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## Silver Spring school celebrates tenth anniversary

By Kevin James Shay

A decade ago, officials renamed Belt Middle School after the late businessman and arts advocate A. Mario Loiederman and rebranded the Silver Spring-area school as an arts magnet.

This week, students, faculty and alumni are celebrating the school's 10-year anniversary with a series of events. That includes a musical gala Friday at 7 p.m. at Wheaton High School, which is near Loiederman Middle School.

Performers will include members of the Washington National Opera, National Philharmonic Orchestra and Loiederman staff and students, said administrative secretary Denice Wepasnick. There will be an a cappella group and barbershop quartet, as well as the Loiederman chamber choir.

Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children.

"This is an event designed for current and past Loiederman students, staff and their families to celebrate the past 10 years," Wepasnick said. "But anyone who is interested in our school is welcome to attend."

While the arts play a central role in the school's magnet curriculum, with elective courses in visual art, choral music and theater, all students take regular courses such as English, math, science, world studies and physical education. Sixth-graders take an introductory arts course.

Loiederman schedules plays, art shows and music and dance concerts featuring student performers throughout the year.

A first-time event is a student film festival on Wednesday evening at the school on Goodhill Road. "They are all short films directed by students," Wepasnick said.

There also will be a barbecue on Thursday.

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