



Vano's love of music education shows each and every day with students

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - Cathy Vano has long been recognized by students and administration alike for her talents as a teacher.

Recently, she was honored with an Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award by Emerson.

The honor annually recognizes more than 100 educators in the St. Louis metropolitan area – from kindergarten teachers to college professors – who are examples of excellence in their field. Recipients are selected by the chief administrators of their school districts or educational institutions.

“I was very honored to be recognized not only by Edwardsville School District #7 administration and school board, but also by Emerson,” she said recently. “As the story made it into social media, it was been wonderful to hear from many of my current and past students.”

Vano said she has taught for 34 years, 22 in Edwardsville District 7 as a band teacher.

“I have taught every level of band, from beginners, to middle school and high school,” she said. “I have worked with the EHS Drama Department as the Pit Orchestra Conductor for the past 18 years. I also serve as the secretary for the Edwardsville Education Association, secretary for the Madison County Band Director’s Association, secretary/treasurer for the Illinois Grade School Music Association Southern Division District 5, and serve as a Professional Development Chairperson for the Illinois Music Education Association District 4.”

Vano said she has been an advocated for music education for students and continuing education for teachers from the beginning of my career.

“Those experiences and personal contacts have helped shape me into the educator I am today,” Vano said. “I especially love teaching beginning band – watching the students explore and experience instrumental music for the first time is exciting for me! I enjoy it when something finally clicks for them, when they figure it out, and then watching them grow each week and month is just the best.

“I also have the opportunity to work some of these students again in high school through the drama program. The last several years, the pit orchestra has included many students that I first taught in fourth grade band. That is such a rewarding experience – for them and me.”

Edwardsville School District 7 Superintendent Dr. Lynda Andre said about Vano:

“Ms. Vano has taught instrumental music at all levels - elementary, middle and high school - for 22 years. Cathy is passionate about the importance of the fine arts to overall development of students. She believes that music, drama, dance, and the visual arts provide unique means of communication and creative expression and are fundamental to the physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development of students.”

Vano said for someone who went to college to study accounting, she made the switch to music after a push from two music educators.

“I cannot imagine myself doing anything else in my career,” Vano said. “I truly have loved every day, and it makes my heart happy that I have had the opportunity to enrich the lives of so many students through music education.”