

DIRECTOR OF CHOIRS | STEFANIE CANNON
COLLABORATIVE PIANIST | LIZ STINMAN

MIXED CHORUS
The Little Creek
You are Light
Sisi Ni Moja

CONCERT CHOIR
Enough
City called Heaven
All of Me

FRIEND CHOIR
Always a Place for You

STRUMMING HIS FINGERS

Paying close attention to the music sheet, **Angel Jimenez (12)** rehearses with the mixed choir before the fall concert in the auditorium on Oct. 7, 2025. "I was definitely blessed with the opportunity to play guitar for the mixed choir; it's definitely something I'll take with me when I graduate," Jimenez said.



YOU GOT A FRIEND IN ME

FIRST CHOIR CONCERT OF THE
YEAR MIXES SONGS WITH
FRIENDSHIPS ALONG THE WAY

STORY BY
ARTEMIS WRIGHT

While the thought of singing in front of an audience with your friend might sound imposing to some — that certainly wasn't the case for **Zionah Grandy (12)**.

As part of the choir's first concert of the season, Vocal Music instructor **Stefanie Cannon** wanted to try something new.

"I started with the idea of a friend choir and considered what pieces would be appropriate for that," Cannon said. "Then once I had selected *Always a Place for You*, I decided that would be the theme for the whole concert."

For Grandy, that was having the opportunity to sing with her friend

Jasmine Payne (09).

"I found this really fun and enjoyable," Grandy said. "The entire time I was just so captivated and in awe."

With many friends, family and staff gathered in Burke's auditorium for this concert. The choir performed a variety of songs.

"I invited mutual friends from theater and band," **Zayne Prusla (10)** said. "It was nice to see them all show up. I felt pretty good to showcase, but it's hard to put all of our hard work into one concert. That's the reason I always do my best to perform to the best of my ability."



THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

Warming up before the first choir concert, **Jordan Sagitteh (12, left)** prepares to enter the auditorium for the opening ceremony. The choir had started practicing in the first week of school. "I think it went really well," Sagitteh said. "I think I was able to hold my part pretty well. It was a little difficult because it's hard to like hear on the stage."

ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Below: Singing "Always a Place for You," **Radio McCune (10)** performs at the fall choir concert. "I'm not really used to singing so it was kind of an odd experience for me, but it was still fun to do and to get out there," McCune said. Photos by Keely McNabb-Harbert



SAY CELLO TO MY LITTLE FRIEND

ANNUAL CELLO/BASS DAY AFFORDS MUSICIANS OPPORTUNITY TO FINE TUNE CRAFT

STORY BY
ARTEMIS WRIGHT

VERMILLION, S.D. —

OF instructor **Jestin Cam's** 68 students, only 17 of them play cello or bass.

To compensate, Cam takes full advantage of professional development opportunities.

"Cello or Bass isn't really an instrument that people choose to play," Cam said. "When you think about the balance, it's a bit off. Being able to take them places and learn things from the wonderful musicians at USD is an experience for all of them that I would want."

Spending the day at the University of South Dakota

campus, for the South Dakota Cello/Bass Day, cellists and bassists learned from professionals and had the opportunity to perform with other musicians around the Midwest.

HOT JUST STAND PARTNERS

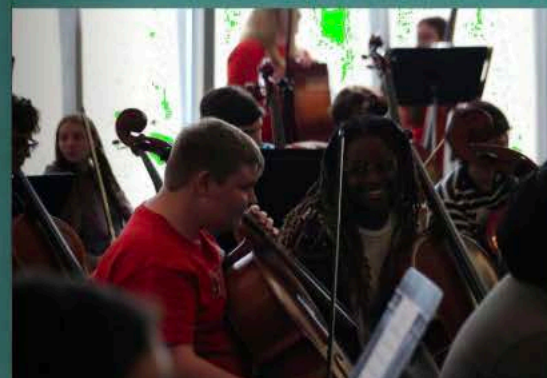
Chatting during a break, **Jonoe Davis (12)** took a second to themselves. After practicing one piece for over an hour and switching between instructors, they needed it. "Sam was my stand partner, I've known him since like freshman year," Davis said. "It's so helpful having someone you know as a stand partner especially since at USD, since you don't really know anyone."

Photo by Jacqueline Juon



LOW TONES, HIGH PASSION

Glancing over at Teacher Cam, Ouren gains some helpful tips about what to work on. **Samuel Ouren (12)** performs at USD for cello/bass day. Ouren had just received the music earlier that day. "I had lots of fun on that day," Ouren said. "I learned a lot of new things, met new people, and overall enjoyed the music we played. The instructors there are very helpful." Photo by Artemis Wright



LET ME TUNE IN

Reading music with her stand partner, **Thoshita Barua (10, front)** at the University of South Dakota for Cello/Bass Day. The piece students were given had just been received on the day of the event, so they was no chance for memorization. "Since we work with other cellists, I feel like we learn a lot," Barua said. "Since we all play the same instrument it's so much more helpful because they know the ins and outs of it." Photo by Artemis Wright



WALK THIS WAY

STORY BY
ARTEMIS WRIGHT

After another senseless school shooting, enough was enough for students around the country and the Metro.

Understanding that without change mass shootings would continue, the Students Demand Action organization planned a national walkout for noon on Sept. 5, 2025.

While only three students exited the front doors at school, there was no regret.

"I walked out to help prevent gun violence in schools," **Tanya Lopez (12)**

WHILE THE NUMBERS WEREN'T THERE, STUDENTS FIGHT FOR GUN REFORM

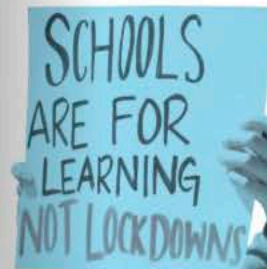
said. "The walkout was a nationwide thing planned by an organization that was pretty much done by every other school but ours."

Other OPS schools saw higher numbers. For instance, Central High School recorded 100-plus students in their walkout.

"I guess, strength in small numbers," **David Segura Diaz De Leon (12)** said. "I'm really happy that Central got to

have their big group. I wish that happened to Burke because that would send a bigger message, but you know what, we still showed our support by protesting so I guess that's what matters."

Cedar Hand (12) added, "I feel like gun violence is a growing and continuous issue," Hand said. "It's important to at least raise awareness and show students care."



Senior
Cedar
Hand

In the name of safety

In light of yet another school shooting, the **STUDENTS DEMAND ACTION** organization schedules a national walkout.

When: Sept. 5, 2025 at noon.

What: No students should have to hide in their church pews or their classrooms, wondering if their classmates, friends, and teachers will walk out alive. We should not have to be afraid of gun violence in our schools, places of worship, or whether a bullet will shatter our futures and fracture our communities.

"We're sick and tired of inaction from our elected officials to protect our lives and our ability to actually feel safe in our classrooms and communities. Firearms are already the leading cause of death for children, teens (ages 1 to 19), and college-aged people in the United States — when will ENOUGH be ENOUGH for our legislators?"

studentsdemandaction.org

STANDING FOR A CAUSE

Protesting on the sidewalk near school, **Cedar Hand (12, right)** holds a sign against school shootings during a national walkout on Sept. 5. As part of a broader campaign, Hand said the recent shootings in Minnesota played a role. "I think it is especially important to me because it was only three people including myself," Hand said. "I feel like gun violence is a progressing issue and its not getting any better. It's not slowing down." Photos by Callie Huffman

