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Recycled Percussion makes a surprise visit to Laconia Middle School

By THOMAS P. CALDWELL
LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — Students at Laconia Middle School had a chance to showcase their own talents before members of Recycled Percussion when band founders Justin Spencer and Ryan Vezino made a surprise visit on Monday afternoon.

Recycled Percussion, which got its start in Goffstown, has made 2017 its “Giving Back to New Hampshire” year. After announcing they would be here for the holidays, Spencer said 200 schools reached out to have the band make an appearance. Laconia was one of the 10 they selected.

Part of Spencer’s motivation in choosing to come to Laconia in the week leading up to Random Acts of Kindness Friday is the fact that he now owns lakefront property here, and “I felt the school could use some positivity,” he said.

Principal Alison Bryant said she put in a request for the band to come to Laconia Middle School and got the word last Friday that they would be coming.

“Our focus right now is on being kind, so it was an ideal time to do it and have fun with the kids before Thanksgiving break,” she said.

Recycled Percussion is now based in Las Vegas, but the band has made it its mission to promote tolerance and advocate for the disadvantaged throughout the world. Its most recent venture is an ABC



Elijah Perez shows off his dance moves for Justin Spencer of Recycled Percussion during their surprise visit to Laconia Middle School yesterday afternoon. (Karen Bobotas/for The Laconia Daily Sun)

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television show, "Chaos and Kindness," which band members write and produce themselves.

"You can't change who you are," Spencer told the students. "You are just as special as any other person. No celebrity, no boss at work, no person who judges you, nobody is better than you. Start realizing you're a special person and the world needs you to be the best you can be."

He said he had lived in a small trailer and didn't have a lot growing up.

"Now I have a TV show and I just bought a house in New Hampshire," he said.

He told the band's story: how they got together with the idea of doing a single performance at a

Goffstown High School talent show.

"I was one of those kids that's always tapping on a desk," Spencer said, seeking confirmation from his audience that some of them did that as well.

"Stealing" the idea of performing with makeshift instruments from seeing such a performer in a New York subway, they put together a 5-minute song that took second place in the talent show.

An elementary school principal who was in the audience approached them afterwards to ask them to bring their act to students there. They then started taking their show from school to school and finally were able to raise \$200 and began performing around the country.

Recycled Percussion's breakthrough came in 2009 when they auditioned for America's Got Talent and

got selected from among 10,000 acts seeking to appear on the show. They came in third place there.

"I've never understood how we received second place in Goffstown, but third place in the country," he said.

Their newfound fame led to an offer to appear in Las Vegas, and in eight years, they have performed 6,000 shows around the world, including appearances on Carson Daily, the Today Show, and China's Got Talent.

Taking questions from the students, Spencer said they travel and race cars in their spare time; the scariest thing for them is performing on live television when there's only one chance to get it right; and among their proudest achievements was helping rescue people from their homes in Texas when Hurricane Harvey hit.

Before anyone could get restless from the talk, Vezino demonstrated how he could use his body as an instrument, tapping, slapping, thumping his chest, stomach, arms, legs, and feet while Spencer's microphone captured the sound.

Spencer followed that demonstration with mouth, throat, and voice sounds that simulated a full band.

They later called upon students to come forward and share talents, saying, "Your career has now started."

It was not just students who were invited to perform. They called up some of the teachers to test their skills at mimicking the drumming and tossing of drumsticks. Male faculty members were asked to do a dance-off, after which students asked to have an opportunity to do the same.

MANSON
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striking," said James Alan Fox, a criminology professor at Northeastern University in Boston. "Manson was memorable: his voice, his appearance, his mannerisms, as well as his crimes and the crazy Charlie act he put on."

Manson was convicted of orchestrating the slaughter of pregnant actress Sharon Tate and six other people over two successive August nights in Los Angeles. Prosecutors said he was trying to foment a race war, an idea he supposedly got from a misreading of the Beatles song "Helter Skelter."

He was sentenced to death, but that was commuted to life in prison after the California Supreme Court struck down the death penalty in 1972.

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