



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Chase County Schools students in grades 3-12 will get the chance to experience a new musical opportunity when The Young Americans come to the school Feb. 25-27.

The Young Americans travel throughout the United States and internationally to bring music to schools.

The three-day workshop will begin after school Monday, Feb. 25, continue during the school day, Tuesday, Feb. 26 and culminate with a show on Wednesday night, Feb. 27. There, workshop participants will perform alongside The Young Americans.

The non-profit music organization was founded in 1961 in Hollywood, Calif. The primary goal of the organization is to provide talented young student performers, 17-23 years of age, with education in music, dance, performance and teaching methods.

While developing these skills, the young people support music in schools and its benefits by conducting music outreach workshops.

The core of the workshop focuses on providing experiences and tools to students that yield individual, personal growth and understanding.

Nebraska native T.J. Stoltz of Blair visited CCS last week to tell students about the workshop and encourage participation.

Stoltz was a member of The Young Americans from 2004-2008, participating in nine international tours and one national tour. He now serves as an associate producer for the organization.

He said The Young Americans includes 300 members, divided into three different casts. The members come from 40 different states and 12 countries.

Jodi Leiss key to visit

CCS elementary music teacher Jodi Liess was instrumental in bringing the group to Imperial.

While teaching at Cambridge, she brought The Young Americans there. In her first year, here, she wanted Imperial students to get the opportunity as well.

The Young Americans have visited Cambridge every three years for the past 15 years.

Cambridge and Imperial will be among the eight Nebraska schools visited by the group during their swing through the state.

The workshop is open to any CCS student. There is a \$57 registration fee, which includes a t-shirt that will be worn during the concert. Tickets for that show will be \$10 for adults and \$8 for students.

Liess said she has already received a contribution from the Pom-Poms to help defray cost for students to attend.

Additional fund raising is underway to provide scholarships so that no student who wants to participate is turned away.

Donations can be made at the school, Imperial Super Foods and Pinnacle Bank.

Due to the group's touring schedule, Wednesday night was the only night they could hold the concert.

Liess said they do not schedule Wednesday night school events. She and music teacher Randy Hayes met with members of the ministerial association to inform them about the conflict. Host families are also being sought to house the 45-member cast, she noted. People wanting more information can contact Liess or Hayes at the school.