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World of Inquiry Senior Raises Awareness for Cancer and Culturally-Relevant Music in City Schools through Concert Downtown

School 58 Students Partner with Rochester Professional Musicians to Create First Annual CHORDS (Concert to Honor Our Rochester Diversity) Concert

Performing Hip Hop, R&B, Gospel and Jazz songs of their choosing under the mentorship of local Rochester professionals including Grammy-nominated saxophonist Jimmie Highsmith and R&B artist Blake Montel, School 58 high school students are preparing for a concert “unlike anything Rochester has ever seen.” *CHORDS: Concert to Honor Our Rochester Diversity* is the brainchild of senior Anthony Lynch who wants to put School 58 on the map musically. He explains that there is so much hidden talent at World of Inquiry. CHORDS is Anthony’s senior capstone project and spotlights School 58’s strong commitment to providing students opportunities to be “crew not passengers” in their learning.

More than 40 School 58 students in grades 9-12 are preparing to take the stage on the night of May 17 at Martin Luther King Memorial Park (5-8p). The lineup includes a dance team, group and individual vocalists, rappers and instrumentalists. A \$2/person suggested donation will be collected at the gate and all proceeds will be donated to University of Rochester’s Wilmot Cancer Institute.

CHORDS is focused on Honoring Our Rochester Diversity by intentionally creating spaces for youth passions that are often seen as extra or even irrelevant in schools as well as society. By celebrating urban youth culture as well as the accomplishments of Rochester’s professional urban musicians, the concert honors not only the diversity of people across Rochester, but the diversity of talent as well. World of Inquiry Principal Sheelarani Webster highlights the importance of this work for RCSD: “World of Inquiry School 58 and RCSD are deeply committed to the concept of *Ubuntu*. The translation is ‘I am because we are’. Anthony’s project captures this essence, as he builds and celebrates community across Rochester.” Partnering with [Warner Graduate School of Education](#), this project aims to understand the important roles music

and social networks can play in urban youth's identity development and future success. Lead Project Mentor, Associate Professor of Teaching and Curriculum April Luehmann, highlights the importance of this work: "Honoring diversity brings incredible beauty into the world. This work is not easy in a society that holds deficit perspectives of whole groups of people, including groups to which many urban youth belong. Nurturing the passions youth care most about in and with our community is one powerful way to change the narrative."

The project provides youth rich opportunities to be mentored in their personal passions. Junior Arabella Ashford will perform with folk artists LunaSolChild. Jordan Campbell and Tylor Ngourn have been working with marketing associate Kara Carnahan on the t-shirt logo, flyers and banners. Grammy nominated Jimmie Highsmith will perform alongside the school's jazz band. Senior Tylor Ngourn who runs sound, stage and lighting for school productions will lead stage crew for the concert under the direction of Carlton Wilcox. Professional emcee and improv artist Chaz Bruce will team up with seniors Jordan Campbell and Jay'Lah Howard.

Anthony's co-host for the concert, Paul Boutte, is a living Rochester legend for his music performance, education, directing and production including radio and records. A WDKX DJ, music director for three local churches (Gospel), and former R&B music producer in New York City, Paul is offering student vocalists his diverse and deep expertise of the music industry. Teens will cover tracks from Beyonce, Ella Mai, The Weeknd and John Legend. Freshman Saree Ware explained what the experience has meant to her, "Working with Blake and Mr. Paul for Anthony and cancer means a lot to me. Personally my great grandma, who was really close to me, died of cancer. Being a participant for Anthony's project shows that I'm capable of pushing my fears aside for the ones I love. It is an honor to be working with Mr. Paul and Blake because they are inspirations to me."

Not only the first of an annual concert event, it is Anthony's hope that CHORDS is an ongoing initiative in RCSD that partners minority youth with professional artists to expand their social networks and give them new opportunities. "They've connected me to others that could expand my opportunities and have taught me social skills that are only taught in college. You have given me a brighter future than I imagined," Anthony explains about his experience with the concert. He continues, "I'm now on the road to a career in music-- before it was more of a hobby or maybe a dream." Tone Simmons (known in Rochester as Grand Tone) has served as senior advisor to Anthony and has been the most significant bridge to leaders in the city and the music industry, while also mentoring him in the art and practice of concert production.

Beyond prioritizing youth passions and positioning youth centrally in Rochester's music scene, this first annual concert is committed to making a difference at even larger scales. A terrible car accident left project-lead, senior Anthony Lynch and his mom seriously injured last June. Soon after, doctors discovered stage four cancer in his mother. He recovered from a broken neck and torn spine but not his broken heart, Anthony is using his senior capstone project Chords to raise money and awareness for those like his mother living with cancer. All proceeds of the event will be donated to the [University of Rochester's Wilmot Cancer Institute](#).

About the World of Inquiry

[World of Inquiry School](#) is an EL Education school (formally known as Expeditionary Learning) dedicated to inquiry-based learning which emphasizes learning by doing. We take a student-centered, active-learning approach that focuses on questioning, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Learning occurs through grade-level expeditions (in-depth studies of a single topic or theme) integrated with New York State Standards.

About Warner School

Founded in 1958, the [University of Rochester's Warner School of Education](#) offers graduate programs in teacher preparation, K-12 school leadership, higher education, education policy, counseling, human development, online teaching and learning, program evaluation, applied behavior analysis, and health professions education. The Warner School of Education offers PhD programs and an accelerated EdD option that allows eligible students to earn a doctorate in education in as few as three years part time while holding a professional job in the same field. The Warner School of Education is recognized both regionally and nationally for its tradition of preparing practitioners and researchers to become leaders and agents of change in schools, universities, and community agencies; generating and disseminating research; and actively participating in education reform.

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