

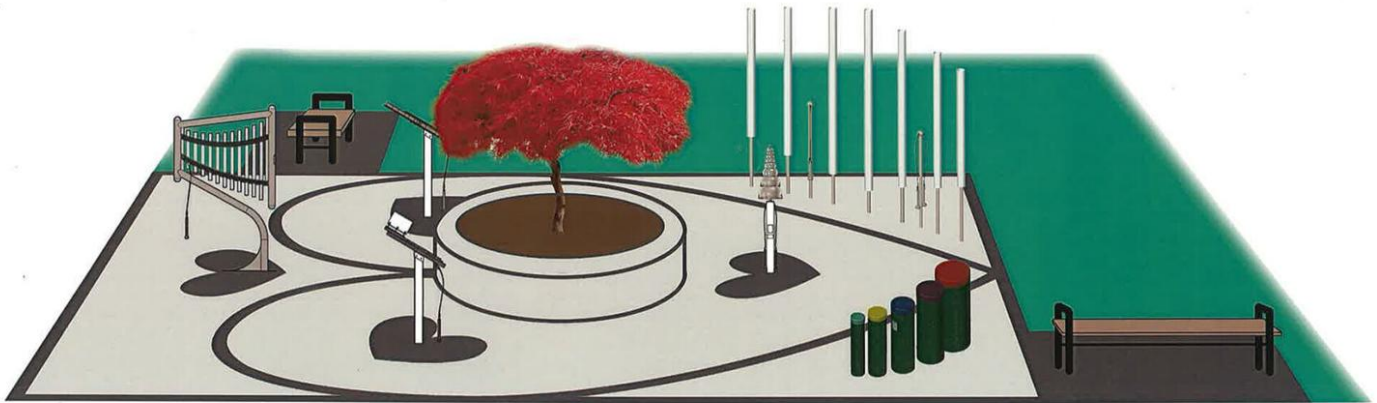
https://www.tiogapublishing.com/the_wellsboro_mansfield_gazette/news/local/music-park-begins-fundraising-campaign/article_a5a5b659-4e36-503d-bf0f-d7e604898a9b.html

FEATURED

Music park begins fundraising campaign

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Bringing Community and Music Together



Harp



Serenade



Pagoda Bells



Duet



Tuned Drums



Contrabass Chimes

This is a concept drawing of the music park design slated for the Deane Center lot. submitted

WELLSBORO — About \$35,000 has been raised for an instrument park here, but another \$30,000 is needed to excavate the area, install pavers and complete the project.

The Celia Finestone Music Park committee met Monday, April 11, to refine details for the park and members said they are ready to begin the community fundraising campaign.

To date, enough money has been donated to purchase six tuned, professional quality outdoor instruments: a harp, serenade, pagoda bells, duet, toned drums and contrabass chimes.

The park will feature all six instruments on a 20- by 30-foot area patterned with heart designs. The music garden will be located along Central Avenue, next to the Warehouse Theatre.

The harp and hearts are tributes to Celia, said her son Paul Finestone. Celia was a musician, specializing in the harp. She was also a lifelong knitter and, following her death in 2020, her family found the heart to be a recurring pattern in many of her knit items. Initially, the committee intended to have the instruments in a straight line on the perimeter of the Deane Center lot. But Celia's daughter, Debbie, also a musician, told her brother the musicians need to see each other to communicate when playing. As the design evolved, Paul Finestone thought it looked like half of a heart, and then he pushed it further.

“In the end, it is far closer to the spirit of my mother and what was important to her and set the tone for the entire park,” he said.

Kevin Connelly, former director of the Deane Center, brought the idea of an instrument park to the area. The instruments are professional grade, tuned and can be played singly or in conjunction with each other, said committee member Daria Guelig. Elementary music teacher Molly Cary, who also serves on the committee, said students can take field trips to the park and gives children the opportunity to enhance their music skills. It is also accessible to children — and adults — with disabilities.

“Music has been shown to improve brain function in all age groups,” Guelig said. “This will provide additional access to kids without instruments at home.”

To raise the remaining funds, the committee plans to seek grants from community foundations and also hopes the residents will see the value in supporting this project.

“My hope is a lot of people contribute small amounts,” Paul Finestone said.

Celia’s daughter, Debbie, is writing music to play on the instruments at the future dedication. Song books are included with the instruments.

The instrument garden next to the Deane Center sets the tone for visitors arriving to Wellsboro.

“It vitalizes that area. It will draw people off The Green to that area,” Paul Finestone said.

“It also shows the community’s focus on the performing arts,” said Pete Herres, who recently joined the committee. “Now it elevates a person’s first impression of the community.”

Both the Deane Center and the music garden show the impact of two women to Wellsboro’s arts heritage, said committee member Bill Hebe.

“Here you have a little lady (Ivah Deane) who sat down and when she wrote her will said, ‘I want to do something significant for the community,’ and gave \$1 million for a performing arts center,” Hebe said.

It’s a rich legacy for a small town.

“It’s people coming together to make a fantasy into a reality,” Paul Finestone said. “It happens in my life very rarely, but it’s happening in Wellsboro.”

Anyone can donate to the memorial music park. Links and videos of the musical instruments can be found at www.deanecenter.com/celia-finestone-memorial.

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