



Celebrating Our Staff

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-Andrew Judd, W.F. West Band Director

Dr. Andrew Judd: Building On a Musical Legacy

Dr. Andrew Judd

W.F. West High School's new band director, Dr. Andrew Judd, is part of a musical legacy that started before he was even born.

Raised in Chehalis, Judd graduated from W.F. West in 1998, where he played the trombone in the jazz band and pep bands and also sang in the choir. His father, David Judd, was the district's choir teacher and his uncle, Dan Judd, was band director. In a famous photo in the high school's band room of a 1997 band trip to Washington D.C., Judd can point to himself as well as quite a few other Chehalis School District staff and parents.

The origin of Judd's love of music also comes from his mother, who was a music teacher who taught piano lessons for many years. All of the Judd children were required to take piano lessons from 1st through 8th grade and they were all in band and all sang in the choirs. When Andrew reached 9th grade, the age where he was no longer required to take piano lessons, he continued on with his piano lessons because he enjoyed them so much.

"It just clicked with me. I just liked the learning process. I don't always like the pain of learning but I find joy in the process," Judd said.

Judd decided music was his post-secondary path when he was a junior in high school, though he said he purposefully did not choose music education. He first attended Evangel University, a small, Christian college, intending to become a music pastor. He quickly learned that he probably did not need a degree to become a music pastor.

"But I wanted to study music and I realized that music education was the best way to be employable," he said.

In his junior year at Evangel, Judd took another detour when his trombone professor approached him about considering becoming a graduate student. He then went on to earn his Master's and Doctorate in trombone performance on an assistantship to [University of North Carolina, Greensboro](#).

He and his wife, Amanda, met in the orchestra at Evangel and were married in 2002. Amanda earned her Master's degree in violin performance from Baylor University while Andrew pursued his graduate studies. Amanda played professionally for the Winston-Salem and Greensboro symphonies while also teaching violin. One of the things Andrew learned during this time was he found himself having a couple of periods where the rigor of playing his trombone for 6-8 hours every day caused him to burn out, so he decided that music performance was not the route for him.

"I realized that wasn't the avenue that brought me the most joy. I love playing my instrument, but I didn't love when I had to play it all the time," he said.

Judd still plays trombone for the Northwest Wind Symphony, which performs at Centralia College.



Leaving Home For a Homecoming

Judd graduated with his Doctorate in 2007 and decided that since he had earned his undergraduate degree in music education, he would teach. He initially intended to teach at the college level but found he did not have enough experience at the time for most universities. He decided the next best thing would be teaching middle school (he did not want to teach high school initially) so he applied and was hired in Oak Harbor, where he spent 16 years teaching middle school and also fifth- and sixth-grade music.

Oak Harbor was not only a job. For the Judds it also became home. Though they frequently visited Andrew's hometown of Chehalis, for their four kids, Annice, 9th grade, Adeline, 7th Grade, Avery 5th grade and Austin, 2nd grade, Oak Harbor was where they had grown up and had an established community and network of friends. So, when the band director position opening at W.F. West was announced last spring, Judd said he probably would not have applied had it not been for the urging of family and friends.

"We're excited to be here but it has been an adjustment at the same time," Judd said.

Amanda homeschools all four of their children and their three older children attend music and extracurricular activities in the Chehalis School District.

Judd said one of the joys of being the band director at his former high school is that he has gotten to rejoin the community of musicians he knew as a high schooler. Many of his peers from high school are now his co-workers and still others are the parents of his band students today.

"It's very surreal. I have a lot of moments where I'm walking through the building and I'm hit by deja vu," Judd said.

In addition to band at W.F. West, Judd also teaches Ukulele/Guitar at Chehalis Middle School and 5th grade trumpet at Orin Smith Elementary.

Judd said his hopes for the W.F. West band program are simple: continued growth of numbers of students in the band program and continued growth of his students' abilities and achievements. The band program's numbers have dipped in recent years, partially owing to the inability to play band instruments during the COVID pandemic. Judd said there are currently 43 students in the W.F. West Band and he hopes to be able to double that number in two or three years. In Judd's mind, this will be accomplished through rekindling the musical group's sense of community and students' excitement for playing.

"There's excellence going on in the band here but we want to have an overarching sense of that that every kid feels. Every student wants to be part of something that's musically excellent," Judd said.



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