

HARMONIKIDS NEWSLETTER

December 2007



Greetings from Harmonikids!

2007 was another joyful year for Harmonikids. My sessions and workshops took Harmonikids to special kids all around the country, with an especially bluesy flavor this year.

Some highlights include...

A lively session with kids in Memphis' was held at the legendary Stax Records Academy. A handful of kids from the session (who had never played harmonica before) went on to perform a Bo Diddley song and You Are My Sunshine to an auditorium full of folks at the International Folk Alliance Conference!!! The Folk Alliance has been a generous key supporter of Harmonikids from the start. Special thanks to Cindy Cogbill.

A workshop at the Winter Park Blues Festival in Colorado benefited kids from the Starlight Foundation. Then it was up to Laramie, Wyoming to play harmonica with the boys from the Cathedral Home.

In New York City we had a rousing "Blues Party" at the Ronald McDonald House, arranged by long-time friend and supporter Chris Nuehoff. Kids joined in - singing and playing joyfully backed by a full six-piece band of wonderful NYC musicians!!!

Then it was back to Delaware for one of my favorite events, workshops at the Riverfront Blues Festival. The City of Wilmington has been a generous supporter for many years and

featured me as a performer on the main stage as well. This allowed me to return to the A.I. Dupont Hospital for Children for another spirited session with a bunch of kids in the playroom.

Of special note, in October Harmonikids returned to Louisiana to work with New Orleans' child victims of the Katrina disaster. I was first invited to The Saint Bernard Parish Community Center where local folks came by to join in a very enthusiastic session. Then it was off to the Martin Luther King School (the only school to re-open in the lower ninth ward of the city). The 4th grade kids shrieked with excitement as they quickly learned and played songs including the Louisiana State Song (You are my Sunshine). Their heartwarming rendition of This Land Is Your Land was particularly moving. Their wonderful spirit soared high above a city that is still struggling to recover in the birthplace of so much wonderful American music.

Very special thanks to our financial supporters and fundraisers this year including the Folk Alliance, IMTA, Barbizon, Jack Newton, and all of the private donations from kind and generous individuals. Thanks to Barbara Belli for her wonderful web design and support.

Please pass this along to someone who may be interested in supporting Harmonikids. Your assistance makes it all possible.

Kind Regards,

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“New Orleans with its rich musical heritage is a great venue for what Harmonikids offers. Your workshop, held at our community center located directly next door to New Orleans Lower Ninth Ward in St. Bernard Parish in the epicenter of devastation, was a joyful uplifting event. Judging from the excitement generated and the expressions on the kids faces it left a very positive impression on the kids, some of whom will make your workshop the first step in a musical career. On behalf of myself, the community center board of directors and our residents I want to personally thank Harmonikids for coming to our center and conducting your workshop.” □

R.M. "Iray" Nabatoff

Executive Director

Community Center of St. Bernard, New Orleans, Louisiana