

Sharing Their Love of

MUSIC

Anden and Jocelyn bring the power of music to kids in foster care.

By JOSHUA ALSTON

Anden Toale and Jocelyn Spellman love music. They love listening to music, talking about music, and most of all, playing music (flute and guitar for Anden; percussion for Jocelyn). In fact, the friends love music so much, they think everyone should get the opportunity to learn to play it.

But Anden and Jocelyn know that not all kids have that chance. A few years ago, they decided to try to fix that. “We’ve both had amazing times in band—it’s so much fun, and it’s helped us make new friends,” Anden says. “We wanted to figure out how to give that gift of music to other kids.”

Together, they came up with the idea for Music Buddies, an organization that pairs high school musicians with kids in the local foster care system. Foster care is a temporary situation for children who can’t live with their families. Kids in foster care often move a lot, so they may lack

WHO:

Jocelyn Spellman, 16, and Anden Toale, 17

WHERE:

Palm Beach, FL



HEROIC ACT:

Founding Music Buddies, a group that provides music lessons to kids in the local foster care system

access to instruments or regular lessons. Music Buddies (with help from an organization called Speak Up for Kids) provides everything: instruments, instruction books, and lessons from the teen musicians.

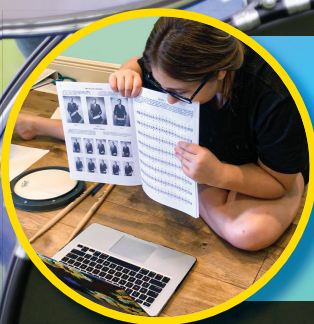
Because of Covid-19, the 30-minute music lessons take place over Zoom. Teaching an instrument virtually to a kid who’s never played it before “is definitely a challenge,” Jocelyn says. The pair hopes Music Buddies teachers will be able to give music lessons in person in the future.

The program currently has 16 teen music teachers and 22 students, and Anden and Jocelyn hope it continues to grow. Both friends say the experience has been hugely rewarding. “I’d been working with one boy for a month, and he couldn’t get a sound out of the flute,” Anden says. “But one day he got a note out, and he was so excited. Just seeing the look on his face was really cool.”

SHUTTERSTOCK.COM (BACKGROUND, LETTERS); JIM McMAHON/MAPMAN (MAP); TWO RIVERS PHOTOGRAPHY (JOCelyn & ANDEN); COURTESY DE SPELLMAN (JOCelyn); COURTESY SANDY WELLS (ANDEN)



Turn to
pg. 24 to read
about a famous
athlete who spent time
in foster care as
a kid.



JOCELYN AND ANDEN'S ADVICE

To be a hero in your own community, Jocelyn and Anden suggest coming up with ways to use your hobbies or interests to help others. "If there's an activity you love, there's probably a cool way to do it for people who need it," Anden says.

