



Commentary

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THE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION

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HOW SWEET IT IS!
A grant from The Columbus Foundation helps
Ohio State School for the Blind's marching band
head to the Tournament of Roses Parade

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MARCHING BAND HEADS WEST

Ohio State School for the Blind to play in Rose Parade

Scarlet and gray won't be the only color uniforms from Ohio seen in Pasadena come New Year's Day. The Ohio State School for the Blind (OSSB) Marching Panthers will don their red, white, and blue as one of just 23 bands invited from across the country to march in the 121st annual Tournament of Roses Parade on January 1, 2010.

The theme for this year's Rose Parade is 2010: A Cut Above the Rest. The theme fits well for OSSB, as its band is not only the only blind marching band ever chosen to participate; it's also the smallest, with 32 members.

The idea for the band was the result of a casual conversation in 2005 between Ohio School for the Deaf Superintendent Edward E. Corbett, Jr., Ph.D., and former Ohio State School for the Blind Superintendent Louis A. Mazzoli, Ph.D.

"Ed mentioned they were re-

"This experience is enlarging their world and the connection with other communities. The interaction they have had with others has been invaluable."

— CAROL AGLER, OHIO STATE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

instituting their football team after decades of inactivity, and I asked them if they needed a band," said Mr. Mazzoli. "After all, every football team needs to have a band." He took the idea to Carol Agler, OSSB music director, who agreed to help transform her existing pep and jazz band into one that marches as well.



The Ohio State School for the Blind's marching band was one of 23 bands invited to march in the 121st annual Tournament of Roses Parade on January 1, 2010 in Pasadena, California.

It was no small undertaking. Since that first season, students have attended band camps and worked

hard to memorize music and marching formations. The band is grateful for the sighted volunteers who help the students learn and practice marching drills, as well as assist them on the field and during parades.

In 2008, a Rose Parade committee member contacted Mrs. Agler to see if

OSSB would be interested in applying to march in the 2010 parade. Mrs. Agler sent a video of the band's halftime show and in October 2008 was informed the band had been invited to march.

A \$17,000 grant was awarded from the Joseph A. Jeffrey Endowment Fund of The Columbus Foundation to help offset travel costs associated with the trip.

The band has also received significant support from the Ohio Lions Clubs and generous donations through the OSSB Parent Teacher Staff Foundation.

The fact that Ohio State University (OSU) will now be playing in the Rose Bowl game is icing on the cake.

"The OSU marching band adopted us right from the start and they are our heroes," said Mrs. Agler.