

LUTHIERS: Program is supported by Sisters Folk Festival

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it takes to build a guitar.

Edwards said, "I love seeing the enthusiasm of the students, and love seeing them pick out a flat piece of wood that eventually becomes a playable instrument."

The ukulele-building program started six years ago and is gaining more popularity among students.

"Students who want to take AP classes and have a full schedule now have the opportunity to build an instrument because they only have to schedule the class for one semester," Edwards noted.

"I'm so glad I got to build a ukulele. All of high school I have wanted to make one and it is something that I will take with me to college," said senior Jules Meeter.

The luthier program is partially funded by grants through the Sisters Folk Festival and is supported by the school district, volunteers, Breedlove Guitar and Bowerman Guitars.

"The students started building these instruments

with a whole bunch of heart and a can-do mentality. Over time it has developed to one of the finest luthier programs in the country," said the creative director for Sisters Folk Festival, Brad Tisdell.

Cosby is the teacher and mentor of the woods programs at Sisters High School and has been teaching the program since the beginning.

"I don't love building guitars; it's low on the list of things I like to do," he said. "I really like the connection I create with the kids. There is at least a four-year story behind each one of the kids that build guitars. They get to start on something really hard and see it through till the end and will pass on their guitars to grandkids."

Many of the students came to the showcase after just finishing their guitars that same day.

"I finished my guitar five minutes ago and just learned how to play a three-chord song," said graduating senior Will Werts. Werts also told *The Nugget* that "I like seeing how raw materials looked from start to finish. It was an amazing opportunity to create a playable instrument that I will keep forever."

Bill MacDonald has been



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Sisters students spent countless hours building guitars and ukuleles in their woods class.

a volunteer and teacher for 10 years with the luthier program at the high school. He says he's enjoyed watching the program grow and evolve.

Students spend countless hours in the wood shop building their guitars and ukuleles, and came in outside of school hours to create the best instruments they could. Students taught themselves to use various computer programs including using a CNC machine, a controlled router that can be programmed to cut specific designs. Every inlay or rosette (the design that surrounds the sound-hole) is created out of pearl, stone, shell, or abalone. Senior Will Miner helped every student create their inlay on the CNC machine, whether it be making the design or putting it on the guitar.

"I feel like I am now related to Will after spending so much time together," said Cosby.

Every student in the class helped each other create the best sounding and looking instruments they could during the span of nine months.

Ryan Funk and Brandon Ermatinger were able to play their hand-built guitars at the graduation ceremony for the senior song.

"I built this guitar with the help of all the volunteers, and Cosby, and I am so blessed to

have been able to build a guitar that sounds amazing," said Ermatinger.

The evening continued with a presentation by each one of the student groups that worked together to build their guitars. Many of the students explained special parts on their guitar from the unique head-stock shape, or design

inlays on the rosette. A few of the students built their guitars for somebody else. Nika Chick built her guitar for her mom for Mother's Day, and Miner built a left-handed guitar for his dad. The evening ended with students, led by Tisdell, performing "Three Little Birds" by Bob Marley on their hand-built guitars.



PHOTO BY CEILI CORNELIUS

Students played their hand-built instruments as a part of the Luthier Program Showcase last week at Sisters High School.

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