

Fiddlers ReStrung

The Saline Area Schools is proud to sponsor a renowned fiddling group for high school students, known as Fiddlers ReStrung. The following information serves to illustrate how the program is organized, run and how it serves to offer rewarding opportunities to high school students and families of the Saline Area Schools.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

FRS operates under the authority of the Saline Area Schools and is subject to all school rules and regulations. **Community Education Director Brian Puffer and Cultural Arts Specialist Rebecca Groeb-Driskill** share school oversight of the ensemble. Brian and Rebecca work closely with the Fiddlers ReStrung Board, made up primarily from parents in the group, on budgetary and directional decisions.

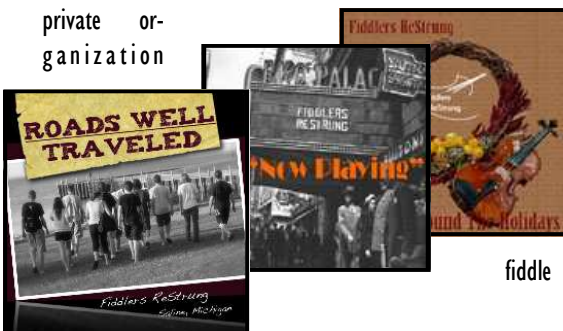
Paid staff positions for Fiddlers ReStrung are considered employees of the Saline Area Schools and include the Artistic Director, Assistant Artistic Director, Music Interns, and Choreographer.

“The Fiddlers ReStrung program is a dynamic community extension of Saline Area Schools. I am continually impressed by the energy and talent of the students.”

- Scot Graden, Saline Area Schools Superintendent

The **Student Advisory Board** is made up of four elected members representing each graduating class. It is an opportunity for the students to voice their opinion and influence the direction of the ensemble, both musically and organizationally. They hold bi-weekly meetings with the Artistic Director and are invited to attend Parent Advisory Board meetings.

In 1994, Bob Phillips created the original group, Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic. After his retirement in 2004, Saline Fiddlers became a private organization



Fiddlers ReStrung offers the opportunity to be challenged musically, travel and perform all over the country, develop self-confidence and presentation skills, all in the comfort of a safe and warm environment of new friends and artistic leadership. We look forward to seeing you at auditions!

and Saline Area Schools established Fiddlers ReStrung as the school affiliated fiddling program for Saline High School students.

ARTISTIC STAFF

Artistic Director—Josh Herter has a long history with Saline’s fiddle groups. He was a longtime member of the Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic and has served as the Assistant Director in each of the previous years of the Fiddlers ReStrung, including the last two years under Artistic Director Cori Smith. He is in this third year of directing Saline’s Middle School Fiddle Club. When not leading the Fiddlers, he is completing his degree at Eastern Michigan University.

Music Interns—Kelly Pond and Eli Bender are students at Michigan State University’s acclaimed School of Music and are working towards degrees in music education. Kelly and Eli frequently perform in several acoustic groups at various music venues in Michigan. They’ve worked as clinicians at numerous ASTA music events in Michigan and Illinois.

Rhythm Coach—Doug Smith had been involved with Saline Fiddler groups since 1997. Playing both, the guitar and banjo, he has served as rhythm coach for Fiddlers ReStrung since 2004. Driven by his love of music, he donates countless hours and practices and performances in support of Saline fiddle music.

Dance Coach—Sheila Graziano teaches a variety of step dance styles after rehearsals every Sunday. Her energy and enthusiasm for dance attracts students to her class and within weeks they are ready to perform incredibly complex routines.

MUSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Fiddlers ReStrung portrays a diverse arrangement of styles; ranging from traditional bluegrass and celtic fiddle to a newer, progressive acoustic sound.

Students work alongside the artistic leadership to arrange new repertoire and share in crafting their ensemble. This collaborative ownership encourages the students to be themselves and share their own ideas while challenging them to be open to new musical experiences. Focused on generating a genuine live performance, the ensemble relies on the musical/personal maturity, improvisational skills and spontaneity of its students.

Participation and improvisation are two key elements of Fiddlers ReStrung. Often, portions of rehearsals are spent working on the arrangement of a new piece or improving a current arrangement and this work is undertaken by the students.

Students in Fiddlers ReStrung are often high achievers, both academically and in extra



curricular activities beyond music, including athletics and community service. These students are required to be enrolled in Saline High School music classes for at least two trimesters each year that they are in the ensemble.

TIME COMMITMENT

Fiddlers ReStrung appreciates that today’s youth benefits greatly by having a diverse schedule, but emphasizes that membership does indeed carry a great deal of commitment. The ensemble relies on the entirety of its membership to make each performance a quality experience, but remains open and flexible to students’ busy schedules with proper and timely communication.

Sunday Rehearsals Fiddlers ReStrung rehearses each Sunday from 3:30 to 5:30pm. The practice sessions start at 3:00 with a full sound

'People perform better when they perform music they like - music they have a part in creating. The energy we portray on stage is a reflection of that. It enhances our sound, not to mention the students own musical maturity.'
- Joshua Herter, Artistic Director

tech setup. The two hours of practice include activities such as reviewing existing music, sectional work, improvisation exercises, arrangement of new music — an exercise done by the students, and continual arrangement of established tunes, driven by collaboration between the students and the artistic team. Practice is followed by dance rehearsal for the students who dance during performances.

Camps There are two mandatory camps (two days in the winter and three days in the summer) for members of Fiddlers ReStrung. At both of these camps, students not only bond (a critical element for a musical group), but they work on new music in an environment free from other distractions

Gig Attendance Fiddlers ReStrung performs approximately 80 times a year. Students are encouraged to attend each performance, but the group understands other commitments (such as other school events, sports, family events, and other events).

EDUCATIONAL MISSION

Fiddlers ReStrung is committed to fiddle education in Saline and beyond. Members are encouraged to assist after school with 6th grade fiddle club and on Sunday's with Middle School Fiddle Club. ReStrung has lead numerous fiddling workshops in Michigan and during summer tours. Teaching student workshops are sometimes the most memorable and favorite event of summer tours.



Occasionally, Fiddlers ReStrung will have the opportunity for educational workshops with guest artists who are in the area. These included Jeremy Kittel, Arpil Verch, Peter Ostroushko and Darol Anger. These opportunities were paid for by the group to provide students with an amazing educational experience at the hands of some of the greatest folk and bluegrass performers around.

PROFFESIONALISM

The Fiddlers ReStrung are always asked to behave in a professional manner. For all audi-



ences, whether they are performing for high visibility paid events such as fairs, private fundraisers, country music festivals, including the 2008 Downtown Hoedown in Detroit or at pro bono events such as schools, senior centers and others, they are expected to perform with tremendous professionalism and act as representatives of Saline Area Schools.

FRS currently stands at 17 performers. In recent years, the group has been as large as 22 performers. **Being a smaller group gives each student the opportunity to perform at their best.**

BUDGET AND FINANCES

The annual budget for Fiddlers ReStrung is approximately \$40,000. Budgetary decisions are made by the Board with consultation from Community Education. We are able to operate with modest tuition rates by relying on parent volunteers and receiving school support for expenses such as insurance and administrative costs.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

In 2008, the tuition rate changed for Fiddlers ReStrung students. The new rate of \$500 per year covers uniforms, winter and summer camps, and Community Education fees. Summer tour is extra, with costs that are subsidized by the group. Last



year, the summer tour cost students approximately \$600.00 for the 10 day tour of Wisconsin and Minnesota.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent volunteers are essential to the success of Fiddlers ReStrung. They serve in all administrative capacities of the group including: sound tech crew, booking managers, gig management, publicity, fund-raising, driving coordinator, newsletter, trailer transportation, etc. By having all of these critical roles performed by parental volunteers, we keep our expenses low, return more money back to the students and enjoy a positive student/parent connection.

Therefore, parents are asked to participate on a regular basis, including driving to gigs at least once or twice a month. Additionally, all parents receive jobs to assist with two annual hometown concerts.

HOMETOWN GUEST ARTISTS

Hometown Concerts since 2004 have included Barrage, Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas, Laurie Lewis, Jeremy Kittel, April Verch, Grant Gordy and the Lonesome County Band.

TRAVEL

Fiddlers ReStrung has frequent performances within one to two hours of Saline. Parent volunteers will drive to these gigs and serve as chaperones. The summer tour transportation is on a tour bus. Recent tours include:

- 2004: Prince Edward Island
- 2005: New York
- 2006: Kentucky, Tennessee
- 2007: Upper Peninsula
- 2008: Minnesota and Wisconsin
- 2008: Upper Peninsula Mini Tour

Questions? Concerns?
Please contact Saline Cultural Arts Specialist
Rebecca Groeb-Driskill at 429-8000 ext. 2338 or
Artistic Director Joshua Herter at 904-6778.