

LOCAL & REGION

No reason not to practice

Bravo! uses grant to buy keyboards for piano students

Daily staff report

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VAIL — The Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival was awarded a grant from the U.S. Bancorp Foundation to purchase keyboards for students in the festival's after-school piano classes. For many of the students, this is the first time they have been able to practice in their own homes.

Electric keyboards and stands went out to 13 families, free of charge.

"Students can get so much more out of it when they are able to practice at home," said Hannah Ploughman, a piano teacher. "Since the keyboards went out, I've seen a huge improvement in the playing and interest from the students who didn't have them before."

Bravo!'s approach to music education is unique, Ploughman said. Not only does the piano program provide affordable after-school piano lessons for students in grades two through seven, but the festival trains teachers — high school students — through



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

Sara Jimenez, left, a student in Bravo!'s after-school piano program, recently received a keyboard from the Festival. The keyboard giveaway was made possible by a grant from the U.S. Bancorp Foundation.

the program's mentor system. These high school students begin as apprentices to mentor teachers and later teach classes on their own.

"This cycle of younger students being exposed to music and high school students developing teaching skills at a young age is sure to inspire a passion for both music and education in a new generation," said Liz Campbell, Bravo!'s education director.

Bravo!'s piano program began in November at three locations, and since then has expanded to six locations with more than 100 students participating in

lessons each week. The current program ends in mid-April and will restart in the fall. For information on how to support the piano program or to get your child involved, call 970-827-4302.

The Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival celebrates its 24th season June 26 through Aug. 3, with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, The Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and Big Music for Little Bands, under the direction of newly appointed artistic director and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott. For a full festival schedule, visit www.vailmusicfestival.org or call 970-827-5700.