

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 6, 2025

FORRESTDALE SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT TAKES TOP HONORS

Forrestdale students receive awards at the 2025 Music in the Parks Festival.

Rumson, NJ – On Friday, May 2, the Forrestdale Senior Choir under the direction of Mr. Kyle Sheehan, and the Forrestdale Concert Band and Jazz Ensemble under the direction of Mr. John Lebitsch, performed in Jackson, NJ, as part of the 2025 *Music in the Parks Festival*. Following their performances, the groups finished their day at Six Flags Great Adventure, where the official awards ceremony was held.

At *Music in the Parks*, each ensemble gives an adjudicated performance for prominent judges in the field of music education. Directors receive written comments, recorded comments, and scores from each judge. This year's festival featured thirteen ensembles from six schools representing New Jersey and New York.

This year's results are as follows: the Forrestdale Senior Choir and Jazz Ensemble came in **2nd place** with a rating of **Excellent**. The Forrestdale Concert Band came in **1st Place** with a rating of **Excellent**, and received the **Best Overall Middle School Band Award**. In addition to the ensemble awards, **Evan Schirripa** was recognized with a **Jazz Soloist Award**. Evan is a 7th-grade Forrestdale student who plays guitar in the Jazz Ensemble, baritone saxophone in the Concert Band, and sings in the Senior Choir.

To cap off the awards ceremony, the entire music department was presented with the festival's top honor: the coveted **Esprit de Corps Award**. At the conclusion of the festival, this honorable distinction is presented to the one school that demonstrates genuine support for fellow musicians while excelling in all facets of performance, both on and off the stage.

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