

Maniacs Will Perform At Benefit For Manhattan Music School

TUE SEP 28 2004

By MICHAEL ZABRODSKY
NEW YORK — Lisa Ecklund-Flores first had a vision to help children learn music when she was in college.

The Jamestown native's persistence paid off when she co-founded The Church Street School for Music and Art in lower Manhattan.

"We do a full range of musical programs starting at 16 months," she said. "Are oldest piano student is 72 (years old)."

On Thursday, Ms. Ecklund-Flores will receive a little more local help when the 10,000 Maniacs play a benefit concert for the school and Manhattan Youth at Pier 25, North Moore and the Hudson River in Tribeca.

Church Street School for Music and Art is the oldest not-for-profit music and art school in lower Manhattan, founded in 1990 and located three blocks from the former World Trade Center.

"In the months following 9/11 we lost about 75 percent of our enrollment — but as a strong and committed communi-

ty school, we remained for the families, to give them a measure of peace, joy and a place to express themselves through the arts. We have been so successful that we have fully recovered, our current enrollment is 385 students, and we are now actually expanding our space. This benefit concert will help to fund Church Street School's expansion," she said.

Manhattan Youth has experienced its own story of loss, recovery and growth. Founded in 1986 by Bob Townley, Manhattan Youth has served thousands of Lower Manhattan kids with After School programs, neighborhood sports leagues, middle school recreation programs, and a Community Service Youth Council for eighth to 12th graders.

In partnership with Hudson River Park Trust, Manhattan Youth runs Pier 25 and offers a wide variety of recreational services and community events.

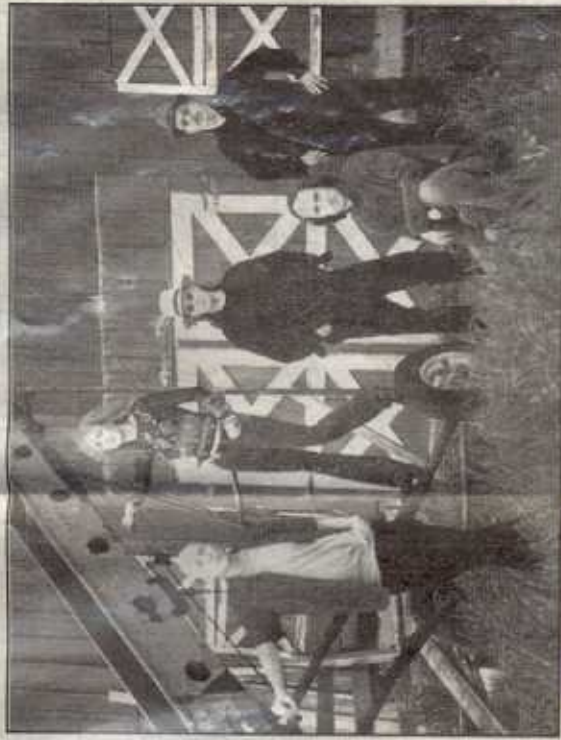
After its own post-9/11 struggle and recovery, Manhattan Youth is working to build Lower Manhattan's first Community Cen-

ter, to be located on Chambers and West streets, she said.

"My childhood friend, Dennis Drew, keyboard player and original founding member of the Maniacs, is excited to have this opportunity to contribute to downtown's recovery effort in such a fundamental and important way. This outdoor concert on the Hudson River marks the first New York City appearance of the 10,000 Maniacs in seven years — a truly historic event," she said. "What they are doing (band members) is helping support the two major youth service organizations in lower Manhattan."

Ms. Ecklund-Flores, a 1978 State College at Fredonia graduate, was teaching at a number of different schools in Manhattan and in 1990, her and friend got the idea to start a school. From there, they rented a some space and began their endeavor.

"We very impetuously decided to start our own school," Ms. Ecklund-Flores said. "We didn't really know what we were doing at the time, we just knew that we loved music and we loved working with children and



The 10,000 Maniacs will perform Thursday at a benefit concert for the Manhattan Music School.

that we really had a mission about music education."

"It should be pretty fun," said Steve Gustafson, the group's bassist. "Music is such a universal language."

Gustafson said when the band travels, there is usually a

Jamestown connection.

"So many times traveling around the country, in almost every city, there is someone from Jamestown that we know," he said.

Sent comments to mzabrodsky@post-journal.com.