

Fine Arts Travels to *Festival Disney*

-Dr. and Mrs. Joy, April 27-

Students in the Choral Ensemble of GCS recently returned from their first adjudicated vocal competition in Orlando, Florida at *Festival Disney*. A national music festival, Festival Disney is hosted at Walt Disney World and provides musical groups (both vocal and instrumental) the opportunity to compete and receive artistic criticism from professional musicians who hold positions of esteem all over the United States. Groups are given the opportunity to perform in a professional setting, be heard and critiqued by professional musicians, and even allowed to enter in ranked competition with schools in various categories. Plus, the students are given the opportunity to spend a few days in the various Disney theme parks!

After years of building a vocal program in the high school at GCS, Mrs. Becky Joy decided that 2022 was the year that the Eagles would invade Orlando and be a part of the festival experience. "I knew that it was time for the choir to be judged on a professional level so that they could not only see what it was like to take their music to the next level, but to also hear some of the same things I've been telling them for years come out of another musician's mouth," Mrs. Joy said. She also noted that this was the first of what could be many competitions for the group as they continue to learn, improve, and refine their talents in the musical arts. She noted that "the Festival offers two forms of competition; individual scoring and division ranking." Mrs. Joy took GCS for individual ranking on this first journey out but noted that after seeing their performance she felt that they were just about ready to go even further into the divisional competitions.

Participating in individual ranking allows the group all the experience of the festival, but only requires that they be scored as a reflection of their ability and not in comparison with other musical groups. Scores are broken into the categories of superior, excellent, good, fair, and poor. The group's total score is based on additional categories such as stage presence, tonality, presentation, diction, and others. There was a lot to keep track of in

the minds of each of the performers as the GCS Ensemble took the stage. Mrs. Joy was happy to point out the red and yellow *Festival Disney* trophy that the GCS group received and the “superior” score on the name plate! In fact, she shared that “looking at the scores after the entire event was over, had GCS been a part of their division this year they would have won second place overall!”

When asked why a trip like this was important, Mrs. Joy said, “the GCS students have more talent than they realize and I wanted them to see what their musical abilities could make possible for them, if they wanted to go further with their art.” She noted that she was thankful for the many opportunities that GCS provided for the students but wanted to let the choir have their chance to compete at the same level that GCS athletics enjoy. “Volleyball, basketball, or choral singing; their all physical,” she said. “One major difference is that we only get one shot. We practice as much as we can, we refine where we can, but at the end of the day a vocal performance gets one shot to get it done. If you blow it, there’s not another chance – no more ‘games’ to make it up. I wanted them to feel that pressure, trust their ability, and see what would happen in the end.”

Success, bonding, beautiful music, and a superior rating: that is what happened. And, she noted, “this is just where it begins – not where it ends.” Congrats Eagles on your first vocal victory!