

Windham Independent News

THURS. FEB. 5, 2015

WINDHAM STUDENTS HONORED WITH ARTS AND HUMANITIES AWARD

Isabel Chin, a violinist and a sixth grader at Presentation of Mary Academy and Daniel Chin, a violinist and a third grader at Presentation of Mary Academy, both of Windham, New Hampshire, are two of 44 Project STEP music students who were recently honored with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award. The award is the signature program of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

Chosen from a national pool of more than 350 nominations and 50 finalists, Project STEP is one of 12 programs across the country to receive the award, which is the highest honor for such programs in the United States.

Project STEP (String Training and Education Program) was recognized for its rigorous, year-round classical string training program for under-represented minorities that invites them into a world of classical music that might not otherwise be available to them. Studies show long term music education programs, such as the one Project STEP provides, increases overall academic achievement, literacy and language abilities, communication, graduation rates, and college enrollment, as well as performance skills, and cultural awareness.

Prompted by concern over the historic underrepresentation of



minority classical musicians, Project STEP was founded in 1982 by William Moyer, a now-retired Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) personnel manager. As the first program of its kind, Project STEP's mission is to address this imbalance by identifying talented, motivated young minority students and providing them with access to the best string music training available. As of 2012, just five percent of orchestra musicians in the United States are African-American or Latino. Sixty percent of Project STEP graduates are now professionally involved in music.

From left to right: Daniel and

Isabel Chin Photo credit: Abdi Ali