

Marching Mountains

2013 Annual Report



2013 Annual Report

Stories

Donating Musical Instruments Changes Children's Lives for the Better

Ian Felton is the founder of Marching Mountains, a non-profit based in Minneapolis. The goal of Marching Mountains is to create a network to supply public school band programs in distressed counties in Appalachia with donated new and used musical instruments.

Recently, I was at the airport getting ready to leave town for a while to take a vacation. While at the gate, I checked my voice mail one last time before being cut off from technology for several days. I was surprised to get a message from a woman in Connecticut, who wanted to donate a flute to the organization. I only had a few minutes before boarding, so I quickly returned her phone call, leaving a message in a bit of a panic; I wanted to give her enough information but felt rushed as I would be boarding the plane at any moment.

After I hung up, I resigned myself to the fact that I had lost that donation. In my mind, I must have sounded anxious and scattered, not really the type of message I typically leave for someone who is generously handing over an instrument to a stranger, an instrument that was likely prized by them or someone close to them.

When I returned from my vacation, I spoke with my mother, who informed me that a flute had arrived from Connecticut. My mother lives in Appalachia, and where she lives is much closer to the schools we work with. Donors who are able to may ship their donations to my mother's house in West Virginia so that they're much closer to the schools. This saves the organization precious funds when paying for shipping instruments to many schools across Appalachia.

I was surprised that my hurried voice mail had not put the donor off and felt very happy to have received the flute. Later on that week, I received a text message from my step-mother, who said she knew someone who knew someone who had a child that wanted to play the flute but who didn't have the money to rent or buy one for her daughter.

This was a new situation for me. Typically, I work directly with band programs, not with parents, because I want the instruments to stay with a school and not possibly end up in someone's closet, unused. I called the mother and explained this to her, letting her know I wanted to find a solution. I suggested that she give me the name of her daughter's school and band director, adding that I would ship the flute to the band director with a letter that explained that the flute was for the woman's daughter, Isabel, to use. As long as she was in band, the flute was hers to use. This means that even when she leaves elementary school and continues on to middle school, if she stays in band, she can take the flute with her. If she quits band, the flute stays with the

"That's great to hear (about this donation) because I have an 8th grade clarinet player that is using a school clarinet that's in pretty rough shape so I can put it to use."

- Logan Skidmore
Band Director
ECHS/ECMS

MARCHING
MOUNTAINS

700 Douglas Ave #1007
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Phone: 612-232-9677
E-mail:
ianfelton@marchingmountains.org



2013 Annual Report

Stories

band program so that another child can use it. The mother agreed.

I was at work when the conversation took place. After we hung up, I stopped and thought about what just took place. I realized what a special kind of person it is that calls someone to ask for help when they're in a tough position. I thought about what this mother was doing by putting aside any feelings that would stop her from helping her daughter get a flute and calling me, not just once, but twice within the hour. She really wanted to get a hold of me! When I realized what I was experiencing in this chain of actions -- the generosity of the donor, the humility and determination of the mother, the kindness of the others involved in making the connections -- I teared-up in my cube and had to take a deep breath.

I wrote the letter, emailing it to my mother for her to print and package with the flute. She shipped it off that Monday. Now the flute is in the hands of Isabel, who gets to experience playing music with her friends, hopefully for many, many years.

One person who never met me wanted to donate a musical instrument -- a flute -- to Marching Mountains. With faith and hope, she made a simple, generous gesture. That flute is now the difference between Isabel becoming part of something meaningful to her instead of feeling like she's missing out and not deserving enough to be a musician.

We'll never know the real effects of Isabel being in band instead of being at home or somewhere else, but we do know that playing the flute is incredibly important to Isabel and her mother. Because someone donated a musical instrument, one little girl's wish came true. It might not be much, but another little girl who received a flute from a kind donor once said, "This is better than Christmas." For me, that makes it worth the effort.

Ian Felton

Founder, Marching Mountains

2013 Instrument Donations

In 2013 we continued to receive instrument donations from around the country and distribute them to schools in West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee and Alabama. We expanded our program to include schools that aren't strictly in distressed counties in Appalachia, but clearly have a need for musical instrument donations. We continue to be amazed and humbled at how willing people are to share the gift of music with children who may otherwise not get to experience it.

"That's great to hear (about this donation) because I have an 8th grade clarinet player that is using a school clarinet that's in pretty rough shape so I can put it to use."

- Logan Skidmore
Band Director
ECHS/ECMS

MARCHING
MOUNTAINS

700 Douglas Ave #1007
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Phone: 612-232-9677

E-mail:

ianfelton@marchingmountains.org



2013 Annual Report

Be a part of Marching Mountains

Band Directors: join our network by visiting <http://marchingmountains.org> - register your band's program to get started

Community: [Donate an instrument](#) - Please send us your used marching and concert band instruments in good working condition to:

Marching Mountains
1449 Andmore Ave.
Morgantown, WV 26505

If you live in the areas [listed on the site](#), we can arrange to pick up your donation.

Donate funds - Currently it costs about \$25 to pack and ship an instrument to a school in need. Please [donate here](#).

Spread the word! (through FB, word of mouth) Sign up for future newsletters/updates, follow us on Facebook @ <http://www.facebook.com/MarchingMountains> and Twitter @ <http://twitter.com/MarchingMtns>

Marching Mountains is also in search of talented individuals with expertise in Graphic Design, Web application development, Law and [many other areas to volunteer to be part of our project](#).

“Thank You
to all of our
donors and
volunteers!”

- Marching Mountains

MARCHING
MOUNTAINS

700 Douglas Ave #1007
Minneapolis, MN 55403

Phone: 612-232-9677
E-mail:
ianfelton@marchingmountains.org