

Boy's Accordion Talent Lifts Spirits

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Henry posing for pictures with Denver Mayor Michael Handcock as well as his teacher Alice Aman and a fellow student.
(Courtesy Photo)

ARVADA, Colo. — The accordion was invented in the early 1900s but is one of those instruments that had its hay day and has been slowly fading for some time now. It's an instrument often seen only at polkas and played by people of a different generation with a few exceptions. For eight-year-old Henry Cline, grandson of Susan and Gene Lore, and John and Connie Hansen of Alliance, the accordion is his instrument of choice. His mother Carolyn Cline recalls that a few years back Henry had a toy that featured a globe in which some of the countries had buttons on them and when pushed music of that country would be played. "Henry's favorite button was South America that played an accordion version of the Tango. From there he and his dad (Eldie) went online to watch accordion videos and he was hooked," stated Carolyn.

When Henry was barely six his parents took him to the music store and rented him a small red accordion. He soon fell in love with the variety of sounds that it could make. With practice and the help of his teacher Alice he could soon play well enough to play at church. He was asked to be the entertainment at a dinner for a Methodist Church in Arvada where his mother worked. As payment they informed little Henry that they would make a charitable donation in his name to the cause of his choice and to think about where he wanted the money sent. The family got in the car after the event and Henry asked his mom, "What's a donation?" to which Carolyn stated, "Well if you were a rich, rich man who had a lot of money who would you want to help?" His six-year-old response was "I want to help old people!" Later that night when the family got home they researched area senior organizations and Henry decided to go with the Senior Assistance Center.



The Senior Assistance Center is a food bank with the mission to “promote the self-sufficiency of all seniors in Colorado and to ensure that no senior goes without the necessities of life, including food, shelter, and public services.” The center’s executive assistant, Sandy Brown, stated “I did not know Henry or his family at all but one day I was going through some donations that we had received and I opened up a letter from a church in Arvada with a little yellow note attached that said that Henry earned this money playing his accordion and donated it all to our charity. I could not believe it! I knew I just had to meet his mother and thank them both so I reached out to the church. In thanking them both I asked to speak to Henry so that I could invite him to play at our Christmas Program.”

Henry and his family have since become very involved with the center and enjoy helping out. His accordion Christmas music was such a big hit at the party that Sandy wanted to make sure he came back for the next year. In November of this year Henry called Sandy to invite her to his church to watch him play. He surprised Sandy that Sunday at church with a check for \$75. “This small child has literally given every dime he has ever earned to us. So touching! He and his family simply mean the world to us,” exclaimed Sandy.

After that day Sandy decided to call 9 News, a television station in Denver to let them know about Henry and his charitable ways. She had heard that the station was doing a special called the 12 days of Christmas program which targeted the good deeds that young people are doing in the Denver area. The reporter was so impressed that a news crew was there when he played for the center’s Christmas party for the second year in a row. “I just want to help others. And if they are taking care of people, then maybe they might need more money to get things to help people,” Henry said in the interview with 9News.

Henry’s grandma, Susan, quickly let her family members and friends on Facebook know of the event and they were all anxiously glued to the TV when the segment aired in mid December. Henry said that he was pretty sure that half of Nebraska was going to watch the segment because his family was so proud. Henry’s grandparents are all from Alliance. Gene and Susan Lore, John and Connie Hansen, as well as his fathers parents the late Eldie and Sharon Cline.

“Pretty remarkable for a little 8 year old. He has always been a kind hearted person,” said Susan. The segment touched the hearts of all who watched.

To watch Henry’s story go to 9 News and search for ‘Young Musician.’

Along with playing at the Senior Assistance Center and church Henry also played at a reception hosted by the mayor of Denver — the downtown Denver event ‘Kris Kringle.’ He has also won numerous awards at the Rocky Mountain Accordion Association banquet and plays with an accordion choir that let him play all the solos that he wants.

“I wish that he could see people’s faces as he plays. The joy he brings to others with his music is truly special,” added his proud mom.

