



NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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San Jose Middle School Teacher Honored

(Novato, CA)...Benedetta Dalbesio, music and drama teacher at San Jose Middle School (SJMS), was awarded the Gilbert T. Freitas Memorial Award for Achievement in Music Education at the California Association for Music Education (CMEA), Bay Section, Annual Conference January 9-10, 2015.

Ms. Dalbesio has grown the music and drama programs from 62 students when she arrived at San Jose Middle School in 2008 to over 300 in 2014. The San Jose Jazz Band attends numerous jazz festivals throughout the year and consistently earns Unanimous Superior ratings. The Concert Band at SJMS also attends festivals and CMEA competitions and earns similar ratings.

In addition to the jazz and concert bands, Ms. Dalbesio created World Beat, a class at SJMS created for students who did not take band in elementary school. She creates all the music for the students who use African, Cuban, Egyptian, and Caribbean instruments and rhythms to make the music come alive. World Beat performs at Farmers Markets, concerts and Six Flags festivals.

"Benedetta is an extraordinary teacher and musician. She is incredibly devoted to her students and her passion for the performing arts is reflected in their growth and development as musicians and performers. San Jose Middle School and NUSD are lucky to have someone of Benedetta's caliber working with our students," commented Justin Mori, Principal at San Jose Middle School.

Ms. Dalbesio began teaching music in 1976 in Sebastopol at the Gravenstein Union School District followed by 10 years at Sinaloa Middle School where she earned her first Golden Bell Award along with her bands receiving numerous Unanimous Superior ratings at music festivals. She received two more Golden Bell awards at San Jose Middle School.

Gilbert Freitas was one of the original owners of Best Music Company and Best Instrument Repair Company. He was an ardent supporter of music education in CMEA Bay Section and

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through his generosity over the years he donated resources to many schools, music camps and youth bands/orchestras, supplied scholarships, and used the resources of their Oakland stores to help poorer schools and their music programs. In many ways he was like the late Don Schmeer of Byron Hoyt Sheet Music Company, helping music education where it was needed most. Gil died in September 1985 at the young age of 56. This award pays tribute to the music education community in CMEA Bay Section in memory of Gilbert Freitas. There are two awards, one for a young teacher with less than 7 years of experience, and one for a veteran teacher with more than 7 years of experience.

CMEA Bay Section is a regional affiliate of [CMEA](#) (The California Association for Music Education) and [NAfME](#) (The National Association for Music Education). The mission of the Bay Section of the California Association for Music Education is: 1) to promote the advancement of music education; 2) to cultivate social and educational interaction among its members; 3) to assist its members in seeking individual and collective growth as musicians, educators, and conductors.

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