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i.am College Track Students Make Wish Come True for 88-Year Old Musician

After 20 years, accomplished musician Betts Hall finally got the chance to perform in front of an audience again with a working violin

BOYLE HEIGHTS (June 12) -- At 88, Boyle Heights resident Betts Hall thought she would never be able to play her beloved violin again. That is, until she met students from i.am College Track, an organization dedicated to empowering students from underserved communities to graduate from college. On June 12th, students fulfilled Betts' wish to repair her broken violin, and they celebrated with a special performance by Betts for the students and residents of her retirement community.

College Track students discovered Betts' Wish in late February 2014, while conducting a workshop with staff from Wish of a Lifetime, a Denver-based nonprofit dedicated to fulfilling life-enriching Wishes for seniors. Through the workshop, students spoke with seniors about their passions, family, and history. The students instantly felt the significant impact that music has had on Betts throughout her life, and felt compelled to help make her dream a reality. Students took action to nominate Betts for her Wish of a Lifetime, and fundraised to make her dream come true. Chase, a longtime partner of College Track, agreed to sponsor Thursday's celebration.

Betts' passion for music began at a young age and has proved to be unwavering. At six years old, she, her parents, and her sisters would perform as a group at parties and weddings. Betts began playing the violin and piano; her sisters were all piano teachers. She was surrounded by music, and playing became an everyday occurrence. Betts turned her passion into a lifestyle at the Toronto Conservatory of Music. She went on to play in the university symphony and then became a charter member of the Winnipeg Symphony in Manitoba, Canada. She soon got married and began a family, but she continued to play music in her spare time – any instrument that she could get her hands on. After moving to southern California in 1957, she belonged to the "Scottish Fiddlers" for 12 years.

Currently, Betts is an active member of the Hollenbeck Palms retirement community in Los Angeles where she worked as the Activity Director for fourteen years and continues to volunteer. From music to painting to drawing, Betts loves to keep busy with the arts in general. However, Betts' violin was in dire need of repairs; it had been in tired shape for 20 years and was virtually unplayable. Having her violin in working order will allow her to play with other residents and continue to celebrate a passion she has had for over 80 years.

About Wish of a Lifetime

Wish of a Lifetime™ fosters respect and appreciation for deserving seniors by fulfilling their life-enriching Wishes. Founded by two-time Olympic skier, World Cup gold medalist, entrepreneur, and former NFL football player Jeremy Bloom in 2008, Wish of a Lifetime encourages the public to take an active role in granting Wishes through its [Wish Connect](#) program. Wish of a Lifetime has made more than 850 wishes

come true for seniors in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. 93 percent of wish recipients stated they felt their quality of life improved after having their wish granted and 76 percent said they felt their overall health improved after experiencing a Wish. Learn more and join our Wish Connect program to help fulfill a senior's wish by visiting www.seniorwish.org.

About i.am College Track

College Track's mission is to empower students from underserved communities to graduate from college. College Track recruits students from underserved communities and works continuously with them from the summer before 9th grade through college graduation. Our 10-year program removes the barriers that prevent students from earning their college degree by providing them with comprehensive academic support, leadership training, financial and college advising, and scholarships. We teach our students the skills necessary to succeed in college and beyond.