

MOUNT PLEASANT
HIGH SCHOOLStudents
rock out
at concertBY DANI NICHOLL
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Daina Turnwald finished the first day of her high school senior year Tuesday and headed to the parking lot.

She was greeted with music. Mount Pleasant High School's front lawn had been turned into a rock show, much to Turnwald's, and several other students', surprise.

"I thought it was really cool that they threw this the first day (of classes)," Turnwald said. "It makes school that much better."

Deja Norm'al, an alternative punk/rock band, performed in "Modern Rock's The High School" — a concert sponsored by Modern Rock 91.5 WMHW.

The band played outside of the high school's main entrance for about 30 people, ranging from high schoolers to teachers and even a few CMU students.

"We wanted to reach out into the high school community," said Kelly McMann, Novi junior and Modern Rock 91.5 promotion director. "At first we were just going to hand out stickers, promote the station and then it grew to, 'Hey, let's throw a concert for high schoolers.'"

After McMann and Kristine Moore, Owosso junior and Modern Rock 91.5 station manager, came up with the idea, they pitched it to the high school's principal, Jeffery Thoenes.

"My first reaction (when hearing about the concert) was, 'what a neat opportunity to kick off the year with something very memorable and special,'" said Thoenes. "It didn't take me very long to realize it would appeal to a lot of our kids — not all, but some."

Thoenes also gave the concert a green light because the band is a "high school-friendly" group



PATRICK SILLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Brett Pudak, Tekonsha resident and guitarist for Deja Norm'al, along with Matthew Bailey on the keyboard, perform at Mount Pleasant High School Tuesday afternoon during a concert sponsored by Modern Rock 91.5.

and doesn't use any inappropriate language in their lyrics.

"Part of our mission is to prepare students for continued success and maybe music is a way to do that," Thoenes said. "If kids come to the concert and enjoy it, they might look at it as enjoying school and it would make it a fun place to be, while also learning."

Modern Rock 91.5 also gave away free CDs and stickers at the concert as a way to get its name out into the high school community, McMann said.

"Playing for a bunch of kids on the first day of school was fun," Brian McIsaac, one of Deja Norm'al's vocalists, said. "It gave us a chance to have younger kids exposed to our music."

This wasn't the only exposure Deja Norm'al has received lately. Last summer the band went on tour, playing in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York

and North Carolina.

Integrated Social Studies teacher Sue Hoeft said she wished she could have had a concert like this when she was in high school.

"I think it's a great idea to give kids a safe place to have fun and hang out," Hoeft said. "What more could you want? Plus, I enjoy listening to music and relaxing after a day of work."

Deja Norm'al includes Fenton freshman Matt Bailey, 19, on keyboard; McIsaac, 20, from Fenton, on vocals; Mike Mains, 19, from Lake City, on vocals and guitar; Chris Morrow, 19, from Lake City, on keyboard and bass; Brett Pudak, 19, from Tekonsha, on guitar; and Karl Woodward, 20, from Lake City, on drums.

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