BELLARMINE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Educating for Life

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TEEN PLAYS 'MUSIC FOR THE SOUL' AT ALLENMORE

by Cole Cosgrove

(Story courtesy of MultiCare Allenmore Hospital)

Bryan Lee (11)

Soft piano notes float through the main lobby and drift down hallways, greeting visitors as they approach the reception desk.

This warm and welcoming atmosphere, reminiscent of Nordstrom or a boutique hotel, is actually at MultiCare Allenmore Hospital, courtesy of a 16-year-old volunteer.

"Honestly, I like playing for people," says Bryan Lee, a junior at nearby Bellarmine Preparatory School. "I'm giving happiness and joy to their ears, and I like that. If I can provide enjoyment for others, that's all I care about."

As a song concludes, Bryan looks up and offers a modest smile when he hears applause from patients and hospital staff members.

"Isn't that amazing?" says Lynne Marie Pelzel-Pendon, receptionist at Allenmore's information desk. "We are so lucky to have him here. He's very humble about his skills. He just plays with so much feeling. It's music for the soul."

Bryan takes requests for any kind of music at the hospital, but he's trained for classical recitals. Last year he took first place in the statewide Korean-American Music Association contest. He also plays for Bellarmine's choir and theater programs.

Recently at Allenmore, a 60-year-old woman approached Bryan and asked if he would teach her how to play. She told him, "I've always wanted to learn the piano. I'm getting older and I want to do what I want to do."

"That boosted my confidence," Bryan said.

Even if he doesn't pursue piano as a professional career, Bryan said he hopes to keep playing as a hobby.

"Wherever I can play for people, that's where I get my inspiration," he said.