

Toyota and VH1 Save The Music National Music Education Program Culminates with Grant Presentation to Chicago Area Schools

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Chicago, Nov. 7, 2016 — Toyota and VH1 Save The Music’s national music festival activation and social media campaign #ToyotaGiving came to a close yesterday as Toyota presented three Chicago area schools each with \$10,000 grants that will provide musical instruments and equipment to each school.

At an energetic school-wide assembly held at John Spry Community Elementary School on Thursday, November 3, Tyler McBride, Engagement Marketing Manager at Toyota, and Chiho Feindler, Senior Director of Programs and Policy at VH1 Save The Music, awarded the grants to the three participating schools – John Spry Community, Goudy Technology Academy, and Daniel Boone Elementary. John Spry’s Assistant Principal Pablo Guzman and Chicago Public Schools’ Director of Arts Education Evan Plummer were also on-hand to present the grant and spoke to the importance of music education in Chicago’s public schools. Chicago local and self-proclaimed “Ghetto Gospel” singer Sir the Baptist surprised the students with a soulful performance of his track “What We Got,” which brought the entire auditorium to their feet. He also invited thirty music students from all three schools up to the stage to perform a rousing rendition of “Wake Up.” Several students performed with his band, adding elements of violin, cello, and drums to the mix, while others stomped and sang along with Sir to the chorus: “We gotta wake up, we can change the world.”

The grant was achieved through an interactive festival activation and social media campaign implemented at music festivals nationwide, including Lollapalooza, Sasquatch, Voodoo Music + Arts Experience, Stagecoach, Afropunk, Ruido Fest, Firefly Music Festival, and Country 500. The activation engaged with festivalgoers and artists through interactive large-scale pointillism art pieces, unique to each festival and built using plexiglass and multicolored globes. Festivalgoers and artists were invited to write or draw their answer to the important question – **“What Does Music Mean to You?”** – on the globes, which were then added to the art piece. As each festival progressed, the mural evolved as it slowly filled up with hand drawn pieces. By the end of the festival weekend, the art was displayed for festivalgoers to check out their handiwork, complete with hundreds of personalized messages speaking to the importance of music. Artists who participated in the activation had the below to say:

“Music means I am not alone” – Third Eye Blind’s Stephan Jenkins

“Music is Everything” – City & Colour’s Dallas Green

“Music is how we connect. Music is how we express ourselves” – G-Eazy

With the eight festival run complete, Toyota was able to fulfill a \$40,000 donation to VH1 Save The Music, which was divvied up to fulfill three Keys + Kids grants at three deserving Chicago schools. Each Keys + Kids grant consists of \$10,000 worth of musical instruments; a Casio Celviano Grand Hybrid GP-500 Piano and 3 Casio WK-7600 Music Workstations. VH1 Save The Music established the Keys + Kids grant in response to the growing need for high-quality, functional pianos, and to provide even more students with a safe and inclusive community to learn through the arts.

“Altruism is at the forefront of our brand, so we’re thrilled to partner with VH1 Save The Music to support music education across the country,” said Steve Appelbaum, national engagement marketing manager, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. “Cultivating curiosity and creativity is so integral to our nation’s progress and VH1 Save The Music is the perfect partner to help Toyota invest in the quality of education across the country.”

“We are gearing up to celebrate 20 years at VH1 Save The Music and partners like Toyota have helped significantly with our mission to ensure music is a part of every child’s complete education,” says Henry Donahue, executive director of VH1 Save The Music Foundation. “We’re thrilled to be in these communities and that our work over the summer has brought instruments and music back to these schools.”

