

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Office of Expanded Learning receives \$25,000 from Denny and Mark's Pro-Am Jam

Office of Communications

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Charleston, SC - Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Office of Expanded Learning (Kaleidoscope) was selected as the recipient of funds raised through the Denny and Mark's Pro-Am Jam's "Call to Give." The 10th anniversary of the event started by NASCAR star Denny Hamlin and Hootie & the Blowfish's lead guitarist Mark Bryan raised \$25,000 for Stono Park Elementary School's Kaleidoscope program and the Baptist Hill Middle High School band. The funding will be used to provide students with enriching opportunities through music.

Bryan and Hamlin (a three-time NASCAR Daytona 500 champion) started the Pro-Am Jam in 2012 and have donated nearly \$2.4 million.

The Baptist Hill band, led by director Jared Sutphin, was selected by the Office of Expanded Learning to be the opening act for Nelly at this year's Pro-Am Jam, which is a mash-up of rock and roll, racing, golf, and charity. Students witnessed first-hand the opportunities and exposure that music can provide. These students were able to interact with Bryan, Smokey Robinson, and other well-known celebrities.

Ashley Peters, Program Officer with the Office of Expanded Learning, explained that the funds will allow the department to provide a variety of musical enrichment opportunities to the students.

"Studies have shown students who participate in music perform better academically, and the more they study music, the better they perform academically," said Peters. "Ultimately, we want to provide as much exposure to the world of music and all the opportunities it can provide, and we're so grateful for the support of Mark and Denny in providing these opportunities for our students."

Shelia Grier, also a Program Officer with the Office of Expanded Learning said the funding also allowed the Kaleidoscope program to offer music to students who attend Stono Park Kaleidoscope after-school program and to support resources for Baptist Hill Middle High's band.

“CCSD’s Office of Expanded Learning has been blessed to have a long-standing partnership with Mark Bryan’s foundation and the Hootie & the Blowfish Homegrown Roundup for over ten years,” said Grier. “We look forward to continuing this partnership and offering more music opportunities to additional Kaleidoscope after-school and summer programs.”

Bryan met with staff members from the Office of Expanded Learning at Stono Park Elementary on December 7, 2022, and presented them with the check.

Jason Sakran, CCSD’s Director of Expanded Learning, stated that he hopes this is just the beginning of a long, fruitful partnership between Mark Bryan and Denny Hamlin.

“We couldn’t thank them enough for their support,” added Sakran. “Our students and families will directly benefit from their generosity.”

For more information, contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 49,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.