

# Over One Million Served

By V. Chandler Monday, May 03, 2010

On April 23, 2010 **Fruteland Jackson** presented his **Blues in the Schools** program entitled *Blues 101*, to his one millionth student. This event took place in **Greensboro, North Carolina**. The **Piedmont Blues Preservation Society** of the Greater Greensboro, North Carolina area sponsored this KBA recipient on a three-day BITS and concert performance tour.



This milestone workshop was held at the **Doris Henderson Newcomers School**, Greensboro, NC and hosted by the school's Principal Dr. Jacob Henry. This school serves recently arrived immigrant and refugee students in grades 3-12 who are novice English speakers. This school prepares newcomers for success in American schools, culture and beyond. Students who attend come from around the world:

Afghanistan  
Benin  
Bhutan/Nepal  
Burma  
Burundi  
China  
Congo  
Cote d'Ivoire

Cuba  
Dominican  
Republic  
El Salvador  
Ethiopia  
Ghana  
Honduras  
Iraq

Jordan  
Kenya  
Mexico  
Niger  
Pakistan  
Peru  
Philippines  
Puerto Rico

Russia  
Saudi Arabia  
Somalia  
Sudan  
Suriname  
Tanzania  
Thailand  
Vietnam

Because music education is not a part of the regular school curriculum, having a blues in the schools program that introduces students to American roots was special and enriching for both Fruteland and the students.



**Ning Suan Kim** is the one millionth student to hear the *All about the Blues Series Blues101* lecture/performance since general head counts began in 1997. Ning whose native country is Burma, responded to the call to come to the stage and ad lib an original one-verse-blues-song in front of the student body while being accompanied by Fruteland Jackson on guitar. As **Ning Suan Kim** made her way to the stage Fruteland signaled to the media that this student was the one millionth student.

Nine student translators assisted Fruteland with the Blues 101 lecture/performance. Their languages included Arabic, Swahili, Vietnamese, Burmese and Spanish. About nine students from the Congo honored Fruteland with a “Call and Response” song entitled Mother Africa.



**Ning Suan Kim** received from Fruteland his **Beginning Delta Blues Book and DVD**. Ning also received music instructional materials for guitar and harmonica as well as blues CD's and a harmonica. Ning Kim participated in both sessions at the school serving as a translator for the elementary children.

This is **Ning Suan Kim's** story: “Good afternoon. My name is Ning Suan Kim and I'm from Burma, the present country of **Myanmar**. My homeland is beautiful with high green mountains, big rivers, farms, and many beautiful flowers.

Every evening I went to the river with my parents and played with my friends. At night, my father and mother told us beautiful long stories until we fell asleep. But I can't forget one thing, and that is the soldiers came and took my father away from my family. The soldiers were powerful and they killed the people who didn't listen to them. All of my people ran away from my country because of the soldiers. The Burmese people came to the United States as refugees with the help of the U.S. government. Now I am safe here with my mother and brother. My father was killed by the soldiers in my country, but here there are no soldiers. Here we can do what we want. We can dress and talk freely. Here we can go to church anytime. I am so happy to be here where I believe I can make a better life. Thank you for listening to my story. **God bless you all and the United States”**.

Other schools on this BITS tour include the new **Northern Guilford High School**, Greensboro, NC. **NGHS** is a new high school having its first graduating class in June 2010. Fruteland was hosted by **Band Director, Ed Kimbrough**, and **Will Laine, Principal**; Fruteland hopes to receive a copy of the impressive *Greensboro Bicentennial March* (2008) composed by band director, Ed Kimbrough. The **Penn-Griffin Middle School** was hosted by **Catherine Butler** and **Shelley Nixon-Greene**, Principal. Fruteland visited the classroom of **Mike Connors** along with his classical guitar/ music students. **The Lindley Recreation Center's After School** program provides programs and workshops for people of all ages including recreational and enrichment activities in a safe environment. The attending students were presented a blues workshop that included storytelling.

Fruteland also conducted a professional development workshop for teachers and administrators entitled, “**Using *Blues in the School Programs to Improve Literacy*: Helping to close the achievement gap by using music as a second language**”, at the **Greensboro Arts Center** where he would present an evening performance.

Fruteland Jackson extends a heartfelt thanks to **Casey Hazelman**, President of the **Piedmont Blues Preservation Society** with along with **Ralph H. Speas**, **archivist** ( and newest best friend) and **Terry VunCannon**, sound engineer and guitarist who invited Fruteland to a jam session at **Plumb Crazies club**. The other important organization whose assets and generosity made this program possible includes: **The Greensboro United Arts Council, Nathan Street (Guilford County Schools), Mary Alice Kerr-Murphy (GSO Parks & Rec)** and **Jennifer Hance (GSO City Arts)** for their interest, assistance and cooperation.