



SAN GABRIEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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San Gabriel Unified Students Spread Joy, Sing Holiday Carols at City of Hope and Royal Vista

SAN GABRIEL, CA – Jefferson Middle School eighth-grader Jessica Sucongga joined her fellow concert choir members in singing “Silent Night” in English and German – and signing the ending chorus in American Sign Language – for patients and doctors gathered in the lobby of City of Hope’s Helford Hospital on Dec. 21.

“I believe that singing is just a nice thing to do for people in the hospital during the holidays,” Sucongga said. “Being able to see the smiles of family members, friends and patients is why we do what we do, and it is an experience we’ll never forget.”

Forty-one Jefferson students sang a variety of holiday choral pieces in the lobby of Helford Hospital, bringing some holiday spirit to the visitors, patients and the children’s ward before visiting residents at Royal Vista Care Center in the afternoon.

Jefferson music teacher and choir director Rachel Chew said the performance was created to mesh with the school’s project-based learning (PBL) instruction by showing students that singing can have a real-world use and inspire people in a time of need.

“City of Hope is known for its advanced cancer research and care for cancer patients, and cancer has affected all of us individually and as a community,” Chew said. “We wanted to bring some joy to their community and give the students something different from just school performances. Here, they get the opportunity to see how music and singing touches lives in different ways.”

During both performances, the choir sang holiday choral pieces including “African Alleluia,” “Al Shlosha D’Varim,” “Betelehemu,” “Under Winter Moon,” “Christmas Time is Here” and “Silent Night,” plus Christmas carols, like “Deck the Halls,” “Jingle Bells” and “Feliz Navidad.”

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“The District is so proud of our Jefferson Middle School Choir students for giving their time and talents to others who are in need this holiday season,” SGUSD Superintendent Dr. John Pappalardo said. “We aspire to have all our students demonstrate this degree of community service by using the skills they learned while attending San Gabriel Unified schools.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

SANGAB_HOPE1: Jefferson Middle School music teacher and choir director Rachel Chew conducts students singing “Under Winter Moon” for patients, doctors and staff at City of Hope’s Helford Hospital on Dec. 21.

SANGAB_HOPE2: Jefferson Middle School students sing “Silent Night” and sign the chorus in American Sign Language during their performance at the City of Hope’s Helford Hospital as patients and staff gather to listen to their holiday melodies.

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