We are so fortunate that many of the same supporters keep giving over and over to our program. Meanwhile, we are always making new friends who, combined with longtime donors, will enable us to build the cash reserves any organization needs to ensure sustainability.

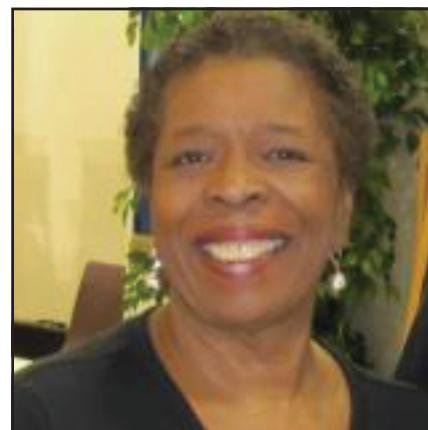
We are grateful for the continued support of the National Endowment of the Arts, the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs and Atlanta Public Schools.

We are truly blessed that so many people recognize the value in what we do. We teach kids to play the harp who would otherwise not have the opportunity. Over the past 13 years, we have found that when you give kids who want to play an instrument the opportunity, they'll take that opportunity and run with it.

Thank you!

*Roselyn Lewis*

Executive Director



## Our Mission

The mission of the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble is to deliver quality musical instruction on the harp, develop music reading skills and musicianship to at-risk urban youth.

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## Power2Give: Our Fundraising Powerhouse

The City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs sponsors an innovative gift-matching program called power2give. The Urban Youth Harp Ensemble has been fortunate to be selected for this program each of the three times it has been offered to local organizations. Each time, we raise \$5,000 among our donors, and the city matches that amount dollar-for-dollar. So every dollar you donate, contributes two dollars toward our programming.

Camille Russell Love, director of the City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs, is a huge supporter of our program. “When I proposed that the City of Atlanta bring power2give.org to our community, the intent was to provide organizations like the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble with the infrastructure to pull off robust online giving campaigns,” Love says. “Mayor Kasim Reed and the Atlanta City Council invested new funds to provide a match to encourage new donations. We are so glad to hear success stories like those from Urban Youth Harp Ensemble!”

Our first power2give campaign, “Adopt a Harpist,” raised \$2,500 from donors through online contributions. The Office of Cultural Affairs would match every dollar, for a total of \$5,000. Our second Power-2Give campaign raised \$2,500 online and was matched by The Office of Cultural Affairs, dollar for dollar, for practice harps, so our students can take turns practicing at home. We are in the midst of our third campaign, which will be used to cover the cost of holding our spring concert at the Southwest Arts Center. Please consider a donation by going here: <http://goo.gl/11RR5>.



BRINGING PASSION AND CREATIVITY TOGETHER.

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## Student Voices

Several of our students share their thoughts on the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble. They are: Diamond Giles, ninth grade; Jordan White, tenth grade; and Reginald Risper, eleventh grade.

*What do you feel you have gained by participating in the UYHE?*

**Diamond:** I have learned structure, patience and persistence. I've learned to take my time and to not get frustrated.

**Reginald:** Teamwork. I have to rely on other people for their parts. I have to listen to other people while they play and keep my timing. I know I can rely on my partner to keep going and hopefully pick it back up if I mess up.

**Jordan:** I have learned hard work and dedication. When you're playing it hurts your fingers, so you need endurance. It's hard work playing the harp, and it's hard work in life. It takes a lot of hard work, period. It hurts your fingers, and you have to come back every other day and keep going.

*What motivates you to keep working on your harp skills given how challenging this instrument is to play?*

**Diamond:** Not a lot of people play the harp, and it's very unique. I want to feel accomplished, and so I keep trying to perfect it.

**Jordan:** I hope to use it in the future, and maybe be an entrepreneur. You never know when someone will need a harpist! I want to play the harp for President Obama one day.

**Reginald:** I am motivated by my competitive drive against my sister, Diamond. I strive to be the best in everything I do.

*Where would you like to see the harp program in five years?*

**Jordan:** I would like to see it go national, in more high schools across the country. Underprivileged children want to play the harp, and they never get the chance. It opens many doors.

**Diamond:** I wish the harp was used more in the music industry. More singers and rappers should use it because it's unusual and takes a lot of skill, and it brings out people's emotions.

**Reginald:** The harp is looked down upon sometimes. It's looked over. I wish the harp was more common and more mainstream because it's a beautiful instrument. It changes people's attitudes. You can't be mad playing the harp. You can't be angry.

*Where would you like to see yourself in five years?*

**Diamond:** At Syracuse University, playing the harp and dancing.

**Jordan:** At USC or Pittsburgh, acquiring my doctorate in physical therapy or dentistry. I would like to be a sports physical therapist.

**Reginald:** I'll be in my senior year at UCLA studying graphic design and interning at Activision, a gaming company, or creating music for in-game soundtracks.

## UYHE Board Member Spotlight: Joe Parham

Joe Parham joined the UYHE board about five years ago, after having lunch with Executive Director Roselyn Lewis. “It’s hard to say no to Roselyn,” says Joe, who was introduced to her by Nancy Hamilton, our longtime treasurer.

He was drawn to the organization by the uniqueness of its programming and a desire to give back to the community. “I am unaware of another school-based harp instruction program,” he says.

He still feels inspired every time he listens to the students perform. Yet his proudest accomplishment as a board member involves dollar signs, not musical notes. He helped get the UYHE back on solid financial ground after the recession took its toll. “The funding is the engine that makes achieving the mission possible, thereby exposing more of our youth to music and this beautiful leadership.” His goal is to see the UYHE become a globally recognized program with a healthy endowment.

Joe’s business background has proven invaluable to the organization as it continues to build a financial cushion. He has worked four decades in corporate positions, including a short stint as Chief Operating Officer of a Switzerland-based operation. For the past 19 years, he has worked in human resource leadership positions.

An overseer for his alma mater, Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, Joe enjoys skiing, attending the North Sea Jazz Festival in the Netherlands, having dinner with his grown children and spending time on Martha’s Vineyard.

On the board, Joe is known for his business skills. But he does have a music background. “As a college student,” he says, “I earned a living playing bass guitar in R&B groups in the greater Boston/New England area.”



## Carolyn’s Corner



Carolyn Lund is the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble’s accomplished teacher. She has been with the organization four years and has brought enthusiasm, talent and a gift for connecting to young people. As she prepares to send four longtime students on to college, she shared a few thoughts.

*So the spring concert will be held at a new location. How will the new location impact this annual event?*

We are very excited to be able to perform in such a beautiful theater! It will be a great experience for the students to be able to perform on a much larger stage with professional lighting and sound. I hope it will elevate the entire concert for the audience and the students.

*Give us a sneak peek at the types of music we’ll hear at the concert?*

This concert is all about Hollywood! All of the pieces are pulled from movies the students love. Some of my favorites are James Bond, which Donevon Howard arranged, and Star Wars. For Star Wars, it was a challenge to replicate such a big orchestra sound with a harp ensemble.

*How many seniors are graduating, and what are your hopes for them?*

We have six seniors this year. They all have different colleges in mind, and many have already received scholarships. I hope they will all continue their music education in college, whether that means taking private harp lessons, attending university symphony concerts or just being active in the arts.

*How are things going with the honors ensemble?*

The honors ensemble continues to impress me. Next year they are all returning. Not only are they all top-notch players, they are also some of the greatest students I have ever taught in terms of their character, dependability and leadership.

*The middle school program at Drew has thrived under your leadership. What is your vision for this program?*

The students at Drew have been a blast to work with. They are so enthusiastic to learn every single day. As Drew expands into a high school, we hope to follow these 11 students all the way to their senior year. We also hope to start teaching some elementary school students.

*Some of our ambitious students have exciting summer plans, right? Tell us about the camps they will get to attend.*

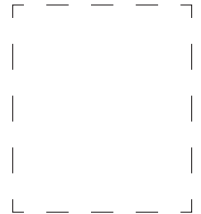
Donevon Howard will again be attending a prestigious harp camp in Interlochen, Michigan. Kimberly Walker and Hati Pines will be going to the American Youth Harp Ensemble camp in Richmond, Virginia.

# INVESTING IN A CHILD'S FUTURE



By making a financial donation to the Urban Youth Harp Ensemble, you confirm your belief in our program and the students we serve. More importantly, you equip our harp students with the tools they need to enhance their artistic skills, gain confidence on stage and in the classroom, and extend their dreams beyond their current environment. UYHE has continued to flourish thanks to support from patrons like you.

The Urban Youth Harp Ensemble, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization, which means your contributions are tax-deductible. We invite you to make a donation of \$50, \$100, or more, to make a significant impact. Make checks to Urban Youth Harp Ensemble.



CONTACT US: ROSELYN LEWIS • EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR • URBAN YOUTH HARP ENSEMBLE  
3259 BRIARWOOD BOULEVARD • EAST POINT, GA 30344  
404.271.5899 • ROSELYN@MINDSPRING.COM • WWW.URBANHARP.ORG