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Kids' Orchestra Conducts *Play It Forward* Campaign

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BATON ROUGE, LA (January 28, 2021) – Kids' Orchestra (KO) continues its 10th anniversary year with a renewed commitment to supporting the East Baton Rouge Parish community through accessible music education. To help keep music alive for local elementary-age children, KO pivoted to 100% virtual for the 2020-21 school year, providing students with a safe and fun virtual learning environment through its signature virtual learning program, [KO@Home](#).

KO is a nonprofit organization which endeavors to provide music education to all children, regardless of their family's ability to pay. KO relies on community, state and federal grants, corporate sponsorships, as well as individual donations. With this in mind, the ***Play it Forward*** Campaign is being launched to create community awareness, help recruit students and raise much needed revenue to keep instruments in the hands of its students.

Spokespersons for the Play it Forward Campaign are Dr. Larry Heard, Paige Hoffman and Layne McDaniel.

Dr. Larry Heard, Program and Instrument Inventory Manager, is tasked with keeping track of, distributing, and maintaining all the instruments that KO lends to its students. This past summer, students were asked to submit videos of their performances, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Dr. Heard recalled the touching story of a young man who almost did not submit his video because several strings on his violin had snapped and broken while he was practicing his submission. He figured "why bother?" Dr. Heard told him it would be fixed by the next day, and he would still have time to finish his video performance. "When I saw his video, I was moved by the joy and pride with which he performed," says Dr. Heard. "He loved playing his violin! This is why I do what I do."

Now an accomplished 16-year-old alumnus of the program, Paige Hoffman started with KO at nine years old. "Kids' Orchestra is an astounding program that gives children in the community the opportunity to begin their journey to finding themselves through music. I wonder if I would be the composer and musician I am today if I wouldn't have had an outlet like Kids' Orchestra," says Paige. Paige plans on pursuing a degree in composition to eventually become a composition professor herself. She is looking forward to inspiring young musicians just as she was inspired in her time at KO.

Community activist and supporter of numerous non-profits in our community, Layne McDaniel provided the inspiration for the first ***Play It Forward*** Campaign in 2013. Layne credits his experiences in junior high school and high school band with changing the trajectory of his life. McDaniel says, "Kids' Orchestra gives our youth a creative outlet that is no longer available in many schools while providing them with a positive way to express their feelings and giving them a sense of accomplishment. I know the tremendous impact that music has had on my life and the impact that it can have on our youth."

The ***Play It Forward*** campaign will run mid-February through mid-May, then pick up again when the school year starts (hopefully with in person after school classes) in mid-August through December.

Play It Forward is sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana, Louisiana Healthcare Connections WAFB, and iHeart Media.

Kids' Orchestra's programming, is supported by the community, including the Capital Area United Way, Aetna for a Better Louisiana, The Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Division of the Arts, and Rotary Club of Baton Rouge Foundation, among other partners and supporters.

For more information about KO@Home, visit: <https://kidsorchestra.org/koathome/>.



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About Kids' Orchestra

Kids' Orchestra's (KO) mission is to build a community of creative, confident, and socially engaged students through music education. KO serves elementary-age students across East Baton Rouge Parish and gives them the opportunity to study music, play an instrument, and perform in an ensemble. Learn more: www.kidsorchestra.org

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