

SCI band program wins festival award

By Tony Zerucha

Teacher Greg Crowe said Springfield Collegiate's (SCI) band program is successful because of the students, and the Manitoba Band Association agrees.

The school returned from the recent Manitoba Band Association's Family of Festivals with the Don Green Award. It recognizes "exceptional performance, both on and off the stage, as well as a deep commitment to musical excellence and the development of outstanding band programs." SCI last won the award in 1993, when its bands were under the tutelage of Robert Payne and Susan Crosby.

Crowe said SCI sent four bands to the festival, a rarity among schools. The Grade 9 Band, Grade 10 Band, Senior Band, and Wind Ensemble all performed.

"All four groups did very well. I thought," Crowe said. "I must not have been the only one who thought so."

The festival provides a unique opportunity for musicians to grow. Professional adjudicators, some from outside of Manitoba, critique performances. A panel listens to two songs from each group and discusses their thoughts together before one shares them with the students.

Bands can receive straight feedback or a star rating. Crowe opts for the feedback alone, as it focuses the students on im-

provement instead of competing for ratings. Adjudicators ask the students questions like what the music means to them. Crowe was impressed with the responses.

"One adjudicator turned to the audience and said, 'You need to realize these folks aren't playing music, they're making music,'" the proud teacher said.

Crowe said there's no finish line in art. No matter how well a band plays, there are always new places to go, and it is his job to take them there. Crowe said every music teacher needs a guiding philosophy. They start thinking about it in university, and it evolves.

His is service, and he models it daily. Musicians serve the melody, the composer, each other, and the audience. They take it seriously but have fun doing it. Along the way, they learn about culture, develop friendships, and understand who they are and how they relate to others.

"There's always this through-line of service when I'm on the podium," Crowe explained. "My hope is that after the students have left here, they have that idea of that seed of service in their minds. It doesn't matter what field they go into."

Develop it a little at a time. Serve them through words and actions. That may mean performance tips, a reference letter for a summer job, or a kind ear.

"It's my job to serve," Crowe said.

Crowe hopes his students bring



Photo by Ashlyn Maheux

Band director Greg Crowe and four of SCI's bands won the Don Green Award at the Manitoba Band Association's Family of Festivals.

that example no matter where life takes them.

"I believe that through teaching the arts, you have the opportunity to impact change upon the world, which I think is super-important right now," he said. "When these

kids get into a tumultuous world like this, I hope they take a moment to say, 'What can I do to serve this situation?'"

Crowe was proud to accept the Don Green Award, perhaps because it confirms what he al-

ready knew.

"I feel quite honoured, not just about the award but to have the opportunity to work with such wonderful students as we have here at Springfield Collegiate," he said. "They really are something special."



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