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Intergenerational crowd warmly welcomes back Concert at the Res after two-year pandemic hiatus

By Sharon K. Sobotta



One of several performances at May 14 Concert at the Res. Photo Sharon K. Sobotta

Four-year-old Leila smiled ear-to-ear, while pointing toward the stage at the Lafayette reservoir. Why? "Because my brother plays jazz."

Leila and her mom Meera Sreenivasan were among the few hundred people who gathered May 14 for the annual Concert at the Res, hosted by the Lafayette Rotary Club, after undergoing a two-year pandemic hiatus.

"My son is a percussionist and it's great to be out here on this beautiful, sunny day," Sreenivasan says. "I love hearing him play with his teacher Bob Athayde, who's retiring, because he brings so many people from different generations together."

Throughout the day, students from the local schools cycled across the stage playing music, beating conga drums and singing for a happy intergenerational crowd, thrilled to be back together again.

Katie Penn showed up at the concert to listen to her seventh-grade son play, but she leaves with an even deeper appreciation for the community of Lafayette than when she arrived. "When the kids were playing online, it wasn't quite the same. There's something about the collectiveness of music," Penn says. "It's nice to celebrate their teacher and it's fun to come together and bring our kids and watch them be influenced by music."

Monica Phillips doesn't have a student in the band, but the concerts have been on her online calendar for a long time. "I came back from a work conference and 'Concert at Res' popped up on my calendar," says Phillips, who knew when she experienced the reservoir concert a few years ago, that she'd be back. "I love outdoor concerts. I've missed the art and wine festival and I'm so excited that concerts (in the plaza are resuming). Music is such a great connection and a great way to bring the community together."

Stanley Middle School Music Director and Director of the Lafayette Summer Music Workshop Bob Athayde, the man that so many parents and community members gushed about, may have directed his final concert at the reservoir, but promises he'll be back. "I can't wait to come to this concert again next year and sit back in a chair and enjoy the music as my former student Todd Minson directs," Athayde says. "It's so important to hear live music. If you hear these parents and these kids, that's all you need, to know what music does for people."

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