

LOCAL

### Tax help

AARP offers free services  
page 5 >

PUBLIC SAFETY

### Autism and police

Savage to host public forum  
on emergencies  
page 9 >

2019

### The best new year

Tips on keeping resolutions  
pages 14,15 >

EDUCATION

### 'Akeelah and the Bee'

Burnsville High brings movie  
to stage  
page 16 >

INDEX

OPINION.....	6
OBITUARIES.....	8
PUBLIC SAFETY.....	9
CALENDAR.....	11
SPORTS.....	17
CLASSIFIEDS.....	22

HOW TO REACH US

SUBSCRIBE: 952-345-6682  
EDITOR: 952-345-6376 OR  
EDITOR@SAVAGEPACER.COM  
ONLINE: SAVAGEPACER.COM

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

FACEBOOK.COM/  
SAVAGEPACER  
TWITTER.COM/  
SAVAGEPACER

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 26  
swnewsmedia  
Great People Growing Communities  
© 2019 SOUTHWEST NEWS MEDIA

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE MAILING LABEL



PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE SCHUSTER

M.W. Savage fifth graders Cumene Golegio, left, and Siham Warsame, right, practice playing a Somali lullaby on xylophones during Becca Buck's music class.

# Songs from home

## Local educators' multicultural project changes music education

BY CHRISTINE SCHUSTER  
cschuster@swpub.com

Becca Buck, a local elementary music specialist, knew something was missing from the repertoire of standard music she taught her multicultural students.

So she set out to collect lullabies and other songs from students' homes — a project that's bringing music from around the world together and transforming

her classroom and music education around Minnesota.

"Music functions differently in every single culture," Buck said. "People say music is a universal language — it's not. It's a language we all speak differently."

Buck teaches kindergarten through fifth grade music at M.W. Savage and Gideon Pond elementary schools. As an educator, she trained in a method

Music to 2 >



Becca Buck sings a Somali lullaby to students in her fifth grade class at M.W. Savage on Jan. 17.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THE  
COMMUNITY AND EXTEND OUR BEST WISHES TO ALL IN 2019!

IN-HOUSE DENTAL PLANS NOW AVAILABLE

We are Proud  
to Have Served  
the Prior Lake/Savage area  
for over 40 Years.



Babcock & Morgan  
family dental  
mypriorlakedentist.com

16670 Franklin Trl. SE,  
Prior Lake  
952-447-4611



# MUSIC

► continued from 1

of music education rooted in singing with a strong emphasis on folk music.

“Folk song is the foundation of each culture’s music,” she said. “All people should know the sound of their culture’s music.”

But Buck began realizing that many students don’t hear their culture’s music in the classroom.

According to the Minnesota Department of Education, about half of the students at Gideon Pond Elementary are black. At M.W. Savage, 29 percent of students are black and nearly 11 percent are Asian.

“My main thought was how do I find music that these kids know and are familiar with,” Buck said.

She turned to the students, asking them what songs they sing at home. She also started asking their parents to write down those songs and translations whenever possible.

The students then shared with their classes — Somali lullabies, Arabic alphabet songs, “all of these songs that music teachers in Minnesota

had no idea existed because the misconception is that music doesn’t exist in Somali culture,” she said.

Buck’s classes begin with a moment of meditation. In some ways, it’s the calm before the storm.

The next moment during one recent class, a classroom of fifth graders were on their feet clapping along to an upbeat partner dance called “Sashay the Donut.” Afterward, they worked in groups of two and three on a Japanese song and hand clapping game called “Omochio Tsukimasho,” in which the clapping mimics making mochi — a type of Japanese rice cake.

“I’m just trying to ignite an excitement,” Buck said.

Next, the class began work on a Somali lullaby, singing in Somali and practicing the melody with the do-re-mi syllables.

Fifth grader Iris Garay said her favorite part of music class is learning new things.

“Sometimes it’s a challenge, but it’s really nice to learn something new,” Garay said while tapping out the Somali lullaby on a xylophone.

Buck focused in on So-



PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE SCHUSTER

Fifth grade students at M.W. Savage practice a Japanese folk song during Becca Buck’s music class on Jan. 17.

mali music because of the large number of Somali immigrants in the area and reached out for help from her friend Qorsho Hassan, another teacher at Gideon Pond.

“It means a lot to me simply because I am a Somali American educator and there aren’t a lot of us around, and I sometimes feel very lonely in my work,” Hassan said. “I think having someone who is passionate about not just bringing Somali culture into the classroom, but all cultures, is someone who, at least in my eyes, really values the meaning behind education.”

Hassan said there are misconceptions about Somali culture and music that continue to hinder multiculturalism in music classrooms around the state.

“I think people are uncomfortable with duality,” Hassan said about societal pressure for people to “be American” or not. She said many Somali Americans, especially Millennials, listen to all kinds of music while being deeply connected to their culture and faith, which traditionally may deem certain types of music immoral.

“I think people want a monolithic response, but that doesn’t represent my culture,” she said. “That doesn’t represent the people.”

Somali culture is shared by oral tradition, so many Somali songs have not been translated into sheet music, Buck said. She began notat-



Elementary music specialist Becca Buck sings a Japanese folk song with a fifth grade student at M.W. Savage Elementary.

ing the music based on what her students would sing to her, and Hassan wrote out the Somali or Arabic lyrics and provided an English translation.

“It’s created a sense of longing in some ways because I wish there was a teacher growing up who saw the importance of sharing my culture with the classroom,” Hassan said.

For three months, Buck worked around the clock to gather folk songs from her student’s families and dissect how each song can be used for a classroom lesson.

“I would go straight from work to home and forget to eat dinner,” she said with a laugh. “I was so excited.”

Buck also began realizing that students knew different versions of songs, and she worked to gather as many versions as possible.

The end result is a book

of 65 folk songs from around the classroom and around the world. Included are songs in English, Somali, Spanish, Russian, French, and Oromo, an Ethiopian language. Each page features a song’s sheet music, musical concepts that can be isolated for teaching and a student’s personal connection to the song.

Education message boards are flooding with teachers requesting Somali music, Buck said. Next month, she and Hassan will present on culturally relevant music instruction at the annual Minnesota Music Educator’s Association conference. Buck in August also plans to teach a six-hour workshop at the Perpich Center for Arts.

“It’s just an incredible connection from home to school,” Buck said about the song collection project. “I can’t even describe what it’s done for me as an educator.”

Buck’s work builds on the work of Zoltán Kodály, an early twentieth century Hungarian composer who created the Kodály method, which Buck and music educators around the world use in their classroom.

According to Buck’s research, Kodály’s teachings revolved around making music education joyful for young learners while instilling a deeper appreciation for music and their national identity. Notably, Kodály kept an extensive collection of folk songs, which he gathered through field recordings and transcriptions throughout his lifetime.

Jacqueline Kelly-McHale, an associate professor of music education at DePaul University, said diverse music provides a way to learn about other social and ethnic groups in a classroom environment.

“Additionally, the chance to sing, play and listen to the music of other cultures creates an understanding that transcends personal experience, and creates a more global perspective,” Kelly-McHale wrote in 2016 for The Conversation, an online academic news outlet.

While the multicultural music, song and games help students learn musical concepts, Hassan agreed the project is about more than music.

“We can’t discuss important things like racism, we can’t discuss important things like globalization—all of these really meaningful conversations that will bring about societal change, we won’t be able to have if we are just sticking with things that are comfortable,” Hassan said.

At first, Buck said she feared appropriating a culture by applying the songs to music lessons. She said teaching about the song’s origins and how it would be sung in the culture it belongs to helped her overcome that fear.

Hassan said Buck “illuminates” the music rather than taking it and making it her own.

“I think that she’s a pioneer in that, and I really admire her because I know it takes a lot of bravery,” Hassan said.

“But we all need to be brave,” she continued. “If these kids are brave, we need to be brave, too.”



## Living Hope Lutheran School’s 2019-20 Kindergarten Family Mixer

For families exploring kindergarten in 2019-2020  
Songs, crafts, school info, and free ice cream social

**Monday, Jan. 28, 6:30-7:30 PM**  
**8600 Horizon Drive, Shakopee**  
**RSVP (952) 445-1785**

bllhschool.org | facebook.com/bloomingtonlutheran

## CALL ON EXPERIENCE AND GET RESULTS!



**OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY 12:30 - 2 PM**

**3904 Green Heights Trail SW**  
**\$799,900**

Updated walkout rambler on the lake! Maintenance free, multi-tiered deck is great for entertaining guests and watching sunsets. Detached, heated garage is perfect for lake toy storage.

**PAUL BOTHOF**  
651-329-4735  
Paul@stilesandbothof.com

**RE/MAX**  
ADVANTAGE PLUS



[www.StilesAndBothof.com](http://www.StilesAndBothof.com)

Each Office Independently Owned and Operated



**OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY 12:30 - 2 PM**

**115358 Breezy Point Road SE**  
**\$1,200,000**

Enjoy big, beautiful views of the water from this stunning home designed with lake living in mind. Spacious master suite, oversize garage and 200 ft of shoreline. See it in person this Sunday!

**KAREN STILES**  
612-749-1615  
Karen@stilesandbothof.com

## D.Fong’s

**JANUARY SPECIAL**  
**WARRIOR MEAL**



**D. FONG’S**  
Chinese Cuisine  
County Road 42 & Joppa  
**(952) 894-0800**  
DINE-IN, CARRY-OUT & CATERING  
[www.dfongs.com](http://www.dfongs.com)