



## Press Release

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**Contact:** Selina Ayala-Patlan  
Valerie Martinez  
(909) 445-1001

## **Bell Gardens High School Music Program Receives \$42,000 in New Instruments**

*Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation Lauds BGHS Music Program Strengths*

**MONTEBELLO** – Clarinets, saxophones, cymbals, piccolos, guitars and an electric keyboard are among the musical instruments and accessories donated to Montebello Unified's Bell Gardens High School (BGHS) by the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation. The nonprofit organization awarded the BGHS Music Program nearly \$42,000, retail value, as part of its "Keeping Music Alive in Our Schools" campaign.

"The partnerships, grants and donations that Montebello Unified pursues helps us ensure our students have access to top programs and services," Montebello Unified Board President Edgar Cisneros said. "We thank Mr. Rico for his vision and the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation for its generous donation, which will bolster our stellar music program at Bell Gardens High."

Foundation members visiting Bell Gardens High School were thoroughly impressed with the dedication and tutelage of music instructor Frank Rico, as well as his department's range of band offerings and music production program.

"We are impressed by the Bell Gardens High music department," said Tricia Steel, Program Director for Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation. "Mr. Rico is accessible to his students before, during and after school and the wide range of the curriculum encourages access to the program for students interested in learning all aspects of music education."

Budding musicians can join marching band, concert band, orchestra, beginning or afterschool jazz band or afterschool mariachi band. Prospective recording engineers can take classes on sound editing or song structure. An innovative recording techniques class focuses on various facts of stage set-up such as lighting, microphone placement and sound board specifications.

"The hands-on technical experience for the students is invaluable," said Rico, now in his 10th year teaching at Bell Gardens High. "They lend tech support to many of the District events, including concerts and stage plays."

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Rigorous instruction and harmonic diversity are hallmarks of the Bell Gardens music program and what students take away from the classroom can be productively applied as they advance to higher education and stimulating career paths.

“Our music program is one of many visual and performing arts programs Montebello Unified offers as it prepares students to be well-rounded for the next step in their academic, professional and personal lives,” Montebello Unified Superintendent of Schools Cleve Pell said. “We congratulate Mr. Rico, his team and his students for going after this highly generous donation and we look forward to a more robust program as a result.”

At its Board meeting on April 2, the MUSD Board of Education, together with District administration, will recognize and present certificates to the Bell Gardens High School music department and the Mr. Holland’s Opus Foundation.

### **About the Foundation**

Mr. Holland’s Opus Foundation was established in 1996 by Michael Kamen, the composer for the motion picture “Mr. Holland’s Opus,” as a means of providing hands-on support for music programs across the country, donating new and refurbished instruments to schools. The Foundation has strong music industry backing, partnering with organizations such as the National Association of Music Merchants and StubHub, to develop networks that bring in a steady supply of cash donations and used instruments in need of repair.

### **Photo Caption**

BGHS Music: Various musical instruments and accessories – nearly \$42,000, retail value – were donated to Montebello Unified’s Bell Gardens High School (BGHS) by the Mr. Holland’s Opus Foundation as part of its “Keeping Music Alive in Our Schools” campaign.

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**Montebello Unified School District** is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone’s efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District’s number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at [www.montebello.k12.ca.us](http://www.montebello.k12.ca.us).