

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2010

TRUMPETS NOT GUNS



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL DEMOCKER / THE TIMES-PICAYUNE

Glen David Andrews performs in the band room of Warren Easton High School during his visit to promote Trumpets Not Guns, a program to help young people become interested in music as an alternative to street life.

Musician shares frustrations, hopes with students

*Glen David
Andrews started
new program*

By Maria Montoya
Staff writer

Glen David Andrews doesn't understand New Orleans today.

Children shooting children, people too scared to second line and innocent toddlers losing their lives — that's not the New Orleans he thought he knew.

So on a recent Wednesday afternoon, Andrews, 30,

See **TRUMPETS**, Page 2



Glen David Andrews talks with students in the band room of Warren Easton Charter High School.

shared his frustrations and concerns with band members at Warren Easton Charter High School. He told the students that he was launching a new organization, Trumpets Not Guns, and shared with them his desire to work with the younger generation to take back the city's often violent streets.

The new organization, which Andrews founded with John and Lisa Grillot, plans to collect, refurbish and distribute at least 300 instruments to New Orleans students next year. Change, Andrews told the students, can only happen when you examine past mistakes and use them as learning opportunities. "I am here today because I care about you," said Andrews, who sported sunglasses and wore pressed jeans and an eggplant-colored velvet jacket. "I want y'all to pay attention because I am excited to see you and I am not going to b.s. y'all. I am here to tell you where I came from."

Andrews said he was a rebellious, angry high school student. "I went to school one day carrying a gun because I was tired. I was tired of running through St. Bernard Projects every day like I was Reggie Bush because I was a nerd," he said. "I let some stupid punks make me feel bad for being smarter than them. Don't do that. Don't let no one tell you that you're a nerd or a geek and feel bad about it."

Andrews was eventually arrested and sent to jail for carrying a weapon to school. He spent time in prison and soon after developed an addiction to marijuana and later heroin. He told the students that marijuana, no matter what anyone tells them, will lead to bad things. "I loved the weed. Y'all don't want me to lie to you," Andrews said. "It got me. Don't tell me you going to smoke weed and not smoke crack, because it'll happen. Weed is a purgatory to a million evil things."

Though drugs were always his impediment, music never failed to be his salvation. "This here, this is life. This is the ticket to seeing the world. You give it your time and it will take you anywhere -- if you let it," he said as he held up his trumpet and looked at it like a dear friend right before he ticked off a list of nearly two dozen countries where he has performed.

After fighting drug addiction for years, Andrews found inspiration in the form of local civil rights lawyer

Mary Howell who told him, "Glen, you can be something."

"Y'all know Mrs. Howell is an attorney, the one you see portrayed on 'Treme,' " said Andrews, who also appears on the HBO series. "She's a lady who fights for people like us, and she helped me get my life right." Andrews said he has faith in each of the students the way Howell had faith in him. "You can be whatever you want. I am here to tell you it ain't going to be easy," he warned. "Not all of us are going to be rappers or football players, but you can damn well be a teacher or a musician. ... No, you may not open up for U2 overnight, but some day -- some day -- you might."

Fewer than 48 hours before he met with the students, Andrews himself became one of youngest musicians inducted into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame as "Future Famers," which honors stars for the 21st Century. Before leaving the class, Andrews played the "Treme" theme, written by John Boutte, and asked willing band members to join him in a second line.

Many of the students remained after class, to thank Andrews for sharing so candidly his life story and struggles. "I love his honesty. He isn't coming in here pretending to be something he's not," said ninth-grader Jasmine Batiste. "It was nice of him to take the time to talk us. He is right ... it's really dangerous out there." Taiyana McCoy, an 11th-grader, said she knows firsthand the toll the city's violence can take on one's life. Taiyana, who's father was murdered when she was a girl, shared with Andrews a poem titled "Bittersweet." She told him she hoped he could help her turn it into a song. "It's getting worse every day," Taiyana said. "My grandmother, she raised me saying this is the way the world is, but we don't have to act that way."

For some of the students, the opportunity to jam with a noted local musician was enough to elevate them. Raymond Ellison, a senior, said he loved the fact that he got to play drums with Andrews. It's not a memory he'll soon forget. "I felt like he walked in here and kept it real," Raymond said. "He gave us tips on being better musicians, but he also gave us tips on how to survive."

To donate to Trumpets Not Guns

Email:

tng@soundadvicemanagement.com

or visit:

www.facebook.com/trumpetsnotguns

.

For more information on Glen David, or to set up an interview,

Contact:

Kimball Packard
Sound Advice Management
504-298-6652,
packard1@gmail.com

For Booking Inquiries:

Ted Kurland Associates
www.tedkurland.com
Phone: +1.617.254.0007
Domestic fax: +1.617.782.3577
International fax: +1.617.782.3524
Email: agents@tedkurland.com