



BANDOLGY

THE LOCAL NON-PROFIT IS DEDICATED TO BRINGING MORE MUSIC TO MORE KIDS

by Cecelia Feor

While volunteering for the Association of Music Parents at her daughter's Oakville high school, Lisa Michaels discovered something about the students she worked with. Not only were they musically talented, they also excelled in academics.

"At awards night, every kid in the band would be called up for the honour roll," she says. It was this realization that spurred her to co-found Bandology with fellow parent volunteer, Peter VanDuzer.

"Music makes kids smarter, helps with mental health, builds great social skills and improves reading and math scores. Basically, all the skills they need to succeed," says Michaels who noticed a big difference between schools with regard to the amount of music opportunities offered. Although both her kids played saxophone, she noticed her daughter's high school offered more extracurricular opportunities for band than her son's high school (who attended a different school).

"We thought, what can we do in the community that will give extra music for these kids?"

In 2017, VanDuzer and Michaels created Bandology. A non-profit organization that offers opportunities for kids to play and learn music.

Bandology's Band Camp is one of the pillars of its mission. "Band camp is fairly unique. There isn't really anything else like it," Michaels says. Following a curriculum-based approach, students in grades seven to 12 spend a week of the summer playing and interacting with other musicians their age.

The camp, which is open to kids in the GTA, Halton and, more recently, Grand River also brings in professional musicians, award-winning music educators and music experts to share their knowledge.

"We make it a fun experience as well as offer the chance for kids to play," Michaels says. "Actually, sometimes it's hard to get the kids to stop playing."

Due to the popularity of Band Camp, Bandology has created Band Camp Junior for

students in grades one to six who want to learn more about music. They are launching a secondary Band Camp location in Grand River to serve the kids of Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph and Cambridge.

Thanks to government funding, Bandology is able to hire staff through the summer. The organization also launched What's Your Forte? – a podcast that features interviews with music industry professionals to share their musical experience and thoughts on music education.

During the school year, Bandology offers music workshops as well as its 'Play a Gig' program which allows young musicians to play live in the community as well as online. School teachers can also look to Bandology for resources such as lesson plans.

Members of the Bandology team are more than happy to hop on a school council Zoom call to talk about the positive effects that music has on kids, according to Michaels.

"We have the specifics, but we also have the anecdotal stuff, the proof in the pudding, seeing it in our own kids." **W**