

'AmateurPianists' organization promotes the joy of music, live performances

BY KRISTINA HOUCK

From graphic designers to teachers, the diverse members of AmateurPianists have one thing in common: their love of music.

Based in North San Diego County, AmateurPianists is a membership organization for amateur pianists of all professions who want to perform in front of a live audience.

Solana Beach resident Monique Kunewalder helped the group reserve the recital hall for its recent fundraising concert at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Dieguito in Solana Beach.

"I will do anything to promote music and the joys of playing music," said Kunewalder, who plays piano and sings in the choir at the church.

The 78-year-old has been a member of the group since it launched in 2011. A former piano music page-turner for La Jolla Chamber Music Society, Kunewalder is pleased to have a forum for amateur pianists of all ages.

"Many people have heard me play, but I don't care. I care to promote," Kunewalder said. "I care to endorse and encourage young people to play music, and I try to give them an opportunity to perform."



Recital at Founders' Hall in Solana Beach. Courtesy photos

"We want to enjoy playing music. It's a great activity to be involved in."

More than 330 amateur pianists have joined the group since it launched two years ago. Membership is free.

AmateurPianists has held a number of performances at a variety of venues, including recital halls, churches, public libraries and private residences. The group also offers lectures and master classes on performance practice, the history of classical music and more.

"We're pianists who spend hours and hours learning a piece, but we don't have people to play for except our own friends and family," said Glenn Kramer,

founder and board chair of AmateurPianists. "The whole purpose is to provide members opportunities to perform live in front of audiences like the professionals do."

In addition to providing performance opportunities, Kramer said AmateurPianists enables local musicians to network and become better performers.

"We all love to play piano, and we're all very supportive of each other," said Kramer, a graphic designer who performs at business receptions, weddings and other special events. "You can really feel that warm energy when you attend a recital. Everybody is rooting for each other."



Glenn Kramer

With membership continuing to grow, Kramer hopes to organize an international amateur piano competition next year in San Diego to bring even more amateur pianists together.

"The organization is flying fast forward," Kunewalder said. "Glenn's idea to have an amateur piano competition is also something very special. I think it's wonderful that Glenn is interested in doing something in San Diego that is necessary and will be highly appreciated."

For more information about AmateurPianists, visit amateurpianists.org.



Ildiko Tesak (left) and Jan Parsons (right)

Eyeglasses for El Salvador provided by one Rotarian to another

The Del Mar-Solana Beach Rotary Club (DMSB Rotary) recently took one more step in helping to assist and educate the poorest of the poor, especially children and women, of El Salvador. Earlier this month, Jan Parsons, past president of DMSB Rotary, delivered two satchels containing over 100 eyeglasses to Ildiko Tesak of El Salvador, founder of the non-profit Organizacion y Educacion Empresarial Feminina de El Salvador (OEF). Ildiko, Hungarian-born and attorney-educated, is also a member of the San Salvador Northwest Rotary Club and an honorary member of DMSB Rotary. The eyeglasses will be distributed to those in need through both OEF and Ildiko's Rotary Club in El Salvador.

In six years of working with Ildiko, OEF, and San Salvador Northwest Rotary, DMSB Rotary has funded a pre-school and computers for it, job-related adult education classes, classes on farming (and cooking) of more nourishing food crops, medical clinic equipment, and many other health and education projects. To personally inspect projects it has funded or may fund, DMSB Rotarians have visited El Salvador twice thus far and are planning a third inspection trip in early 2014.

The Del Mar-Solana Beach Rotary Club's primary purpose is to provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through its men and women members from the business, professional, and community-leader communities. To learn more about Rotary and the Del Mar-Solana Beach Rotary Club, call Richard Fogg at (858) 693-7556 or see www.DMSBRotary.com. Information about OEF can be found at www.oefes.org.

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