

May 3, 2008

What does it take to build a successful band program? It starts with dozens of fifth graders, most of whom can't tell a note from a rest. Through years of teaching, practice, and hard work, our current band leadership has nurtured award-winning ensembles and individuals, resulting in numerous invitations to perform at local, state and national levels. But a program like this doesn't happen by magic. It takes strong, consistent leadership.

As a result of unavoidable budget cuts, the Fergus Falls band program as we know it will undergo drastic changes. There are currently about 500 students, grades 5-12, involved in band. There are, at present, three teachers over the band program, but imminent cuts will reduce the teacher count to two. Some of our favorite programs will fall by the wayside, possibly including, but not limited to: 7th and 8th grade honor band, one of the jazz bands, Homecoming field shows, All-State Band auditions, high school lessons, music competitions, and marching band. Since music is academic in nature, it is not eligible for the mandated activities fees of extracurricular programs, such as sports.

So what can *we* do? In order to keep current programs that we value, we must raise the money ourselves. If every band member contributed \$100 per year, we would have the \$50,000 needed to keep programs running at their present level. We are proposing a *voluntary*, tax-deductible donation of \$100 per child per year to help keep our current band program. *No child* would be excluded from participation in band because of inability to make a contribution. For the balance, we are appealing to FFHS alumni, grandparents and local businesses who might be interested in sponsoring one or more band students in this way.

A fund has been established to collect these donations. Please make checks payable to Fergus Falls Band Boosters and send by May 16th to: PO Box 115, Fergus Falls, MN 56538.

Working together, we can continue the tradition of musical excellence our school is known for, one that we all can be proud of for years to come.

If you have any questions, please contact one of the following band board members:

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