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LAPD Band

by Christina Challey

Whether it's performing for terminally ill kids or for an elementary school assembly, the Los Angeles Police Concert Band, L.A.'s own, is dedicated to supporting the LAPD's community outreach efforts toward improving the lives of our city's children through music appreciation.

Every year, the LAPD Concert Band, along with the Chief of Police and sworn and reserve LAPD officers, partner with the Sunshine Kids Foundation to provide a "once-in-a-lifetime experience for kids who are fighting cancer." At the Universal Sheraton Hotel, the Band plays as the kids are escorted to a seating area where they experience a flyover by an LAPD Airship, and then are sworn-in by the Chief of Police as "LAPD cops for a day." The kids then

get to partner with an LAPD officer who takes them on a ride in a black-and-white police car through the streets of Hollywood, escorted by a team of LAPD motorcycle officers, with lights and sirens blasting. During the event, the kids are introduced to some of their favorite actors who portray police officers and detectives on TV shows and movies.

One of these favorite actors is G.W. Bailey, currently the executive director of the Sunshine Kids. G.W. is an award-winning actor recently on the TV show "Major Crimes." Also attending this



Chief Moore, Richard Allen and G.W. Bailey.

year's event, and on the national board of the Sunshine Kids, was Andy Sacks, producer of "Major Crimes," "The Closer" and many other television shows.

Along with performing for the annual event with the Sunshine Kids Foundation, the Band also performs for elementary schools throughout L.A. One of its recent performances was for the Elysian Heights Elementary School—home of Room 8, "the most famous cat in Los Angeles." The legend of Room 8 can be found in the 1966 book written by former Elysian Heights School Principal Beverly Mason and former Elysian Heights School teacher Virginia Finley called "A Cat Called Room 8." It's a heartwarming story about a cat that, for over 15 years, kept showing up at the school's room #8 at lunchtime. It became beloved by faculty and students alike—so much so that "the most coveted job for any Elysian Heights sixth grader was not class president, but cat feeder." Room 8 became an international celebrity, with stories in countless newspapers and television news programs. He received over 10,000 fan letters, most of which were happily answered by the students.

The Band's performance for the students at Elysian Heights School began with an introduction of the Band's executive director, Jim Starr, by Principal Emilio Garza. Principal Garza also introduced Jackie Goldberg, LAUSD School Board member from District 5, who spoke about the importance of music.

The kids loved hearing the Band. Maestro Richard Allen asked the kids what their favorite instruments were. Whatever instrument was mentioned, a Band member would play a little bit from the instrument, tell some of its history and demonstrate how to play it. The kids especially liked the baritone horn and, of course, the drums.

The Band continues to volunteer its time to help the LAPD in providing L.A. schools with the musical side of the Department. Many thanks to our sponsors who help to make these Band performances possible. Should you like to donate to this very worthy cause, please visit the Band's website at www.lasown.com, and go to the Donation Page, or visit our GoFundMe page for elementary schools. For further information about the Band, please contact Jim Starr, executive director, at sngcop@aol.com. ❖



Elysian Heights student with an LAPD hat.

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Elysian Heights kids listening to the Band.