



**Zambelli**  
FIREWORKS

**Christopher Protho, M.Ed.  
2013 IFEA/Zambelli Fireworks  
Volunteer of the Year Award Winner  
Nominated by Music for All  
Indianapolis, IN**

**The IFEA and Zambelli Fireworks are pleased to announce Christopher Protho, M.Ed. from Music for All in Indianapolis, IN, as the recipient of the 2013 IFEA/Zambelli Fireworks Volunteer of the Year Award.**

Chris's journey with Music for All began in 1990 when he was a freshman at West Virginia University. A member of their acclaimed Marching Band, Chris was required to volunteer at Music for All's Bands of America Eastern Regional Marching Band Competition for high school students. He was a parking lot attendant. Despite the lackluster volunteer assignment, this first exposure to Music for All made a lasting impression on the young man who grew up outside of Pittsburgh, PA. So impressionable, that he continued to volunteer for Music for All for the next 23 years. Following his debut as a parking lot attendant, Chris traveled the following summer to Wisconsin to be a camp counselor for Bands of America's Summer Camp for high school marching band students. By then, he was hooked.



Within those 23 years, Chris experienced nearly every volunteer opportunity available at Music for All, from a parking lot attendant in 1990 to the Contest Director for the Grand National Marching Band Championships in 2009, Chris's progression is a result of his commitment to the organization at all levels. This is no small feat as Music for All is a multifaceted organization that: provides music education for middle and high school students in marching bands, concert bands, orchestras, music ensembles or as individuals; offers professional development for instrumental music teachers; organizes a series of regional and national performance events that are culminating experiences for schools and student musicians; and serves as an advocate for scholastic music programs across the country.

During his tenure with Music for All, Chris provided logistics support and event management at: 81 Bands of America Regional Marching Band Championships; 20 Grand National Championships; four Summer Symposiums; three Music for All National Festivals; and one Regional Concert Band Festival, which occurred during his honeymoon. His volunteer assignments at these events have included (but not limited to): event management, field manager, field operations, announcer, parking manager, ticketing, concessions, tabulator, timing and penalties judge, loading dock monitor and shuttle driver. Chris has logged 39,000 miles in personal vehicles to these events, and dedicated more than 7,000 services hours to Music for All. After 23 years of volunteering, working a full-time job, earning a Master Degree, getting married, having children and pursuing a doctorate degree, Chris's dedication to Music for All has not waned.

Chris's expertise in events management has evolved with the organization, and he has more institutional knowledge than many of the paid staff. Chris's hands-on experience is greatly enhanced by his academic and career pursuits. Chris holds a Bachelor of Music from West Virginia University, a Master of Education from California University of Pennsylvania, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Instructional Management and Leadership from Robert Morris University. Since 1999 he has been a Music Teacher and the Band

Director at Mars Area Middle School. In addition, Chris is deeply involved with scholastic music programs in his home state, most recently serving on Pennsylvania's Department of Education's Standards and Practices Commission, a position appointed by the governor.

Chris's extraordinary dedication to working on the front-lines at the many Music for All events earned him the distinguished role of Contest Director for Grand National Championships three years in a row from 2009 to 2011. This is the highest volunteer position available at Music for All, responsible for delivering an event that is consistent with Music for All's mission, vision and core values. A demanding, complex and highly specialized volunteer position, the Contest Director makes the event—held in Indianapolis' Lucas Oil Stadium—an unforgettable experience for 75,000 people, including the students, teachers, band directors and spectators.

Chris considers Music for All a part of his family. This deep commitment, coupled with Chris's positive attitude, is a rare asset to any organization. To Chris, scouting locations for Music for All events while on his honeymoon in Florida was part of life. Driving to various cities for events after Friday night football games was commonplace for Chris. To Chris, this is an adventure, a dream come true, a chance to travel the country doing what he loves—supporting and recognizing students for their outstanding accomplishments in music. Chris is inspired by Music for All's mission to create, provide and expand positively life-changing experience through music for all.

Chris's impact extends far beyond a single event or series of events. Chris has been the bridge to Music for All's future. He began volunteering when Music for All had a staff of nine, and now that staff has doubled. In many cases, he has helped train and orient new staff for Music for All events. His institutional knowledge is unmatched. Chris believed in the organization from the beginning. When it was a fledging organization striving to evolve and professionalize scholastic marching band events—Chris believed in the mission. When Bands of America and Music for All Foundation merged in 2006 resulting in many organizational pains—Chris believed in the mission. When Music for All faced devastating budget cuts in 2009 exacerbated by the recession, staff morale was low and Music for All considered closing its doors forever—Chris believed in the mission. Simply put, Chris was at his best, when the organization was not at its best. He has been an energizing force throughout Music for All's evolution.

Today, Music for All is stronger and more stable than it has ever been, thanks to the dedication and commitment from Christopher Protho.