

## The Power of the Piano Bank Program

Every human endeavor starts with a certain amount of optimism. Especially if you have been cursed with enough entrepreneurial spirit to cause you to become a merchant. While the Steinway Piano Society of Southwest Florida is the envy of piano stores everywhere, most of our programs have come up just a little short of initial expectations. That is why I was so gratified to see Julian Gonzales win an award in this year's FGCU/Steinway Piano Competition.

Julian first started playing the piano in our after school group piano program taught by Professor Joanne Smith at our old Gallery on 91st Street in Naples. He was also one of the first students to qualify for a practice piano from our Piano Bank. Seeing him win 3rd place among the Junior group in this year's competition was especially sweet.

Though the after school program has been suspended, the Competition and the Piano Bank are the principal vehicles we use to encourage and support young pianists. We are currently working with the FGCU Bower School of Music to create a program where their pedagogy students can earn college credit while gaining practical experience teaching young people at several locations throughout our area. There are several logistical and financial issues to resolve. Stand by for more information and let us know if you'd like to help.



*Greg & Sara Billings, Julian Gonzales, Meghan Brachle, Professor Joanne Smith, Dr. Michael Baron*

Julian is living proof that our work is paying dividends. He is exactly what you would hope to see in a young man. He has a big smile and a kind nature. He's a good student and a fine citizen. Music is having a profound influence on his life, and the members of the Steinway Piano Society are helping him achieve his goals.

Congratulations Julian and Professor Joanne Smith! Congratulations to all of our generous members and sponsors.



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-Greg Billings*