

## Spotlight: Davin Haley

### Middle Schooler Helps Musicopia Give the Gift of Music



Davin at his Bar Mitzvah (left) and Davin with Mr. O'Neill and the CMS Jazz Band at Shannondell (right.)

Davin Haley's face lights up whenever he talks about the saxophone and playing jazz. As music is a major source of joy in Davin's life, it crushed him when he dropped his saxophone and it broke. Luckily, he was able to take his instrument to get repaired. He felt grateful and thought about how someone else — someone who loved music as much as he did — may not be able to afford to get it fixed or replaced. This incident made Davin passionate about supporting Musicopia's [Gift of Music Program](#), which he helped fund as part of his Bar Mitzvah project.

Davin grew up in a musical household and learned to play piano at age five. However, his passion for playing music blossomed from learning and playing in school. He picked up the saxophone in fourth grade and has played it ever since. Davin will soon be an eighth grader at Colonial Middle School, where he plays alto sax in his school's concert band, wind ensemble, and jazz band. The jazz band has influenced his love for music the most. "When I started competitions with the jazz band, I really started to play. I was playing non-stop, practicing three times a day," Davin shared.

As his love of music grew, he noticed that playing music affected him in new ways. "Whatever I had coming up — a test or homework that I was stressed about — all that would go away when I played my music," Davin explained. The benefits music had on his life didn't stop there. "It gives you confidence. It helps you focus better in school," he added. "Music also helped me socially. I've made so many friends in the band."

His jazz band director, Mr. O'Neill, also fostered his love of music. Davin looks forward to dropping by his office after school, where he receives extra guidance on playing challenging pieces. "Mr. O'Neill is a great teacher," Davin said. "Even after the jazz band season, Mr. O'Neill still helped me because there's always room to grow." Davin is excited by his journey of growing as a musician. He loves putting in the effort to overcome challenges and feeling

accomplished afterward. Mr. O'Neill has also influenced his understanding of how music can impact others by sharing that "music makes people who don't have a voice heard."

Since music had become a significant part of his life, he wanted to support a music organization for his Bar Mitzvah project. Davin chose to fundraise for Musicopia because the non-profit helps students in every step of their music education journey, starting with the most fundamental part, the instrument. He loved that the organization gives students an experience that mirrors his own. Musicopia's in-school programming provides the passionate staff to teach students how to play, nurture their love of music, and help them grow. By learning music in school, students can experience the same sense of community that Davin has with his school band.

Davin also wanted to help bring joy to the elderly as part of his Bar Mitzvah project. He saw music as an opportunity to do so and asked Mr. O'Neill if the CMS Jazz Band could help. Davin's mother arranged for the band to play at Shannondell at Valley Forge, the retirement community where she works, and the Jazz Band learned new songs for this special opportunity. "I love listening to music as well as playing. Music is a form of healing. It puts everybody in a good mood and can brighten someone else's day. That's what I hope to do when I play," Davin said. With Mr. O'Neill's approval, Davin discussed his fundraising efforts for Musicopia with the Shannondell community, inspiring many of his bandmates to donate to the cause. The experience of sharing music with the Shannondell residents meant a lot to Davin and his peers, and Davin believes that the experience helped everyone love music more.

In the coming school year, he hopes to arrange another event at Shannondell with his jazz band and to continue fundraising for Musicopia. "Music gives me so many opportunities. Everybody should have the opportunity to play an instrument, even if they don't want to take it. It's nice to be able to give that to others by helping Musicopia," Davin shared.

Although Davin doesn't know if he'll ever play professionally (his goal is to be a film director), he knows that music will always be a part of his life. "No matter what I do, I still hope to play the saxophone. I hope to share my music because I love playing it, and from what I've seen, people love hearing it," he said.

Musicopia accepts donated instruments in any condition, and thanks to Davin's generosity, the Gift of Music Program can repair more instruments and distribute them to children in the community. The non-profit is deeply grateful for Davin and the Colonial Middle School Jazz Band. Thank you for helping Musicopia give the Gift of Music!