



Saint Viator Instrument Collection Creates Beautiful Music in Belize

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Students in Belize proudly show off the instruments they received.

Band students at Saint Viator High School collected nearly 50 used instruments last winter after holding drives at their respective parishes and schools. Last month, the instruments finally found a home.

The Rev. Daniel Hall, C.S.V., the former social studies department chair at Saint Viator, delivered them to their intended recipients: a high school band program in Belize.

In all, he turned over 38 restored instruments to the marching band at the high school served by the Viatorian mission at St.

Francis Xavier Church, in Corozal Town, Belize.

“They said it was like Christmas in June,” Hall said. “It was really satisfying.”

Hall first saw the high school band perform last year when he returned to the mission to help minister during Holy Week.

Its students eventually won the Governor General’s National Marching Band competition, but with broken down instruments.

“That’s what I first noticed,” Hall says, “that the boy with the big bass drum was playing with mallets that were duct-taped together. I thought, ‘We can do better.’”

He brought the idea back to Saint Viator High School, where students ran it. Working under the direction of their band director, Tom Seaman, they set up collection drives in Arlington Heights, Des Plaines, Hoffman Estates, Mount Prospect, Palatine and Prospect Heights.

They collected nearly 50 instruments in all --- including tenor saxophones, flutes, piccolos, trombones, trumpets, clarinets, alto saxophones, snare drums, a drum set and three violins --- but many needed to be refurbished. Some even were beyond repair, school officials said.

A grant from the Clerics of St. Viator and a donation from Quinlan & Fabish music store in Mount Prospect covered the instruments’ repair, enabling them to be shipped out in June.

Hall made the presentation to the students themselves, along with their principal, Endeavora Jorgensen, and their music director, Brad More. He expects to ship another box next month, with new reeds for the wind instruments, and more drumsticks and mallets for the percussion pieces.

On Saturday, Hall will return to Belize for a new assignment as pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church. He was one of the Viatorians who founded the mission in Central America in 1998. It now serves 23 surrounding parishes, 22 elementary schools and most recently, the high school.

With more instruments, high school officials said they hoped to participate in international competitions with neighboring Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico.