

georgetown

August 2010

# VIEW

magazine

CHARLES AGUILLON

Keeping  
the Rhythm

GETTING TO KNOW

Ron and  
Chrystle Swain

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August 2010

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**VIEW**  
magazine

**Alicea Jones**  
**EDITOR'S NOTE**

In this Back to School issue of *Georgetown View Magazine*, you'll read a lot about students and the influence music has on building strong minds. We'll tell you the story of young Charles Aguillon, and how his love for band music started two generations ago. And we'll saunter down the halls of Georgetown Music Studio where you'll discover a large selection of instruments and music classes.

You'll also see a distinct Southwestern University connection this month as we visit with student and Paideia Scholar, Kimberly Griffin. Ron Swain, Senior Advisor to the President at Southwestern University took a break from his busy schedule just for *Georgetown View*. Join him and his wife Chrystle, as they invite you into their heirloom-filled home.

And whether your kids have flown the coop or you still have a house full, Gene and Renee Jantzen (Team Jantzen, Century-21), will share their home-hunting (and selling) expertise.

Enjoy this last month of summer with your loved ones before the bell rings. As for me, I'm making arrangements to take those voice lessons and cross one more thing off of my bucket list.

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**On the cover: Roy and Lillie Cullen Building at Southwestern University**

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# Keeping the Rhythm

By Alicea Jones

**G**abriella Hernandez loved band music and she wanted her children to love, or at least appreciate it, too. So every Friday night after Mass, she'd send them down to the high school stadium. There they stood, clutching the chain link fence, like fans waiting for an autograph, listening to the band play "Anchor's Away" and "Alabama Jubilee."

Did Gabriella's children ever come to love band music on those chilly Friday nights outside Victoria High School Stadium? Yes and no. None of her children grew up to play in the band. But two generations later, her great grandson, Charles Aguillon, is not only passionate about band music, he wants every child in Georgetown to have the opportunity to play an instrument.

With the first song he learned in the second grade choir, Charles knew he wanted to be a musician. And it wasn't long before his Choir Director, Ms. Sammy Cowan, recognized his talent and encouraged Aguillon's parents to have him audition for the community youth choir.

"Choir?" His family couldn't understand it. They accepted that he was a studious kid, involved in everything from after school engineering programs



to serving in the local Catholic Church. "But where did this interest in music come from?" they wondered. The Aguillons weren't musicians, they were athletes. Touch downs, tackles, and triple doubles were the talk around the kitchen table, not quarter notes and crescendos. "I was considered the oddball," Aguillon said.

**“Charles Aguillon is not only passionate about band music, he wants every child in Georgetown to have the opportunity to play an instrument.”**

It didn't help that he was a big kid and everyone assumed he'd follow the family tradition. But the only tackling Charles would be doing was charging through a stack of sheet music. He didn't know

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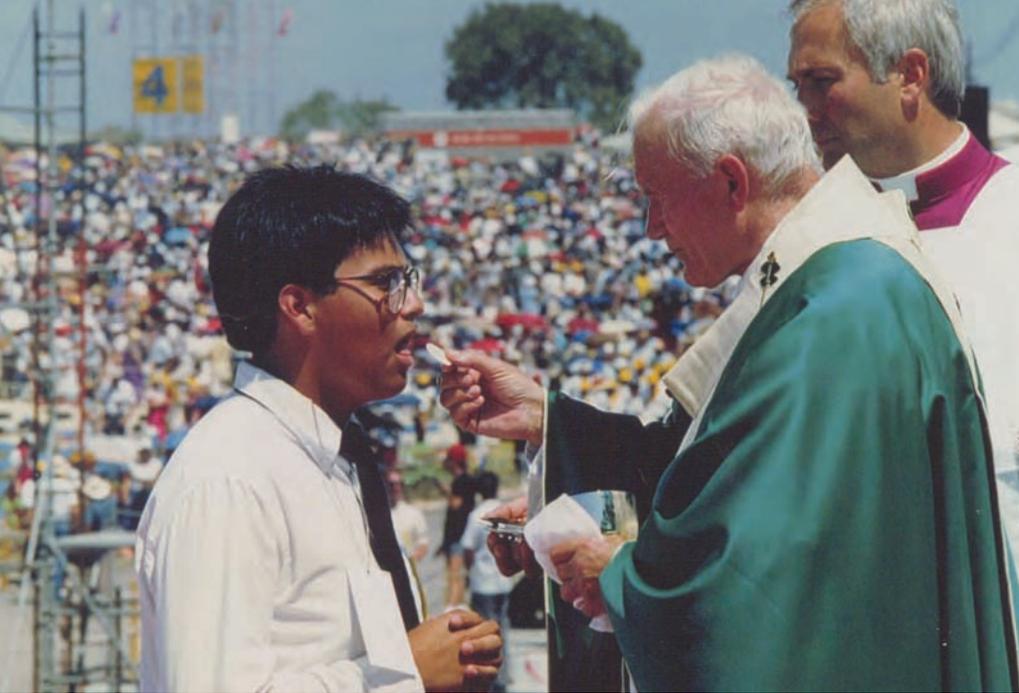


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about it for a while and realized it was true. We'd always have seven or eight kids in band who were included in the top 10 students (academically) of the school." And the 2010 Georgetown High School graduating class is no exception. "Our valedictorian and salutatorian (biological twins) were very involved in the band program," he said.

Aguillon points to numerous studies that have shown the benefits of music to child development. "The brain research shows how music helps the synapses connect much faster in young children," he said. "And I think there is something to it. I've seen students who you would consider just average academically, really flourish later as they become more serious about being technically proficient on an instrument."

Like his grandmother, Gabriella Hernandez, Aguillon knows something about shaping kids. "I'm a believer in the connection between what we've been able to teach in the arts—music in particular—and a student's academic success," he said.

Aguillon is delighted by this connection but at the same time, has a heavy heart for kids who may never experience the benefits of playing a musical instrument. As



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why he liked music so much until someone in his family told him the story about his Bisabuela (great-grandmother) Gabriella. "That was a very interesting story for me to hear," he said. "I attribute my love for band to Gabriella Hernandez."

Aguillon, driven by his desire to sing, became a member of the Victoria Children's Community Choir. "We traveled around the country doing concerts, conventions, and recitals," he said. He remembers the sweaty palms and weak knees at his first performance. But he had grown so comfortable on stage that by the time he was 16, taking public communion with Pope John Paul II, in front of thousands of people, was easy.

Aguillon was in music heaven and he continued to sing and play the euphonium and tuba through high school. He went on to receive a Bachelor and Master of Music Education, from Texas State University-San Marcos, and a Master of Education in Administration and Supervision from the University of Phoenix. He served as Band Director for San Marcos School District and

then accepted the Band Director position at GISD where he served for five years before becoming the district's Director of Fine Arts in 2004. Desiring to work in school administration, he was appointed

**“[S]mart kids gravitate toward band. . . . We’d always have seven or eight kids in band who were included in the top 10 students (academically) of the school.”**

the Associate Principal at the Ninth Grade Campus a few years ago and currently serves in that position.

### **He's A Believer**

Fresh out of college, Aguillon was told that the smart kids gravitate toward band. "I thought

decision-makers come to value the positive relationship between music and child development, he hopes more programs will be made available to children who otherwise would not have the opportunity for this enrichment.

### A Bugle in Every Backpack

Gabriella Hernandez's DNA is evident in the person of Charles Aguillon. But his hopes reach beyond Friday night games at the stadium fence. "We've probably doubled the percentage of economically disadvantaged families in Georgetown over the past decade or so," he said. "It's critical that we offer programs that currently don't exist."

As President of the Georgetown Symphony Society, Chairperson and a founding member for the City Arts and Culture Board, and now, Associate Principal at GISD's ninth grade campus, Charles Aguillon has seen firsthand, the positive influence music can have on a child.

Aguillon's sons; Noah 11, and Brandon, 7, grew up on the football field, watching their dad direct the band. And his wife Vanessa, a

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Technology Facilitator at Jo Ann Ford Elementary School, takes the summers off to visit museums with the boys. But many kids don't have that kind of exposure to the arts.

"I've seen a lot of students who come from struggling backgrounds, and whose parents may not have gone to college. Many of these



students go on to be successful in college because they've completed our program," he said. "And one of the reasons that I've tried to get more kids into arts and music programs over the years is that it develops a child's creativity."

"One of the things GISD has been working on is building capacity for kids to be engaged in the arts, regardless of economic background," he said. "A few years ago GISD made a significant investment in instruments that would not normally be available to students."

He is also active with the Clara Scarborough Music Endowment, which raises money specifically for children and music. "We are going to work directly with the schools to identify gifted students who cannot afford instruments or lessons," he said. The Chisholm Trail Foundation has also started a bank where kids can borrow instruments.

"My wish," Aguillon said with the confidence of a prophecy already fulfilled, "is that whenever a kid



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enters sixth grade, we would be able to say 'here are the things we offer and we'd like you to try it. Don't worry about what it costs.'" That's what Gabriella Hernandez would probably do. [VIEW](#)

### Did You Know?

Many studies support the positive connection between music and the brain, including a 2007 study by Stanford University Medical School. The research shows that music engages the areas of the brain involved with paying attention, making predictions and updating the event in memory. (Source: Stanford University, 2007; <http://med.stanford.edu>)

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