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## Raw Fisher

By Marc Fisher

The Cold Splash of Reality, With A Side of Sizzle

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## Good Deeds In Hard Times: The Annual Thanks Column

The next time one of **Butch Warren's** bass solos inspires a couple to look each other in the eyes and see something new, the thanks should be directed not only to one of the great jazz players of the past half-century, but also to a shopkeeper in Wheaton, a TV news producer whose usual focus is the White House, a minister in Southwest Washington and a charity in California.

Warren, 69, has been playing at Columbia Station in Adams Morgan for more than a year now, ever since he got back to town from the state mental institution in Carroll County, Md. A [man who played alongside jazz legends](#) such as Thelonious Monk, Herbie Hancock and Dexter Gordon had fallen prey to the ravages of drugs and mental illness. By the time he came home last year, Warren had just about nothing left but for an old, inadequate instrument that a friend had stored for him.

That, and the skill and heart that once made him a star. In gratitude for Warren's transformative art, his fans and friends have raised the money to deliver him a performance-quality bass, and they deserve to start off my annual list of thank-yous:

Thanks to **Antoine Sanfuentes**, an NBC producer who spearheaded the effort; **Dimitrios Cavathas** and **Andy Goldenson** from People Encouraging People, which is helping to care for Warren; **Alisa Hafkin** and the Jazz Foundation of America, which is paying for the instrument; the **Rev. Brian Hamilton**, whose Jazz Night concerts at Westminster Presbyterian Church have created community and comfort for hundreds of musicians; **Patrick Cavanaugh** and **Alan Levin** from Chuck Levin's Washington Music Center in Wheaton, who are providing the bass at cost; **John Simson** from Sound Exchange, who is seeking to reunite Warren and the royalties he earned decades ago; and **DeeDee Acquisto** from Musicares, the charitable wing of the recording industry, which is assisting with Warren's health.

With so many people confronting rough seas these days, it's a good time to thank **Colleen Dailey** and the people at [Capital Area Asset Builders](#), a District-based nonprofit that holds free money management classes for people who have fallen too deeply into debt - a 10-hour course that covers everything from how to resist spending money you don't really have to how to handle basic banking tasks.

For those who have taken the next step and started up a business, a recession can be devastating, so it's good to see **Zuraidah Hoffman** and the [Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization](#) launch [Global Dining](#), a series of online profiles telling the stories -- and promoting the food -- of Arlington's ethnic eateries, most of them owned by immigrant families.

And especially in difficult times, it's essential to thank and support those who manage to keep open the creative channels through which kids who lack the advantages of affluence can nonetheless be introduced to the truth and power of music and art. At [the D.C. Youth Orchestra](#), executive director **Ava Spece**, conductor **Jesus Manuel Berard** and a faculty of 40 musicians continue a half-century-long tradition, training more than 700 children to play instruments and work their way up to playing in a 70-piece orchestra and chamber

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ensembles that perform around the city. Many of the students receive financial aid, and more than 90 percent of them go on to college.

When **Mike Gould's** brother Allen died seven years ago and left him \$750,000 to donate to charity, Gould visited with parents, teachers and community groups and concluded that despite all the efforts that exist to help those who cannot afford college, there was still a big gap to fill. So he [created New Futures](#), which thus far has given more than \$1 million in scholarships, mainly to students who have faced rough times but are determined to find careers that will lift their families out of poverty.

On the theory that college isn't for everyone, Gould helps people like **Flor Carranza**, an immigrant from El Salvador; she came to Washington a decade ago to join her parents, who clean buildings at night. Too old to attend high school, Carranza got her GED and impressed New Futures' selection committee enough to win a grant that put her through a certification program to become a medical assistant. Now, she helps doctors and translates for Spanish-speaking patients at a clinic in Columbia Heights. And with New Futures' help, she's going back to school to become a nurse.

New Futures isn't huge, but its founder and board members take a personal interest in each student they support, and they require the community organizations that sponsor their scholars to provide mentors who help the students navigate the worlds of higher education and work.

"This isn't a simple scholarship," Carranza says. "I had someone who went with me to the college to help me apply. When I needed help, I was never alone."

Finally, my thanks to **all of you** who check out what's on offer in the column, on the blog, in the weekly chat and on the radio show.

By Marc Fisher | November 23, 2008; 9:39 AM ET  
Previous: [U.S. History Museum Looks Sleek--But Where's The Beef?](#) | Next: [Immeasurable Service: Murdered Couple's Legacy](#)

#### Comments

Please [email us](#) to report offensive comments.

Thanks for shining a light on the DC Youth Orchestra Program! This program continues to do a fabulous job of providing music instruction to any child who is willing to practice. This model program needs more support, though, from the DC government, DC schools and private funders -- and coverage like this can only help.

Posted by: ShPk | November 23, 2008 4:40 PM

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