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Del Sol Academy instructor Paul Kleemann says he was amazed to receive donations that provided 120 guitars for students.

Pulling some strings

By Jannelle Calderon
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A Clark County music school teacher's appeal for guitars struck a chord with Zappos and the Las Vegas community.

Paul Kleemann, who teaches guitar classes at Del Sol Academy of the Performing Arts in Las Vegas, issued a call via social media last week for "guitar heroes" to donate used guitars so that all 200 of his students could have instruments at home to practice on during distance learning.

Distance learning is particularly challenging when it comes to hands-on subjects like music classes, he

Community responds to teacher's request for guitars for students

noted.

Kleemann had 60 guitars on hand when he put out his call on Facebook and Twitter seeking 140 more, either guitars that were "gathering dust" or entry-level guitars at \$100 apiece, for the remainder of his students, many of whom are from low-income families.

"I'm trying to do anything I can to make sure that all of my students have access to a guitar so they can

learn during this distance learning model for the school," Kleemann said.

The tweet caught Zappos' attention.

"Hi Paul! We'd like to see about helping you out with some guitars!" the company said in reply to his tweet.

Zappos donated enough money to cover 70 guitars, getting Kleemann halfway to his goal. As of Tuesday, he also had received 50 additional guitars, a bass guitar and some amplifiers from community members.

"I am amazed at how generous people are. When I put this out

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there, I was shooting for the stars," the 36-year-old Kleemann said. "It's definitely given me faith that people are willing to help in this time of need, and I know that many schools could use donations similarly of instruments in general that are collecting dust in people's houses."

During in-person classes, the 60 guitars in the classroom enabled every student to play one, with a few left over to lend to students to take home for practice.

Like many teachers, Kleemann has had to make changes to adapt to virtual learning. But he said he doesn't plan to shift the focus of the

virtual class.

"Part of my plan is to simply try to show them how they can create their own music and then, like, have that be part of their independent learning," Kleemann said. "I'm just excited to see the returning students I've seen grow since they were freshman and see some of the new kids and try to inspire them to play."

Those who would like to donate can visit the guitar class webstore at Del Sol's website, purchase a guitar from Kleemann's Amazon wish list or contact him at kleempe@nv.ccsd.net.

Contact Jannelle Calderon at jcalderon@reviewjournal.com. Follow @NewsyJan on Twitter.



Paul Kleemann

Some of the guitars that Paul Kleemann received from the community after his plea for help. He will clean and repair the guitars so they are ready for his students.