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## CityFarm to perform benefit concert for Free Clinic



Submitted photo

Pictured are members of the CityFarm Band (front row, from left) Paul Mengel and Holly Ross Haynes; (second row) Don Parrish and Martin Smoral; (third row) Ed Corr and Marcus Haynes. The group will perform Aug. in a benefit concert for the Danville Free Clinic.

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For almost 30 years a group of Danvillians who migrated north to the Washington area have been making music together, first as a casual weekend band and then as the CityFarm Band.

Now they are headed back home again to perform a benefit concert for the Free Clinic of Danville on Aug. 22.

The CityFarm Band earned its name from the threats of the band members' parents to send them to Danville's City Farm (adult detention center) if they didn't behave. Even though they all behaved and grew up to be solid citi-zens, the catchy name seemed appropriate.

Band members consist of Ed Corr, guitar player, singer and George Washington High School Class of 1977; Don Parrish, banjo player, singer and GW Class of 1971; Martin "Fred" Smoral, resophonic guitar player, singer and GW Class of 1972; Paul Mengel, lead guitarist, mandolin player, singer and Danville native; Marcus Haynes, upright bass player,

### **Want to go to the concert?**

- The City Farm Benefit Concert will take place from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Community Market at 629 Craghead St. on Aug. 22.
- Tickets are \$20 per person and will be available at the door on a first-come, first-served basis. In addition, they may be purchased in advance at Foxglove Clothing Store, Raywood Landscaping Center,

singer and GW Class of 1970; and his wife, Holly, the only woman and non-Danvillian in the crowd.

The official start of the band began in 1995 when a band Marcus and Holly Haynes belonged to disbanded with two gigs still on the schedule. The two enlisted the aid of their friends and weekend band members Mengel, Parrish, Smoral and Corr to play the gigs and — quickly getting enough songs under their belts — they kicked up the week-end band a notch or two, surprising even themselves with how good they sounded.

In November 2005, they played during open mic night at the Tiffany Tavern in Alexandria and packed the house by sending out e-mails to all their friends. Since that auspicious beginning, they have played there once a month on a Friday or Saturday night.

With professional careers and one member even living in St. Croix most of the year, carving out time for rehearsals is tricky, but they have so much fun, they have made it happen.

Along the way, Kirk Bidgood, who retired last year as the administrative director of the Free Clinic and has known Corr and Mengel most of her life, invited them to Danville to help out the Free Clinic.

“Our parents were great friends, and our fathers worked together,” Bidgood said. “I had heard about the CityFarm Band from several people and how much everyone enjoyed them. I was told they would love to come to Danville sometime to perform, and I was looking for a new idea as a fundraiser for the Free Clinic, so it seemed a perfect fit!”

Bidgood contacted the band and found them to be excited about the idea of returning to their roots.

“They are looking forward to playing in their hometown, but also excited to be helping the Free Clinic and contributing to the community,” Bidgood said. “The band plays progressive bluegrass and acoustic music ... I feel it will be something new, fun and different for Danville.”

Returning home

Corr calls the upcoming concert in Danville an “honor,” although he admits it will be “just a bit frightening” to play in front of his family and friends.

“It is very special for me to play and raise money for a great cause,” he said. “The Free Clinic was an important part of the Church of the Epiphany that my family and I attended. It was also an important cause for my parents for their many years in Danville, so in a way, I feel that being a part of this event is a way that I can continue to keep giving to Danville, on behalf of and in memory of my parents.”

Parrish said he left Danville as a college-bound hippie and is returning as a middle-aged hillbilly.

“Quite a contrast,” he said. “It will be my first trip back to Danville in many years, and I am very excited about playing and seeing many longtime friends. One great thing about our band is that our rehearsals and performances are a get-together with my good friends wherein we simply enjoy each other with music!”

Mengel, who attended Danville schools through the ninth-grade, then went to high school in Alexandria, said that growing up in Danville, he felt like he couldn’t wait to get away, but now, as he approaches AARP eligibility with two young children, he understands what his parents liked about Danville.

“There’s a whole lot to be said for a small town, with decent schools, little traffic and folks that you have known and trusted for years,” he said. “Ironically, in my maturity, I find myself drawn to neighborhoods up here in the ‘Big City’ that remind me of what I took for granted when I was a kid growing up in Danville.”

He is sure that his mother, Lois, who was a music major and played the piano beautifully when he was growing up,

Tiger Barbeque and Main Street Coffee Emporium.

- Barbecue, hamburgers and hot dogs from Tiger Barbeque will be for sale, as well as beer, wine and other beverages.

- For more information, call Bidgood at (434) 822-0816 or the Free Clinic at (434) 799-1223.

would prefer to see him come back as a classical guitarist rather than a bluegrass “weekend warrior.”

“But, hey, she bought me my first banjo at Nor-Dan Shopping Center when I was 16, so what did she expect?” he said.

Smoral doesn’t get back to Danville often since all of his family has moved away, although they will be coming back to attend the benefit.

“It will be nice being back and seeing some old friends,” he said. “CityFarm is honored to be able to participate in this event. My dad, Chet Smoral, would be proud of us for coming back do this benefit, since he was very active volunteer in Danville and coached a school basketball team in the mid ‘60s.”

Marcus Haynes has always thought it would be nice to play in Danville and looks forward to seeing family and friends too.

“The Free Clinic is a worthwhile and necessary cause, and I hope our band’s contribution will be helpful,” he said.

Holly Haynes, looks forward to seeing her husband’s relatives, especially her mother-in-law, Burnelle Haynes, who now lives in Martinsville.

“She is one of the main reasons I began singing with the band we were a part of before CityFarm came to be,” she said. “I brought her to one of our rehearsals, and she told me to get up there and join them! I have never let go of the mic since.”

#### Needs of the Free Clinic

Besides the fun of an evening spent hearing old friends have fun together on a stage, the concert will help an organization that stays in continual need of community support.

According to Bidgood, the Free Clinic has enrolled 100 new patients since the first of January, which is usually the average number of new patients for a whole year.

“This shows the need in the community for the Free Clinic services and its continued growth,” she said. “The clinic provides primary health care services to the uninsured populations of Danville and Pittsylvania County and, in addition, gynecology and eye care for established patients.

“With the growing number of new patients, one of the greatest demands on the clinic is money to provide medications for these patients since there is about a one-month gap between a patient’s enrollment in the clinic and getting them established with the Pharmacy Connection, which helps provide medications for patients. Depending upon the medications, that cost could run between \$400 - \$500 per patient.”

The Clinic has only three full-time employees and four part-time, in addition to volunteer physicians and nurses. Both non-medical and medical volunteers are always needed, and anyone interested may contact the clinic at (434) 799-1223.