

Blues in the Gorge 2021

The Guitar Raffle Story – a magical moment as recalled by a Menucha staff member

Menucha is a place where some truly beautiful things happen. We believe they often ripple out, creating more beautiful happenings, but we aren't always privileged to witness them. In this case, we did.

Last week, the 30 guests at Blues in the Gorge had the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for a beautifully hand-crafted guitar.

For the third time, guitar luthier Loren Schulte from Battle Ground, Washington, built and donated a guitar for a raffle, with all proceeds to go to the scholarship fund for Blues in the Gorge. That alone is beautiful.

But the story gets even better.

On the last day of camp, everyone was gathered in the Great Hall for the final playalong and the raffle. The container full of raffle tickets was handed to Loren for him to draw a winner. He did, and called out a man's name.

That man (who we'll call Winner #1) said, "I won the guitar a few years ago. I'd like for someone else to have the chance to own one of Loren's guitars."

The crowd applauded and Winner #1 was asked to draw the next ticket. He did, and read aloud a woman's name.

That woman (who we'll call Winner #2) said, "I was thinking about this ahead of time. I don't really need another guitar." And then she turned to Mary Flower, the artistic director of Blues in the Gorge who was seated up front with the other instructors, and asked, "Mary, is there a student of yours who could use a guitar?"

Mary replied, "That's incredibly generous. As a matter of fact there is. And he's in this room right now."

Mary looked at a first-time attendee of Blues in the Gorge. The quiet young man had wowed the group at the student concert, playing a song with intricate licks and rhythms on his serviceable-but-not-overly-special vintage guitar. She called his name.

That young man (who we'll call Winner #3) looked stunned. "Are you sure?" he stammered as Winner #2 gently handed him the guitar.

It was an electric moment. It was a sweet moment. It was a "love wins!" moment.

Guests clapped and cheered. Someone said, “You’re the future of this blues music,” and another said, “Play something for us!”

After Winner #3 collected his thoughts, he did play for us. Mary Flower took a photo of him leaning over the new guitar, fingerpicking an exquisite melody.

Altogether, the raffle’s ticket sales brought in \$1,625 for the scholarship fund – enough to cover several scholarships at next year’s Blues in the Gorge. How beautiful! And the raffle’s giveaway - from Winner #1 to Winner #2 to Winner #3 - was a beautiful experience of generosity, community and being an instrument of God’s love.