

PRESS RELEASE

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300 Integrated Arts Academy Students, 300 Harmonicas, 30 Minutes

Burlington – On Friday, May 20 the entire student body at the Integrated Arts Academy (IAA) will gather for a special arts experience. Blues harmonica master Bob Stannard will present each student with a harmonica – and teach them how to play in 30 minutes!

Stannard, who is a Vice Chair of the Vermont Arts Council board of trustees, visited IAA in March and was impressed with how the arts are so seamlessly integrated into the educational experience. “IAA is a model for how the arts can deepen and broaden each child’s learning,” said Stannard. “I was inspired by the school and the students and wanted to find a way to share my passion for music.”

With the help of other Council trustees and friends, Stannard purchased 300 harmonicas in the key of “C” from Be-Music in Rutland and started planning how to teach an entire school in 30 minutes. “I’ve never taught more than one student at a time, so this is a bit daunting,” said Stannard. “But I’ve seen firsthand how open these young people are to new experiences and challenges. I’m confident that they will be playing in no time!”

Stannard has been playing and singing the blues since 1969. He has performed with B.B. King and many of the nation’s most important blues musicians. He’s recorded three albums and written two Vermont humor books and recently co-wrote a memoir with Bob Zappa on growing up with his famous brother, Frank Zappa.

The Integrated Arts Academy offers its students an interdisciplinary curriculum and a dynamic approach to learning where the arts are central to academics. Students actively create, communicate through, and respond to their own and other’s work in the disciplines of visual arts, dance, music, and theatre. Adhering to Vermont Standards of Learning, the thematic program enhances the understanding of and connections between the fields of knowledge. Creativity is pervasive in the student-centered curriculum and demonstrated in the physical environment. Collaboration among students, staff members, parents, and community arts partners enrich the in-depth learning with the arts to develop the skills and dispositions necessary for 21st Century learning.

The Vermont Arts Council envisions a state where everyone has access to the arts and creativity in their life, education, and community. Through its programs and services, the Council strives to increase public awareness of the positive role artists and arts organizations play in communities and to maximize opportunities for everyone to experience the arts. Since 1965, the Council has been the state's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts in Vermont. www.vermontartscouncil.org.

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