

March 30, 2017

“Attic Strad” Goes to High School Student

A Wauwatosa East high school student who wanted a “violin with character” has found an instrument that fulfills his hopes.

Ben Tarrence, a violin player since fourth grade, now owns the “attic strad” that was available recently at the St. Jude Thrift Shop, 800 Glenview Ave., .The vintage violin was donated to the store and featured in a Wauwatosa Now report that triggered several inquiries, according to Roberta Dollhopf, thrift shop manager.

Ben’s mother, Heather, saw the story and was first in line to buy it at 9 a.m. on March 22, the day it went on sale. While Ben was at school, she looked over the old violin, gave her husband a quick call and then purchased it for the \$200 asking price.

“He has been looking for something with some history and character,” she said. She pointed out that the violin’s rich brown patina and worn carrying case give it a special look. . The words, “In the manner of Stradivarius,” are imprinted inside the body of the violin.

Both Ben and his mother also liked the instrument’s story which dates back to the early 1900s when its first owner received it as a teenager. After playing it for much of her life, she passed on the instrument to her niece, Sr. Angelyn Dries.

The violin eventually became an “attic strad”--an old violin hidden away for several years -- before being donated to the St. Jude Thrift Shop. The instrument was bargain-priced because it needed new strings and other work

“I am really glad it will have a good home with someone who will appreciate it,” said Dollhopf. Ben’s mother said the family was making plans for its restoration.

Along with violin, Ben plays fiddle and mandolin, and would like to learn guitar and banjo. He also is involved in track, cross country, and Boy Scouts. The 16-year-old student plans to study engineering in college and hopes to travel aboard. Where ever he goes, he said, playing his instruments will remain a lifelong interest.

The St. Jude Thrift Shop carries a wide selection of affordable clothing and household items. It is open on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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