

Inaugural events gives people music and Laurel girls a voice

By KRISTA S. KANO

Last weekend, Sloane Hammerman and Erin Saada should have been exhausted.

Immediately following their final exams on May 16, the two 17-year-olds began their two-week senior project with Elevation Group to learn every aspect of producing a music festival. On June 7, Sloane of Moreland Hills and Erin of Pepper Pike graduated and just a few days later were working around the clock in 90-degree weather to help make the first ever LaureLive event run as smoothly as possible.

On Sunday, they were ecstatic, seemingly running on boundless adrenaline. After all, there aren't many high school students who get to learn first-hand how to produce a full-scale, multi-day contemporary music festival.

Since announcing the event in January, Laurel Head of School Ann V. Klotz promised that LaureLive: Music with a Mission, believed to be the first of its kind in the area, would incorporate Laurel students into every aspect of producing, marketing and contracting the festival held on the school's Butler campus, spanning Russell and Chester townships this past weekend.

Ms. Klotz and the marketing and production company in charge of LaureLive, Elevation Group, fulfilled that promise.

Since January, 37 students from the school in Shaker Heights met weekly with Elevation Group executives, Steve Lindecke and Denny Young, learning what it takes to put on a music festival of this scale.

"All semester, they've had access to Steve and Denny and they've seen it come together, week by week, from all perspectives, from the safety and security, the talent management, to really pragmatic things like how many Porta-potties do you need for the expected crowd," said Trey Wilson, Laurel's Dean of Learning Beyond the Classroom. "I think that sort of overhead, which all 37 girls got, was really valuable. Now they're here and they're helping execute a specific part of the concert, so they're also getting a tangible experience."

For Sloane, who hopes to have a career in music festivals, the tangible experience was invaluable.

"I've been here bright and early the past three days from when it was completely empty to people showing up and now the music is playing. To see the whole thing come together after so



Photos by Philip Botta

Ruby Evans, 8, Grace Wagner, 10 and Bia Evans, 4, jump into a giant cloud of bubbles from Dr. UR Awesome in the main field of LaureLive last Saturday afternoon. Ruby and Bia's mother, Michelle Tucker, is a 1989 graduate of Laurel School.

much time and effort put in by everyone and to be a part of it is incredible," she said of the unfolding of the event on the Russell campus.

Sloane was working in talent relations, getting the artists food, to the stage on time and anything else they needed, including a soccer ball for X Ambassadors. Erin worked on VIP hospitality and also got to meet some of the acts like Panama Wedding, Elle King and Michael Franti.

The girls also attended security meetings with Russell, Chester and Hunting Valley fire and police departments, as well as University Hospitals, to ensure the safety of all parties involved.

"We believe for this to be the contribution to

Northeast Ohio that we hope it to be, we need to have everyone under the tent feeling good about the opportunity for the community," said Ms. Klotz.

Laurel girls weren't just behind the scenes: they were also front and center. Lower school girls were in a sportswear fashion show on the AthletaLive tennis courts and Laurel's Upper School rock band, Who Is David, performed on one of the main stages early on Saturday. The band included Aliyah Anderson of Cleveland Heights on bass, Nina Chapman of Mentor on lead vocals, Gabrielle Fernandez of Bedford on keyboard, Alexandra Mangel of Orange on

guitar, Mimi Thompson of Shaker Heights on drums and Tristan Whitt of Cleveland on bass.

"Before Erin Chittester went on stage, she said 'One reason I'm here is because this is a school that gives girls a voice. I want to be a part of anything that's empowering girls,'" Ms. Klotz said. "The whole motivation for the concert is to link Laurel's own mission to fulfill her promise to better the world and a lot of that has to do with empowering girls and giving them a sense of agency. The girls are learning from the ground up what it is to be a part of this and that it's not just the fun of famous people but also understanding the infrastructure."

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as Ra Ra Riot, X Ambassadors, O.A.R., Elle King, Andy Grammer and Grace Potter. And Cleveland took notice, with well-over 6,000 attendees throughout the weekend.

Organizers Laurel School and Elevation Group worked hard to ensure that the festival promoted Cleveland businesses, including food trucks from Krav, Chill Pop Shop and the Sweet Spot and booths for Cleveland boutiques like the Banyan Tree in Tremont and Blackbird Fly Boutique in Ohio City. Acts were constantly performing on the festival's three music stages and other events, including yoga, fashion shows and discussions on the history of rock were rotating around the

festival grounds.

"It's incredible, what they've done," said Mrs. Barton, whose daughter Ennika is entering fifth grade at Laurel. "We didn't know what to expect. It's a great first year and we were just excited to see what it's about."

"It's been really great. We saw a bunch of different acts, went to the playground and played with the bubbles. We're already exhausted," said Michelle Tucker of Russell, a 1989 graduate of Laurel School who recently moved back from New Jersey and plans to send her children, Bia, 4, and Ruby, 8, to Laurel School next year. "I'm really hoping the festival takes off. Cleveland is a great town for a music festival and it's a great way to promote the city."

Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce

member Billy Grossman of Moreland Hills, whose daughter Rachael attends Laurel, was also there enjoying the sun and the music.

"I think it's a fabulous, amazing event, an inception event. Elevation Group is bringing music to Cleveland on another level," Mr. Grossman said. "I want this to succeed, to be a place for out-of-towners to come and experience music and Cleveland. It's a great turnout for the first year and there's still ways to grow. Bonaroo didn't happen overnight."

Vocalist Wes Miles of Ra Ra Riot performs in front of the track at Laurel School's Butler campus in Russell and Chester townships at one of the four stages at the first-ever LaureLive on Saturday.



Dog poop left behind could cost Woodmere owners up to a \$100 fine

By RYAN DENTSCHIEFF

Not cleaning up after your dog could cost you \$100.

The problem has gotten so bad, that Woodmere Councilwoman Jennifer Mitchell-Early last week during a council session "pooh-poohed" excuses of pooch walkers and called for enforcing the law.

That's exactly what Chief Shiela Mason said her officers will do. In the past, her officers issued warnings, a practice that has ended.

"I had a meeting with our officers (last Thursday) and I informed them that under no circumstance are they to give a warning for the offense," she said. "If they see someone not clean up after their dog, they will issue a citation."

The fine for the offense can be as high as

\$100, she said.

Ms. Mitchell-Early said it's time for the village to take action.

"People are walking their pets and not cleaning up after them," she said. "It's appalling for me to watch our own residents leave their homes to walk their dog down the street and let them defecate and not pick it up."

But, she added, it's not just residents who are committing the misdeed. She lives on Roselawn Avenue and said she has seen people cut through the village-owned property at the end of the dead-end street from neighboring Orange Village and do the same thing.

She said she has also noticed an excessive amount of animal feces in public areas near Rite Aid on Chagrin Boulevard and the shopping

plazas. Her assumption is that people bring their dogs with them when visiting Woodmere businesses, find a nearby area for their dogs to go and then leave the excrement on the ground. Other suspected culprits are the village's apartment dwellers.

"I think we have to take pride in our own community," she said. "I know our officers' time is valuable, but if we see somebody we have to toe the line and say what is acceptable in our community."

Besides being unsanitary, Ms. Mitchell-Early said animal feces littering common areas is not presenting a positive image for the village.

"We're driving all of this traffic in for the RNC, foot traffic included, what does that look like for our community?" she said. "I would

hate for us to have delegates walking up and down the street trying to step over dog crap."

Mayor Charles Smith mentioned that he not too long ago met with management from Pet People who said if the village covered the cost of installing plastic bag dispensers, they would be willing to donate the bags. That could be an option to help encourage people to clean up after their dogs, he said.

"I know it's tough to try and track people who are doing these things, but at least if we have the materials out there, maybe that would help," he said.

Councilwoman Alberta Fanning said she has also noticed the problem on Irving Park, where she resides. She recommended sending letters to everyone in the village that restates the village law and stresses that it will be enforced.