

## The Louisburg High School Marching Wildcat Band Louisburg, Kansas

The Louisburg High School Marching Wildcat Band includes 187 members. Band members comprise more than one-fourth of the entire student body. In recent years, the Louisburg band has performed at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas, Texas, the National Independence Day Parade in Washington, DC, the Indy 500 Parade in Indianapolis, and the New York City Veterans Day Parade. This year is Louisburg's first appearance at the Tournament of Roses.

The band consistently earns top ratings at both concert and marching band events. This year the Louisburg Band earned first division ratings at the 2017 Kansas State Music Festival, the 2017 Baker University Marching Festival, and the 2017 Central States Marching Festival. Louisburg's is one of the finest band programs in the state earning first division ratings from all judges at State Music Festivals for the last seven years.

The band is led by drum majors Chloe Philgreen, Mikayla Quinn, and Shaylor Whitham (pronounced "wit-tam"). Assistant band director is Brett Butler, Kassy Miller is the dance instructor, and Steve Town is the band parent chairperson. The Wildcat Band is directed by John Cisetti (pronounced "chee-set-tee" as in "cheese" and "spaghetti"). Mr. Cisetti has led the Louisburg Band for the last 39 years.

Link to Mr. Cisetti's resume:

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1pNjAsSuJNiZK2b\\_k8Z2hB9D5tt\\_zK\\_B](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1pNjAsSuJNiZK2b_k8Z2hB9D5tt_zK_B)

In December, Mr. Cisetti inducted into the Bandworld Legion of Honor by the John Philip Sousa Foundation at the Midwest Band Clinic in Chicago. Eight band directors from across North America are inducted each year. Here is a link to information about that program: <http://www.bandworld.org/MagOnline/MagOnline.aspx?i=51&p=99>

Students in Louisburg begin band in fifth grade Mr. Cisetti teaches them all the way through. In addition to concert/marching band, offerings include jazz bands at both the middle school and the high school that meet during the school day. The dance team is taught as a class concurrent with the marching band led by Kassy Miller, dance instructor. The drum line also meets as a class during the school day and is taught by assistant band director Brett Butler. The Louisburg marching band for the Rose Parade includes eighth grade band members.

qualified by auditioning for and being selected for the Northeast Kansas District Band.

In order to prepare for the Rose Parade trip, we divided our work into four areas of concentration:

### **Musical and Marching Preparation**

The Rose Parade has given us an opportunity to hone our musical and marching skills. We added extra performances this year including the Maple Leaf Parade in Baldwin City, Kansas and the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Kansas City, Missouri where we won first place. Our summer marching band camp was extended extra days this year. Our regular rehearsals include marching fundamentals drills, music rehearsal, parade marching, and field marching.

## **Physical Conditioning**

We have made extra efforts to prepare for the five and a half mile march.

The Garmin Company donated Vivofit fitness watches for every member of the band. The goal is to walk at least 10,000 steps per day. We set up an on-line spreadsheet and students tracked their steps. They received a dollar in their trip fund account for each day they walked at least 10,000 steps. Our group has recorded nearly 150 million steps!

This summer, we met at the track twice a week for two hours of walking and marching. This fall, we held five evening neighborhood parades. We would meet at the high school and then march to different neighborhoods in town with police escorts. Our final neighborhood parade was five and a half miles in full uniform.

Our band has a saying, "The Band Makes Me Strong!"

## **Fund Raising**

The trip from Kansas to California will cost over a half million dollars. The price per student is \$1,750.00.

Our goal was for half of the cost to be paid through fund-raising project with the other half paid out-of-pocket. Fund-raising and donations far exceeded expectations with the average student earning 71% and only having to pay 29% out-of-pocket.

Our largest fund-raiser was the Letter of Support campaign. Students wrote letters to family and friends describing the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that they were given to represent the Heart of America in the Rose Parade. We have received donations from ALL 50 states, the District of Columbia, and two foreign countries totaling over \$187,000.

The Super Band Garage Sale has been a springtime tradition in Louisburg for 27 years. We fill the high school gym with donated garage sale items and run the event for three days. The sale also includes a silent auction, a new mattress sale, food, and music. This year, the band garage sale earned \$44,000 for the band trip fund.

Our band held a number of other fund-raisers including car washes, concession stands, restaurant events, yard sign sales, and raffles.

More than \$68,000 was donated to the band from individuals, corporations, community groups, and foundations. The largest was an unsolicited donation of \$25,000 from Cheerios "Moments of Good." The presentation was made at a surprise pep rally on the morning of November 28, 2017.

From the outset, we determined that no student should be left behind because of financial need. We established a scholarship fund and an application process. The Scholarship Committee awarded over \$10,000 to students in need. We have met our goal: no one will be left behind because their family could not afford the trip.

## **Positive Patriotism**

One of the core principles of our program is what we call “Positive Patriotism.” Positive patriotism is patriotism in action. Patriotism is supporting our community, supporting our classmates, and supporting our band. It’s being good citizens of the band. Positive patriotism is the understanding that using our skills, our talents, and our gifts to lift up the community is incumbent on every citizen. Flags and flourishes, rousing music, and intense dedication are the norm when the Wildcat Band performs.

As musicians, we use our musical skills to benefit our community and our country. In past years, we have performed wreath-laying ceremonies at the tomb of Abraham Lincoln, at the Navy Memorial in Washington, DC, at the tomb of John Philip Sousa, and at the Flight 93 National Memorial. We have performed for professional sports events including those of the Kansas City Royals, the Washington Nationals, the St. Louis Cardinals, and the Indianapolis 500.

We regularly participate in local ceremonies such as the National Day of Prayer, Patriot Day, and Veterans Day Ceremonies. We salute U.S. veterans at every home football game by playing the five service tunes and presenting the flags of the Navy, Marines, Army, Coast Guard, and Air Force.

This year, members of our group participated in the filming of “Eternal Harvest,” a film funded by the Andy Warhol Foundation and produced by Kansas City artist and Louisburg Band alumnus David Reed. The short film celebrates the cycles of life centered on his family’s farm in rural Louisburg. It will be shown as a part of Louisburg’s 2018 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.

The Louisburg Band Department owns a 20 ft. by 30 ft., garrison-size U.S. flag that is used at all home football games and at other significant events. It was displayed on the side of our high school shortly after the 9-11 attacks and has been used at many patriotic events. The flag has been deployed at Royals Stadium, Busch Stadium, RFK Stadium, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and at the Kansas State Football Championship. The flag was carried in front of the White House in the National Independence Day Parade and on Fifth Avenue in the New York City Veterans Day Parade.

The Louisburg Band will proudly display our giant flag in this year’s Rose Parade

Giant Flag: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByiG1WCiXGpAUjBCQ3JnRGhXTUk>

The Louisburg Band will also perform at a ceremony honoring fallen service members at Defender’s Park in Pasadena on December 31, the night before the parade.

### **Other Information**

Louisburg, Kansas is a city of over 4,000 located approximately fifty miles south and west of Kansas City, Missouri. The community began as a settlement shortly after the Civil War and was known as St. Louis, Kansas or “Little St. Louis.” The city was later incorporated as “Louisburg” and served as the rail center for a large agricultural area. Today, Louisburg is a growing community filled with people working to build a bright future. Louisburg celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> year in 2018. The year of celebration begins with the Louisburg Band marching before an international audience in the 2018 Tournament of Roses Parade.

Louisburg High School was named a National Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education. In 2011, LHS was one of only 43 high schools from across the nation awarded the Blue Ribbon. The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and non-public schools where students achieve at very high levels. Louisburg was recognized for its exceptional test scores and for its comprehensive educational program, including its outstanding vocal and instrumental music department. Louisburg High School has also been recognized with the Governor's Achievement Award for multiple years.

Louisburg High School celebrated its 100th year as a four-year high school in 2012. In that time, it has been housed in three different buildings with its newest home opening in August 2002. LHS serves 550 students and offers a full academic curriculum and extra-curricular activities. LHS is a place where all are challenged to learn to their highest potential.

The Louisburg High School Band was featured in the August 2016 issue of "The Instrumentalist" magazine: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ZQi3jbQUAPtiW8MF6UNHcRxR9DrDbhh3>

This year is Louisburg's first appearance in the Rose Parade. Our band first applied in 2008 and has submitted five applications before being accepted. With each application, our children learned about setting high goals and about working hard and working together to reach for those goals. Each application was a valuable learning experience. Each was a GOLDEN LESSON, an exercise in tenacity that will carry our students far in life. This is why we send our children to school! Even though it took five tries, each one was well-worth it.

Our band has never traveled to the west coast before. This year's California trip will be a nine-day excursion. We will depart from Louisburg early on December 26 aboard six chartered busses. We'll spend the night in Albuquerque and arrive in Los Angeles late on December 27. Besides performing in the parade and at Bandfest, our band will march at Disneyland and take in the sights including Santa Monica Pier, Hollywood, and Pasadena.

Our traveling party includes 187 students, 70 adult chaperones and staff, 6 bus drivers, and 2 tour guides; 265 total. It's like moving an army. We must transport, house, feed, uniform, equip, and train our members. We must attend to their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. We must deploy, execute, and return everyone home safely. We will return home late on January 3. Second semester begins the next morning.

Quote from John Cisetti:

I have had the privilege of leading the Louisburg Band for the last 39 years. It is the honor of my professional life. I have told the kids that marching in the Rose Parade will not be the biggest thing that happens in their lives. No, there will be bigger days, perhaps the day they get married, the days when their children are born, or the days of significance in their careers. But I'm willing to bet that in the end, marching in the Rose Parade with their high school band will be among the top ten events of their lives. And that's why this is worth all the effort, work, sweat, and money it will take. From now on, my students can point to the TV on New Year's Day and say to their grandchildren, "I did that." And the rest of us can point to the TV and say, "We did that, we made that happen!"

Here is a link to our application

video: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByiG1WCIXGpAV1BxRUFpY2xIN0U>

Here is a link to a video of the announcement of our acceptance: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0ByiG1WCIXGpAOFAtU0tIaFZhWWs>