

# 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 of parents in the group, on budgetary and directional decisions. Fiddlers ReStrung is currently a 21 member group.

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

## ARTISTIC STAFF

**Artistic Director:** Allison Cregg is a seasoned and talented violinist with the experience and credentials that will knock your cowboy's hat off. Allison has recently earned her Masters in Violin Performance at the University of Michigan. As a student there, she studied with Aaron Berofsky and preformed with the University Symphony Orchestra, where she served as a Principle Violin. Previously, she received her Bachelors in Violin Performance from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University under the tutelage of Kenneth Goldsmith. She is currently also a member of the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra.

**Music Intern**—Brandon Smith started his music career with the

Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic. He plays violin and mandolin in the Ann Arbor Americana Folk Jazz band The Appleseed Collective. He holds degree in Psychology from the Michigan State University and resides in Ann Arbor.

**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.

**"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**

## 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:** A Fiddlers ReStrung rehearses each Sunday from 3:30 to 5:30pm. The practice sessions start at 3:00 with a full sound 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 Elementary fiddle club and with the 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 Christial Howes, Jeremy Kittel, April 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.

### **PROFESSIONALISM**

The Fiddlers ReStrung are always asked to behave in a professional manner, 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.

### **BUDGET AND FINANCES**

The annual budget for Fiddlers ReStrung is approximately \$75,000. 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**

The tuition of \$600 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 \$850.00 for the 10 day tour of Great Lakes.

### **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.

### **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:

2008: Minnesota and Wisconsin      2008: Upper Peninsula Mini Tour  
2009: Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina and Pennsylvania  
2010: Waterbound Tour (went to all 5 Great Lakes)



**For more information on Fiddlers ReStrung  
visit us at: [www.fiddlersrestrung.com](http://www.fiddlersrestrung.com)**

**For booking inquiries please email us at  
[bookings@fiddlersrestrung.com](mailto:bookings@fiddlersrestrung.com)**

**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 performance or auditions!**