

MAPS Band members enjoy a busy summer

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MANISTEE — Quite a few students from the Manistee Area Public Schools band program enjoyed a musical summer during the past several months.



Members of the Manistee High School Band who took part in the Michigan Ambassadors of Europe trip that went to London, Paris, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria and Germany pose in front of some of the beautiful scenery they saw on the trip.

MAPS director of bands Andrea Mack said they had a variety of activities that the students took part in over the course of the summer that quite

literally had them traveling to various locations around the state and world to put their musical talents to work.

“We had five students from Manistee band go to the Michigan Ambassadors of Europe trip,” said Mack. “I was on that trip as were three parents. We went to London, Paris, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria and Germany. We stayed three days in each place with the exception of Liechtenstein.”

Mack laughed and said they were treated to some very hot summer weather when they landed in Germany, but the overall experience was enjoyed by all. A total of 315 people from all over Michigan took part in the trip.

“It was a great trip and experience and the kids performed everywhere,” said Mack. “The only problem was it was so hot we couldn’t perform in Germany as it was 107 degrees when we visited.”

Manistee band members who took the trip were Seth Thompson, Brandi Monroe, Aleah Miller, Arian Gilbert and Alora Sundbeck. Also going on the trip from Manistee were adults Una Miller, Tamie Thompson, and Elizabeth Mattice.

This summer the Manistee Band also sent more than 20 students to the Blue Lake Fine Arts Summer Camp in Twin Lake to take part in a variety of different programs. Mack said it wouldn’t have been possible without the support of the Manistee Area Public Schools Band Boosters organization.



More than 20 MAPS band students attended programs at the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp this summer.

“The Band Boosters gave over \$8,000 in scholarships this year to 13 kids, but some went on their own to Blue Lake,” said Mack. “So if anyone wonders where the annual fruit sale money and concession stand money raised during the year, goes to, it is used for things like this to help the kids.”

Mack said the vital role those volunteers play help keeps the band program strong and right now they could use some volunteers this fall for the concession stand.

“We are still looking for people to volunteer at the concession stand, so anyone who would like to volunteer they can call me at (231) 723-2547 (school office) and I will get them a volunteer application,” said Mack.

Several years ago a former Manistee student, Frank Loomis served as head drum major for the Michigan State University Marching Band when it performed at the Rose Bowl football game. Two students who may be looking to follow in those footsteps some day are Ryan Biller and Tug Thuemmel.

“They attended the Central Michigan University Drum Major Camp in Mt. Pleasant,” said Mack. “Of all the kids that were there, Ryan finished as the first runner-up drum major. He also was first place as the Best Marching Band drum major, so he did very well.”

Biller also was busy in other areas this summer concerning music, according to Mack.

“Ryan, Titus Lind and Seth Thompson all played in the Benzie Community Orchestra this summer where they put on four concerts,” said Mack. “It was a busy summer this



Manistee High School Band members (left to right) Seth Thompson, director Andrea Mack, Titus Lind and Ryan Biller performed with the Benzie Community Orchestra this summer.

year for many of the kids and that was terrific. The parents were very supportive of the band program, so I am very thankful and couldn't be happier with what is going on."

Mack said they are also taking the first step next week for the up and coming Chippewa Band members.

"On Sept. 12 we will be starting the fifth grade band fitting day for instruments where all the kids can come in at 8:30 a.m. at Kennedy Elementary," said Mack. "We hope to get the kids all excited about band and on Sept. 17 the parents can come at night and Meyer Music will be here so the parents can actually rent the instruments. We will start the band then on Sept. 18 and they will meet every day for the rest of the year."

Anyone wanting more information should call Kennedy Elementary School for details at (231) 723-3271.