

I'm so nervous I can feel the sweat run between my shoulder blades as I hold my instrument. If we weren't already in line I would run to the bathroom. Besides, it's too late; we're almost on. At least I'm not feeling sick. Next to me, Anne is a funny shade of green. Or maybe she's blue. It is November in NYC. I'm so glad it didn't snow on us at three in the morning while we practiced the parade route. I can't believe we're almost on. I wish I could wave at my mom in the stands. I wish I could have put a note on my back or on my hat so my grandparents watching in California on TV could see me among these millions of people. . Still, this is the most exciting moment of my life! I'm so happy to be here. I'm so glad we got the money! I have so many thank you notes to write and postcards to send! I'm so glad we practiced those 567 hours so my arms don't hurt now. I'm strong. I'm ready! Oh. Here's the whistle. I hope I don't miss my first note. . . I hope I don't trip! I want to remember every single detail. I hope someone gets a good picture of me. I'm so excited I feel like jumping up and down!!!! Oh, oh. . . here we go. . .

Can you feel the excitement in the air? We are going to New York City to march in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in November of 2010. We are all going, all 150 band and auxiliary members, 125 instruments (CHECK NO'S), flags, banners, uniforms, chaperones, and assorted staff and parents. It's exciting just to think about it. We are the first band ever to represent Oregon! We were chosen from 150 bands nationwide. We feel so privileged, so honored, and so overwhelmed! We are raising about \$322,000 for this great dream. Of course parents pay for themselves, but as students we are each raising \$1750. The Band Boosters, our great parent helpers, are working long hours to provide fundraisers for us and to find corporate sponsors (By the way, any corporate sponsors out there?), and to write up grant proposals for foundations. We are working hard to accomplish this goal. The student fee of \$1750 covers roundtrip airfare to NYC, hotel and food for 4 days, a couple of tours (How could we come to NYC and not see the big lady Liberty!), a museum entrance, and fun! fun! a Broadway show (We are a music group, after all.)

Just in case you think this is all fun, let me tell you about the hours we've already put in:

- *We've stood hours in the hot sun selling firecrackers for Fourth of July
- *We've yelled ourselves hoarse selling 50/50 tickets at the Horse Races
- *We've cooked till we can't stand the sight of another hot dog for several events
- *We've answered questions at information booths, and asked for donations at several events.
- *We will collect enough bottles and cans for recycling to lay end to end to reach NYC! (Ray's Market on 7th)
- *We'll unload luggage and serve tourists for tips in Grants Pass. (Cycle Oregon)
- *We'll host bands at our local competitions. (Pride of the Northwest)
- *We'll play music for any reception or event.
- *We'll do almost anything legal and moral for funds between now and next Oct. when our last check is due.

We're working hard already and the journey has just begun. Many of us are also contributing our savings from gift monies (think birthday, Christmas, good grades ☺ for the next year), and our odd jobs. We each need to contribute at least \$800 dollars, and then we will fundraise the rest of the student fees and the group money. We are all doing our part!

In working as a group to attain our goal, we're learning about cooperation, communication, responsibility, reliability, and satisfaction. It's great to see our bank balance inch up. It'll feel so good to accomplish this major goal. We're learning to dream; and we're learning that we can achieve our dreams. We're doing this together because some of our families really can't afford this dream, not even the \$800 personal part. Do you know that some of the kids in the band have never been on a plane? This trip to NY will be their first plane ride! Some kids have never been outside of Oregon. Some kids don't even have suitcases; they use plastic bags for the trips. Some kids don't have jackets for the cold NY weather. We'll have to see how we can help with that. The point is: our band is made up of many kids who can't fund this. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity for many on our band.

Won't you help sponsor us? Please consider sponsoring me for any amount. Once I've raised my funds, it spills over to the general account to help us all go. Your donation to the band is fully tax deductible. And you'll get a nice thank you note from me. How about a postcard from New York? How about a gift CD of our band music? How about our undying gratitude? How about the warm feeling you get when you do something kind? How about it? Will you sponsor me, please?