

Pine Richland junior brings musical holiday cheer to senior citizens

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Callie Stoltz, a junior at Pine Richland High School, performs virtually for residents of IntegraCare's Hunters Woods community in Virginia.

Callie Stoltz has played the violin for nearly as long as she can remember. The Pine-Richland High School junior started playing at age 3, and in that time has learned how much music can lift the spirits of both the performer and the audience.

She also appreciates the impact a performance might have when the audience is comprised of seniors, especially those who have had to contend with the daily covid-19 guidelines and restrictions associated with a pandemic.

"I know that personally, being quarantined and spending so much time at home has been very hard for me and others, especially during the holiday season," Stoltz said. "I am sure that for seniors in these communities it must be very difficult feeling isolated from others. I want to do anything I can to help brighten their spirits, and I think Christmas is a perfect time to do that."

The 16-year-old has volunteered to perform virtually for seniors at IntegraCare, which operates 11 senior living communities in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, according to a news release.

"I would also love to extend these performances into the future as well, to continue hopefully bringing them something they can look forward to during this difficult time," Stoltz said.

Her father, Eric Stoltz, is executive vice president of IntegraCare.

Eric Stoltz is proud of his daughter for thinking of others and sharing her musical gift, but he pointed out that the idea to do the virtual performances was entirely Callie's, and she worked with IntegraCare LifeStyles & LifeStories director Butch Cassidy to coordinate the performances with the assistance of Matt McDowell of IntegraCare's IT team.

"Callie reached out and asked if she could volunteer to do a performance for every community via Microsoft TEAMS," Cassidy said. "She wants to do this 100% volunteer. We are looking at close to 21 hours of volunteer time. This is an incredible act of kindness and caring for our seniors."

Callie's first virtual performance was well-received by senior residents and team members at Hunters Woods at Trails Edge in Reston, Va. She had a second virtual performance at Magnolias of Lancaster, a memory care community in Pennsylvania. Other communities are hoping to set dates.

The initial performance has been downloaded to IntegraCare's YouTube channel to provide residents another opportunity to watch.

"I play a lot of classics like 'Joy To the World,' 'Deck the Halls' and 'Silent Night,'" Callie Stoltz said. "I also have a few Hanukkah songs included. Then, I mixed in some selections from movies like 'Frosty the Snowman,' 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,' 'Home Alone' and 'Miracle on 34th Street.'"

When she graduates from Pine-Richland High School, Callie is interested in furthering her education. She is leaning towards studying political science or international relations, currently focusing on colleges in the Boston area such as Boston University, Tufts and Northeastern.

She also is in the Duquesne School of Music program and takes lessons given by a member of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Callie also plays in the Pittsburgh Youth Concert Orchestra, which is a youth symphony orchestra that plays professional music pieces and even tours internationally.

"I have always had a love for music, art, and creativity, which is why I love playing and have continued playing for so many years," she said.

"Callie is a special person and a talented musician," Cassidy said. "We truly appreciate her performances, and our seniors have especially enjoyed the holiday classics."

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