

My favorite parts of the WRS Band Program...

in the words of current/former WRS Band members



In retrospect, the discipline and learning fundamentals and sheet music. Back then, it was playing all the awesome percussion instruments.

Ben, Percussion (Class of 2004)

the music, being able to decompress from my core classes for a period and just play

Kellie, Flute (Class of 2005)

Band was a huge part of who I am today, even though I don't play music anymore. It brought me joy to continue improving, and many of my close friends were also in band.

Angie, Flute (Class of 2005)

I made lifelong friends (that I am still friends with 16 years later and had two of them as my bridesmaids in my wedding!). I also learned a lot about competition and how to prepare myself successfully for an audition or interview that really prepared me for life later down the road. I have so many good memories of concerts and different activities

like the carwash.

Sarah, Saxophone (Class of 2006)

Mr. Zilke was the best band teacher. I remember practicing during small group sessions and found those incredibly helpful in my development as a musician. We also played some great music and had a lot of fun.

Hanna, flute (Class of 2007)

I loved being a part of a group and meeting new people who became some of my best friends. I also loved seeing/hearing how our band grew together and the improvement that was made under the direction of Mr. Zilke.

Rachael, Clarinet (Class of 2007)

The music we played. I had so much fun learning all the different songs and getting to play famous pieces we all knew from movies and tv shows. Jr. High band had to be some of my favorite memories as a musician.

Blake, Trombone (Class of 2008)

The music we played was so much fun-I often hear songs today that catch my ear and it brings me back to a simpler place in time.

I remember working with the PHS high school band for a football game and getting to play some of their tunes pre-game and during the game.

I remember playing in the Jazz Band and being able to play a different kind of music. We were pushed harder and more was expected of us- and that challenge made us better musicians and students. Also remember winning 2nd place in the jazz festival... we were still robbed ;)

I remember the special events-playing in the town square for a Christmas festival or playing for special breakfasts or special solo musician festivals.

But most of all I remember the people. The friends I made and connection we had through music-continuing those through high school and beyond. I remember Mr. Zilke and the love and passion he brought to the WRS band room- not to mention his personality he brought and being able to create a relationship with him that involved other topics besides music. And of course all the laughs we all shared.

All of the experiences shaped us. Whether seen in a grand or small scale, these things all have an effect on us today.

Neal, Trombone (Class of 2009)

Aside from getting to play fun and interesting music, getting better and better at my instrument, and learning how to play in a large ensemble, I think the best part of the band program was finding "my people". People I met in the band program remained my friends through high school and college. Someone I sat next to in band every day was part of my wedding this year and I am 26 now!

Being in band never felt like "work" to me, like math class or French class ever did. I got to do something I love in the middle of the school day!

Natalie, Trumpet (Class of 2010)

Making friendships that last

Jacqueline, Bass Clarinet (Class of 2010)

The WRS band program was where I found a good chunk of my lifelong friends. Mr. Zilke encouraged (and sometimes required) me and my classmates to get together outside of class with people who didn't play the same instrument, and because of that I got to know some people that I might never have talked to otherwise and am still good friends with 12

years later. It gave me my first sense of my OWN community, apart from the one my family had created for me. Being able to hear and play types of music that I wouldn't listen to otherwise created a new (at the very least) appreciation for something different.

Shannon, Trombone (Class of 2011)

I met lifelong best friends in band. My best friends through at least high school, and some of my best friends to this day (post-college) are people I first hung out with in group practice sessions! I also remember how fun the social outings and car wash were.

Lisa, Clarinet (Class of 2011)

I enjoyed the performance opportunities we had. I remember specifically playing in a pep-band setting during the Student/Faculty basketball game, and also playing the national anthem for the Schaumburg minor league baseball team.

Max, Trombone (Class of 2012)

Making lifelong friends and some of my most favorite memories in my life.
charlee, clarinet (Class of 2012)

The music we made and the phenomenal direction of our director. He knew each and every one of us truly was something and saw that potential, guiding us through musical growth personally and as a whole band. We even premiered a piece of music!

James R.B., Baritone/Euphonium (Class of 2013)

I started bassoon in 7th grade and the first concert I played, I shocked myself. Learning a new instrument is hard, especially when its about the same size as you. Mr. Zilke is such a supporter of every student. I have come back years later, and not only does he remember me, but he is always excited to hear updates on my life.

Also, Mr. Zilke has some of the best jokes. For example: We were playing some Irish tune (probably a variation on the Irish Washerwoman), and the band kept rushing. It was a fun piece and we all got into it. Well, we were probably 7-8 clicks over tempo and Mr. Zilke stopped us. And, with a dead serious face, said "this song is irish, not russian!" Of course it took a second, and we ALL laughed.

Band was where I met my best friends and I could not imagine my life without it. Mr. Zilke is passionate about his job and I think his passion rubbed off on us.
Kate, Bassoon & flute (Class of 2013)

I loved making new friends and being part of jazz band. Northshore jazz festival was a great memory along with any other concerts. I also loved socializing (definitely too much). Mr Zilke is the best and made it so much fun all the time.

Anja, Trumpet (Class of 2014)

I enjoyed rehearsals and having that break in between regular classes, field trips, such as the time my class went to Wrigley Field, improving individually, and challenging myself to become a better player, but also as a person.
Natalie, Flute (Class of 2017)

My favorite part about being a member of the WRS Band Program would probably have to be the people. They were kind, supportive and friendly also because I'm a pretty quiet person. I'm the type of person to hang back but the people in the program as well as my section made sure I felt comfortable and didn't criticize me for missing a sharp or even coming in late. They made sure I understood where I was supposed to play and for that I'm grateful for. I started 7th grade later than everyone and I was really nervous to play but the clarinet section had my back and looking back I'm glad they were there.

Giselle, Clarinet (Class of 2019)

The concerts were so much fun, and the fact I had something other than academic homework to do at home gave me a good brain break.
Kyler, Clarinet (Class of 2020)

Meeting new friends and becoming a better player.

Riley, Percussion (Class of 2021)

The performances, some of the fun forms we would do on Fridays if we had a sub.
Aaron, Baritone/euphonium (Class of 2021)

I enjoyed having abreak in my day where I could play music with friends. Jazz band was also very fun.

Brighton, Percussion (Class of 2021)

Being able to play so many more percussion instruments than I did in elementary school.
Rosie, Percussion (Class of 2022)

Getting to make new friends
Jacob, Trumpet (Class of 2022)

Meeting new people I wouldn't have had a chance to connect with otherwise
Junya, Alto Saxophone (Class of 2022)

All my friends were in the band program
Vishakh, Alto Saxophone (Class of 2022)

Some of my favorite parts were the fun concerts and the lessons we'd have weekly that I found very fun.
Angel, Trumpet (Class of 2022)

Premiering Not Alone, learning how to play jazz, and just being able to see some of my closest friends everyday!
Gibson, Trumpet (Class of 2022)

The community and great experiences
Patrick, Percussion (Class of 2022)

I made so many new friends in band. I know that probably sounds really cheesy, because everyone says it, but it's true. I have so many more friends than I started with. I never would have met some of my closest friends if I hadn't joined band. Some of the people I met are now almost like my brothers and sisters. I love band. It's not just about the playing, it's also about the friends. You really get to know the people around you and it's so fun to laugh with them when Mr. Zilke throws his baton behind him. Speaking of Mr. Zilke, he is the best teacher ever! I have never enjoyed a class more than I've enjoyed band. My friends and I go down to the band room every morning to talk with him. Best teacher EVER!!!
Kayla, Clarinet/Alto Saxophone (Class of 2023)

I love the friendship we have with each other and I love being able to connect with a variety of different people with colorful personalities.
Stephanie, Trumpet (Class of 2023)

One of my favorite things about the band program is the ability to connect with people. Playing together as a band is such a fun experience, and being able to express yourself through music is wonderful. Music is such a fantastic thing, and being able to take part in something so enlightening everyday is something I'm grateful for. Not only do you get to play and learn more about your instrument, but you also get to form new bonds and friendships with people in the program. Mr. Zilke, the band director, is amazing and I've learned so much in the past two years. The band room is a place to play music, learn new things, meet people, and just have fun. I would totally recommend it to anyone.
Sandhya, Flute (Class of 2023)

Seeing my friends, playing my instruments, concerts are really fun and exciting too. The banquet and the awards at the end of the year is always a fun time for everyone you have raffles and prizes it's pretty cool. It's overall just really fun in general and I'm really glad I didn't take like computer science or something like that (not like it's bad but band is better).
Sam, Trumpet, Piano (Class of 2023)

I love being part of the WRS band program for many reasons. I have made so many friends while being in the program. I also feel like even though im not physically learning the other instruments I am still learning how it sounds and just more about them. I love learning new songs and laughing with my friends when the read through goes very wrong. I love expressing myself through music and getting better and better at the songs so that we can play them in concert. Most of all I love the whole band community because it is so fun and I absolutely love being a part of it.
Selma, flute (Class of 2024)

My favorite parts of band is that we get a break from school work, make many friends, and skip a class every Tuesday or Thursday for lessons.
Frankie, Clarinet (Class of 2024)