

For Immediate Release

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National High School Orchestra! *School of the Arts Junior named to National High School Orchestra*

James Reinhart
Principal
Charleston County School of the Arts

Dr. Nancy J. McGinley
Superintendent of Schools

NORTH CHARLESTON—Charleston County School of the Arts junior Michelle Hillenius has been accepted into the National High School Honors Orchestra. This Orchestra is sponsored by the American String Teachers Association and is held every other year at the ASTA conference. This year it will be in Santa Clara, California on February 18-21, 2010. Students from all over the country audition for the ensemble and are screened by the nation's top orchestra teachers and professional performers. A student must first pass the audition from their home state in order to be selected at the national level. Michelle is the only student selected from South Carolina to participate in this prestigious symphony this year.

Michelle is the daughter of Willem and Brenda Hillenius and lives West of the Ashley. Michelle began playing the viola at age 5 and has studied under Sadie DeWall and Jill King, violists from the Charleston Symphony Orchestra. Michelle entered the Charleston School of the Arts in the 7th grade and has been accepted into the All-State and Lowcountry Region Orchestras for the past five years. She has earned superior ratings at Solo & Ensemble Festival as well as with the SOA Orchestras at Concert Festival. She has also won auditioned Scholarships from the Charleston Symphony Orchestra League for the past 6 years.

Michelle has played in many community orchestras and ensembles including the SOA String Quartet, Summerville Community Orchestra, Charleston Symphony Youth Orchestra. She is currently Principal violist in the Youth Orchestra of the Lowcountry and the School of the Arts Symphony Orchestra. Michelle also enjoys playing Fiddle in a Contradance band and teaching violin to elementary school children.

Michelle needs to raise money to be able to go to California in February: along with the participation fee, there will be travel expenses, supply expenses, and meal expenses. The cost of the trip is estimated at \$1,500.00. We welcome any donations to help the cause. Her high school orchestra director, Sarah Fitzgerald, will be traveling as her chaperone.

For more information regarding this event, please contact please contact Sarah Fitzgerald at the Charleston County School of the Arts, 843-529-4990 or sarah_fitzgerald@charleston.k12.sc.us Additional contacts: Principal James Reinhart or Andi Awkerman at 529-4990.