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Story title:

Become a rock star, help 'Save the Music'

Author: Zandy Dudiak

Houlihan's in Monroeville Mall is inviting customers to be a rock star this week -- and help Save The Music through March 31.

The restaurant is hosting a "Be a Rock Star and Save The Music" tournament using "Rock Band," the video game in which players sing or play guitar, bass or drums to score points. Contestants, for \$7 each, will have a chance to compete in groups of four, performing one song.

A \$300 cash prize will be awarded to the team with the highest score. The contest takes place from 4 to 7 p.m. today and Thursday and again from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

The competition will raise funds for the non-profit VH1 Save the Music Foundation, dedicated to restoring instrumental music education in the nation's public schools and raising awareness about the importance of music in each child's education.

Since 1997, the foundation has provided \$40 million in new musical instruments to 1,500 public schools. The Monroeville Houlihan's and three other Pittsburgh area locations are attempting to help raise \$25,000 for the charity by the end of March.

"So many kids today are growing up without the opportunity to play an instrument," says Michael Giannetti, general manager of the local Houlihan's, a restaurant chain which features lesser-known indie artists as background dining music. "We're dedicated to raising public awareness and encouraging our customers' involvement in this wonderful cause."

If the fundraiser proves successful, it may be repeated again during March, says Deborah Lovelace, marketing manager for the Monroeville restaurant. The game and play system for the contest have been donated by Game Stop in the mall.

Customers who are performance-shy can donate in other ways, Lovelace says.

Through the end of March, \$1 from each signature mini-dessert purchased will be donated to Save the Music. Guests can also round up their checks, and those who make other donations will receive a paper cutout that will be hung in the restaurant.