

Noteworthy News

Puerto Rican arts student displaced by Hurricane Maria receives gift of music

Gift courtesy of Palm Beach Symphony and Dreyfoos School of the Arts Foundation.



Jacqueline Bosch, Palm Beach Symphony Education & Outreach Director; Dr. Susan Atherley, Dreyfoos School of the Arts Principal; Gabriel Morales, 15, Dreyfoos School of the Arts student; Kris Lidinsky, Executive Director of the Dreyfoos School of the Arts Foundation; David McClymont, Executive Director of Palm Beach Symphony

Palm Beach Symphony's Executive Director David McClymont and Education & Outreach Coordinator Jackie Bosch presented a reconditioned acoustic/electric guitar to Gabriel Morales, a young student who fled Puerto Rico with his family to escape Hurricane Maria. The presentation took place Tuesday, Nov. 7 on the campus of Dreyfoos School of the Arts in West Palm Beach, where Morales has been enrolled since arriving from Puerto Rico.

"Nothing gives us more pleasure than helping build the foundation for future generations of music and cultural arts patrons," said McClymont. "Music education is a vital part of Palm Beach Symphony's mission, and we're committed to offering programming that opens up live classical music performances to children and families, brings professional music mentorship in Palm Beach County schools, and puts refurbished instruments into the hands of young musicians like Gabriel Morales."

Morales, 15, and his family caught the last flight out of Puerto Rico on Sept. 19, the day before the hurricane hit the island. The Morales family left behind their rented home and all their possessions, including Gabriel's beloved guitar and a lifetime collection of artist tools

belonging to Ulisses and Iris Morales, both artists who worked at a university in Puerto Rico.

While attending the Pablo Casals School of Fine Art in Puerto Rico, Morales spent his spare time teaching himself to play guitar by watching YouTube videos. Since fleeing to Florida, he has been able to continue his arts education as a theatre major at Dreyfoos School of the Arts while living in temporary housing with family members in Lantana. Morales' teachers reported he was thriving in his new environment but feeling the loss of his home and possessions, especially his beloved guitar.

When the staff at the Dreyfoos School of the Arts Foun-

dation, which raises funds to support the arts and academic curriculum at DSOA, learned of Morales' loss, they contacted Palm Beach Symphony. Through its Instrument Donation Program, which arranges for the refurbishment of donated instruments and puts them in the hands of underserved children and school music programs in Palm Beach County, the Symphony arranged for a newly reconditioned electric/acoustic guitar to be presented to Morales.

Morales thanked David McClymont with a heartfelt handshake and an expression of excitement. "I'm so stoked," said Morales. "[The guitar] sounds so, so beautiful with the steel strings. It's great."