



EDUCATION SPOTLIGHT: Alton High School Director of Bands Alyssa Cudney inspires students

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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ALTON -Alyssa Cudney, Director of Bands at Alton High School, knew she wanted to be a band director while she was in band herself at **Belleville East High School**.

Under the direction of **Mr. Mark Tessereau**, Cudney’s love for music flourished. She decided during her sophomore year of high school that doing what she loved would someday become her career.

“Mr. Tessereau really instilled a love for the activity in me,” Cudney said, “and I want others to love it, too!”

After high school, Cudney attended **Missouri State University** and graduated with a **Bachelor in Music Education** degree in **2008**. While teaching within the **Alton School**

District, she graduated with a **Master of Educational Administration** degree from **McKendree University** in **2013**.

Before coming to Alton in **2009**, Cudney was the interim band director in the **Wolf Branch School District** in **Swansea, Ill.**, where she taught elementary and middle school band. Cudney served as assistant director for the AHS bands for three years before becoming the head director of the high school bands, where she is serving her fourth year.

“Everybody loves music!” Cudney said, “We don’t all have the same tastes, but I have yet to meet a person who doesn’t listen to some kind of music throughout their day.”



Cudney’s passion for music comes from her intense love for performing in front of audiences.

“To play and perform music is a whole different level,” she said, “You communicate thoughts and feelings to your audience. It’s so fun, and to help students do that is an incredible privilege.”

Unfortunately, for one to play hard, they must work hard as well. That remains true for Cudney.

“High school band is a busy, busy activity,” Cudney said, “There is constantly something going on - after school rehearsals, meetings, Saturday contests and festivals, fundraisers, trips, concerts, parades, etc.”

“It’s really more of a lifestyle than a job,” she said, “I love it, but I have to remind myself to take time out for me, family and friends as well.”



The astounding support of the Alton School District, along with the whole community, is what keeps Cudney’s program going strong.

“The support of the administration, school board and other teachers give to the band and its students is really unparalleled in most other districts,” Cudney said, “Alton really respects and loves the tradition of band throughout the district, and just about everyone was either in or has a family member who was in band while they were in school.”

The students attending AHS have a true love for the band, more than any other school around.

“For example, at our first football game last Friday night, the **Redbird Nest** gave the **Marching 100** a standing ovation after their halftime performance,” Cudney said, “I can tell you that doesn’t happen very often at other high schools.”

Cudney said now is the best time to be a member of the bands in the Alton School District.

“The excitement, enthusiasm, and dedication the parents, students, district and community have for the band is second to none,” Cudney said.