



June 13, 2008

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## **1,000 School Children, YouTube Sensation Cactus Cuties and Members of Congress Sing “The Star-Spangled Banner” at US Capitol to Commemorate Flag Day**

### **New Survey Finds Americans Overwhelmingly Support Teaching National Anthem in Schools and Agree Music Education Impacts Success in Other Subjects**

**Washington, D.C.** - As the nation recognizes Flag Day, more than 1,000 school children from across the country sing "The Star-Spangled Banner," standing at the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial near the U.S. Capitol building and joined by the Cactus Cuties and the United States Marine Band, kicking off a weekend of performances celebrating the national anthem and the importance of music education.

Created by MENC: The National Association for Music Education, the "National Anthem Project: Restoring America's Voice" is celebrating a national education initiative to re-teach Americans "The Star-Spangled Banner" after a Harris Interactive Survey showed that two out of three Americans don't know the words to the national anthem.

In the era of "No Child Left Behind," access to music education has decreased 20%. "With cut backs in music education, our children no longer are learning the music of their heritage," said Barbara Geer, a choral director and president-elect of MENC. "As America grows more diverse, learning the music of our history and our country is an important way to bind us all together as Americans. We're hoping events like today's bring attention not only to the national anthem, but to music education in our schools nationwide."

#### *Americans Support Teaching of National Anthem and Agree Music Education Impacts Success in Other Subjects*

A June survey conducted by Harris Interactive for MENC shows knowledge of the words to "The Star-Spangled Banner" up slightly from 2004 when the survey was last taken.

Americans overwhelmingly support the teaching of the national anthem in our schools. Eighty-five (85%) percent feel "The Star-Spangled Banner" should be taught in schools with two-thirds (67%) saying they feel strongly about it.

Eighty-four (84%) percent of those surveyed also feel music education teaches valuable skills that help with other subjects. According to a University of Kansas study, students in top quality music programs scored 22% higher in English and 20% higher in math on standardized tests mandated by the “No Child Left Behind Act.” In November 2007, Harris Interactive released a Harris Poll which showed a positive association of music with lifelong educational attainment and higher income. Nearly nine in ten people (88 percent) with post graduate degrees participated in music education. Further, 83 percent of those with incomes higher than \$150,000 or more participated in music.

“Not knowing the national anthem is a symptom of a larger problem in our school systems,” said Dr. John Mahlmann, Executive Director, MENC. “Research shows music education at an early age greatly increases the likelihood a child will grow up to seek higher education, earn a higher salary and feel more personally fulfilled. Music education teaches people how to think and work with others - - skills that are the foundation to success in our society today. We know as a result of The National Anthem Project, more teachers are teaching children “The Star-Spangled Banner.” That’s the good news. The bad news is music teachers have less time and fewer resources to work with our children. Our country and our children will be poorer for it.”

**GREAT VISUALS:**

- 1,000 school children, dressed in red National Anthem Project shirts, the Cactus Cuties, the President’s Own United States Marine Band, and Members of Congress at the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial, with the Capitol Building in the background
- Children singing the "The Star-Spangled Banner"

**Additional National Anthem Project Performances**

**Friday, June 13**

Mosinee High School Cantabile	Wisconsin	Sylvan Theater	10:00
Muldrow High School Band	Oklahoma	Jefferson Memorial	10:00
Whitney Point High School Aquila Chorus	New York	Sylvan Theater	10:45
El Rancho Middle Charter School Theater Choir	California	Sylvan Theater	11:30
Nash Central High School Band	North Carolina	Jefferson Memorial	11:30
Sam Houston High School Mariachi Tejana	Texas	Sylvan Theater	1:00
Wilbur L. Cross School African Drum Circle	Connecticut	Jefferson Memorial	1:00
Buckhannon Upshur Middle School Choir	West Virginia	Sylvan Theater	1:45
Harrison High School Band	Arkansas	Jefferson Memorial	1:45
Boston College High School Chorus	Massachusetts	Sylvan Theater	2:30
Kammerer Middle School Choir	Kentucky	Sylvan Theater	3:15

**Saturday, June 14**

New Canaan High School Band	Connecticut	Jefferson Memorial	10:00
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***MENC: The National Association for Music Education**, the world's largest arts education organization, marked its centennial in 2007 as the only association that addresses all aspects of music education. More than 130,000 members represent all levels of teaching from preschool to graduate school. Since 1907, MENC has worked to ensure that every student has access to a well-balanced, comprehensive, and high-quality program of music instruction taught by qualified teachers. MENC's activities and resources have been largely responsible for the establishment of music education as a profession, for the promotion and guidance of music study as an integral part of the school curriculum, and for the development of the National Standards for Arts Education.*

Harris Interactive conducted the study for the MENC online within the United States between June 2 and 4, 2008 among 2,035 adults ages 18 and over. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; complete poll results with methodology can be found at:

<http://www.menc.org/documents/temp/NationalAnthemMemo.pdf>

### **About Harris Interactive**

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Coordinates for our satellite video feeds:

Friday, June 13	2:30pm-2:45pm	GA 25C/23 DL 4160V
Friday, June 13	4:30pm-4:45pm	GA 25C/23 DL 4160V

Pathfire - NBN325449 (available after 5:00pm, Friday, June 13)