

Amazing Grace

By Lisa Rose Hook

She's sweet 16 and instead of planning a huge bash at her Rochester Hills home, this songbird is volunteering her time teaching music through Kensington Orion's K-Rock music program to inner city kids at Whitmer Human Resource Center Elementary School in Pontiac on Monday afternoons.

"It's really been a blessing for me," Rochester Adams High School junior Grace Elizabeth Lee says of the experience. "It's wonderful to meet these kids. It's not just about teaching them to sing, but about teaching them to set goals, empower them to use music to validate their character and teach them that they can do something positive despite their circumstances."

While singing is a passion for Grace, she says she really enjoys using music to connect with urban arts. Jennifer Kincer of Kincer-Catallo Private Voice Studio LLC in Rochester Hills has been her mentor, manager and voice instructor.

Grace came to her for lessons when she was trying out for Rochester Idol, a junior talent show she entered in seventh grade. Her natural ability was unleashed with Kincer's coaching and she won first place. She went on to win Michigan Idol in 2014. Soon after, she was getting gigs all over town.

Her style is surprisingly unconventional for a 16-year-old. She can belt out

the blues or jam with some jazz — a pop princess she is not. And it's refreshing.

While she does write songs that wax poetic about boys and other teenage-type themes, she is wise beyond her years and grounded with values that are hard to come by these days — faith and family.

She is also grateful to her manager for the opportunities she's had, like gigging at the Dessert Oasis Coffee House, F.A.S.H. Fest, rocking out the national anthem at last year's Brooksie Way Race and serenading the crowd at Lagniappe and the Big, Bright Light Show in downtown Rochester.

"Jen has been the biggest blessing — I went to her not even knowing about bravado or tone was, and she has taught me so much — far beyond just singing," Grace says. "She is one of the best women in my life."

Kincer, who has 30 voice students, three of whom are artists in development, has worked with Grace for four years.

"Often times, music is where young girls find success and self-worth, using their talents to impact others," Kincer says. "Grace is truly a talented singer/songwriter with a generous heart who I fully expect to do great things with her music." **NS**

To find out more about Grace Elizabeth Lee, visit graceelizabethlee.com.



Live, Love, Laugh, Listen

By Lisa Rose Hook

When you listen to Dan Tillery, you just might break out your shades, throw off your shoes and start swaying to and fro, and you just might feel a ray of sunshine infiltrate your day.

He says he doesn't want to be tied to a genre — yet reggae does come to mind, and rightly so, since he cites Bob Marley among his top influences.

This 29-year-old singer/songwriter/musician from Waterford is blowing up YouTube with his viral video cover of "All About that Bass" with Anthony Christie. But he is much more than another singer with a pretty face and a passion for social media. He's a serious musician with talent, ambition and

the drive to succeed — though his laid-back, "don't worry" attitude may indicate otherwise.

Tillery is booked pretty tight, with six or seven shows a week, from MGM Casino to Andiamo and the Rochester Tap Room. He has a regular gig Tuesday nights at Bologna's in Rochester and plays festivals whenever possible.

Tillery is finishing up writing and co-producing a few songs and will then be recording a 12-song album. In the meantime, his goal is to play as much as possible for as many people as he can.

"I've been playing on and off for the past 10 years and doing this for a living for the past five," he says. "Over the past year, I've been able to reach

more people with my music through social media. I love changing people's days through music. I just want to make people smile and dance — it's grown stronger than it ever has and I'm grateful for it, that's for sure."

He recently won the Battle of the Bands and was voted Best Songwriter by the *Metro Times*, and that's quite an accomplishment in Motown.

"When the video went viral on the Internet, I had so many emails in my



inbox from people telling me that my music made their day ... people are responding to me ... and I am able to serve through my music.

"I want to make sure everyone around me is having fun. I try to learn and use that

toward my song. That's my inspiration, I guess." **NS**

To find out more about Tillery's upcoming gigs, visit Dantillery.com.