

Music Making Turns Out to Be a Hit

The more than 60 members of the Iowa City New Horizons Band have discovered a creative form of play in making music together. Since 1995, the band has provided an opportunity for adults 50 and older to learn or continue to play musical instruments.

Band leader Don Coffman, Ph.D., comments, “New Horizon Band members taught me that having fun and never losing sight of fostering social relationships are as important as making music.” Two times a week, band members meet at a local senior center to rehearse for a performance and concentrate on learning to play better.

Coffman is a professor of music education at The University of Iowa. Student teachers from the university provide additional support and motivation for band members, who thrive on the encouragement of younger professionals.

Coffman has also organized several intergenerational band concerts with players ranging from elementary school students to seniors. “Music is timeless,” observes a French horn musician. “We don’t think about age, we just make good music together.”