



# In Bloom at Blossom

## *Now More Than Ever, We Need Your Help*

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- Enrichment activities for our students.
- Professional development scholarships for teacher training.
- Technology to enhance student learning and achievement.
- Volunteer support.
- In-kind contributions.

Each day Blossom is working miracles in the lives of deaf, hard-of-hearing children and their hearing family members. Our children succeed where others may not because of our dedicated and caring staff and our individualized

Montessori approach to deaf education.

As a non-profit school, Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf is continually seeking financial support for:

- Scholarships for students.

To become a partner of Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf and help give our children a chance, please contact Rich Engwall at 727-539-7879 or by e-mail at [rengwall@blossomschool.org](mailto:rengwall@blossomschool.org).

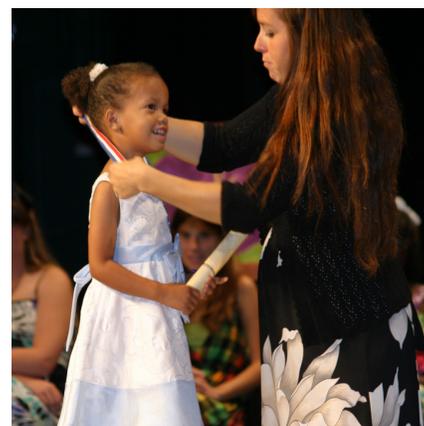
### Did you know?

- Tampa Bay is home to the 4th largest deaf and hard-of-hearing population in the United States.
- 75% of deaf children reach the age of 18 reading at only a 3rd or 4th grade level.
- You can make a difference in the life of a child by sponsoring a Blossom scholarship.

## *A Year of Hard Work Means Stepping Up*

June 10, 2010 was a milestone in the history of Blossom as 26 students stepped up to the next academic level and 2 students, Tyler Cook and Edward Fountain graduated from Blossom to attend Pinellas Park High School in the fall. Tyler was among Blossom's first

students in 2003. According to Blossom's Director, Julie Rutenberg, "It's hard to see them step up knowing that they're leaving us, but we know they're leaving with the knowledge to succeed."



## Taiko Drums...A Sound to be Felt by the Heart

Taiko Japanese drums make a thunderous sound but how do you give deaf children the chance to hear that sound? Students at Blossom were recently treated to a performance by the world-renowned Maturiza Taiko Japanese drummers from the Orlando Taiko Dojo. Performing for the students were Yuko Ishikura and her husband, joined by Ms. Tomoko Yoshikawa. The program was coordinated by Taiko Dojo member Yuni Sakurada and Blossom teacher Linda Williams. As the program began, Blossom's deaf students

were given inflated balloons which were able to catch the thunder of the drums and vibrate, allowing the students to experience the thrill of the Taiko drums along with the other students and faculty members. Students were then given sticks and invited to drum and feel the vibrations. Frequent performers at Epcot, their performance at Blossom was featured in the May issue of Asia Trend Magazine.

According to Mr. Ishikura, "Taiko is not a sound to be heard only by the ear. It is a sound to be felt by the heart."



## Spring Brings New Blossom Board Members

The lifeblood of any non-profit organization is its board of directors. Since its inception, Blossom has been guided by a dedicated group of business and community leaders who truly believe that Blossom's role in this community is to "Give Children a Chance, Parents a Choice."

Chairman Emeritus, Art Rutenberg, and Board Chairman, Jim Harper, are pleased to welcome two new members to the Board of Directors of the Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf.

Joining Blossom's Board this spring are:

Dick Crippen— Senior Advi-

sor to the Tampa Bay Rays and longtime Tampa Bay Area sports broadcaster. Dick's dedication to this community and its children is legend.

Ellen Stavros—Educator and lifelong community leader. Ellen and her family have a long history of support for education she is a welcome

"I am pleased to have these outstanding community and business leaders join our board of directors," said Blossom President Rich Engwall. "From the moment they first visited our school and met our faculty and children they were anxious to help and I can't thank them enough."

## It Was a Great Day for a Garden Party



Spring at Blossom means flowers, preparing for Stepping Up, and the Annual Garden Party at the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg. The Garden Party is the culmination of the groundbreaking Strokes of Genius Program, created by

Blossom's Associate Director, Carol Downing in cooperation with the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg.

Strokes of Genius creates an opportunity for Blossom's students to study works of art by world-renowned artists like O'Keeffe and Monet and then

emulate the artists work as the students create their own works of art. This year's Garden Party featured "blossoms" painted in the styles of various renowned artists, displayed by our students at the museum for its guests. Of course, the party concluded with refreshments in the museum garden.

## A Lot of Love for Mikie

His smile, his unique sense of humor, his practical jokes, and his love have been missing from Blossom for the past couple of months...missing but not forgotten by the students and staff who love Mikie.

Mikie is missed here in Blossom's halls as he continues his recovery from two marathon spinal surgeries at All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, followed by weeks in intensive care.

Recently Mikie's mom became concerned that he was not able to eat and was missing the familiar "Mikie spark" that we all know and love, so Blossom's students and staff paid him a surprise visit at the hospital. During the visit, Mikie got out of bed, visited the lobby, and that night downed a peanut butter sandwich. Several days later he went home and recently joined us for the annual Stepping Up ceremony. A little love goes a long way.



## What's Summer Without Summer Camp?

Summer would not be complete without arts and crafts, story time, water play, field trips to The Florida Botanical Gardens and Great Explorations, and lots of fun. All of those activities and more are part of Summer Camp at Blossom.

According to Blossom Direc-

tor, Julie Rutenberg, "Learning shouldn't stop when the temperature gets above 90 degrees. Summer at Blossom is the time when our youngest students can thrive in a learning environment that's all about making learning fun."

A total of 10 campers ages 3 to 6 are participating in this year's

Summer Camp Program, led by staff members Colette Derks and Thanya Robles.



## Heart for Art is September 21

Now is the time to mark your calendars for one of the most talked-about and eagerly-anticipated Blossom events of the year. The date has been set for the annual "Heart for Art" wine pairing dinner at the Parkshore Grill in St. Petersburg.

On Tuesday, September 21, 2010, Parkshore's team of Steve Westphal and Chef Tyson Grant will open their doors to Blossom's friends to enjoy an evening of some of the finest foods and wines available anywhere in the United States. Proceeds from the evening will benefit the

programs at Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf.

"We look forward to this wonderful evening each year. Our students are grateful to Steve, Tyson and their entire organization for their continued generosity and support of our programs here at Blossom," says Rich Engwall.





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#### OUR MISSION

To be the premier education and communication center for families with deaf and hard of hearing children in the state of Florida.

Non Profit Org  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Tampa FL  
Permit 1648

## *Why Blossom Montessori School for the Deaf?*

The Florida Association of the Deaf indicates that Tampa Bay is home to 348,000 Deaf or hard-of-hearing people, the largest such population in Florida and fourth largest such population in the United States.

In August 2010, Blossom will begin its eighth year of classes. We have received numerous inquiries from interested teachers, school administrators, deaf organizations, interpreters, students, families and others who have heard about Blossom and are interested in how this school accomplishes its important mission.

The first group of Blossom's

students have now graduated, moving on to the public schools, the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind in St. Augustine, or other private educational institutions. Progress reports on those students indicate that all are performing in their new academic environments at or above grade level.

It is apparent that Blossom is accomplishing its objectives to provide our deaf and hard-of-hearing students with the best education available and ensure that our students have the same social and academic experiences and advantages available to any other student.

For Blossom to continue to grow to meet the needs of this community's large deaf and hard-of-hearing population, Blossom must broaden its base of financial support beyond our very generous board of directors in order to meet the financial needs of our primarily low-income student population. Please help us help our children.

No deaf or hard-of-hearing child should be denied a proper education or the opportunity for a rich and full life simply because of his/her inability to hear. At Blossom we give children a chance and parents a choice.



Blossom School, Inc. is a 501C3 organization. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free (800) 435-7352 within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the State. #CH27378