

# Spotlight On...

## BSO Residency in the Dracut Public Schools

The Dracut Public Schools have just completed the first of a two year residency project with members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Supported by the Mass. Cultural Council, the “Creative Schools” Grant is funding the *Musicians in the Schools* Program offered by the Boston Symphony Education Department.

This past year, several members of the BSO string section worked with members of the Dracut High School String Orchestra, which is directed by Robin Mallory. During several visits, the students were coached in playing chamber music as well as large ensemble playing.

Members of the high school concert band, directed by Julian Sciolla, were coached by wind players from the BSO. These professional musicians provided tremendous inspiration to the students, not only in their teaching, but with the personal stories they shared with the kids.

The highlight of the first year was a free evening performance, during which the students in both the orchestra and the band performed selections with the guest artists. This was followed by an amazing performance of the *Bass String Quintet* featuring cellist Bill Rounds and violinist Colin Davis, both in-resident artists of the BSO. The evening ended with a performance of the *Beacon Brass Quintet*, which featured resident artist Kevin Owen, principal horn player of the Boston Pops.

The grant was written by Leon Grande, Supervisor of Fine and Performing Arts in Dracut, and graciously administered by Diane Dailey and Gregory Liakos of the Mass Cultural Council, and Myran Parker-Brass and Claire Carr of the Boston Symphony Orchestra Education Department.

The students are grateful for the opportunity to work with these professionals. They all agree on how the artists have given them “great confidence in their playing”. Despite some financial cutbacks in the grant program, the student musicians of Dracut High School are looking forward to next year’s continuation of the program.