

# Charlie Puth “Only One Call Away” for Stunned Rumson Staff and Students

Forrestdale students and staff were treated to a surprise on Tuesday, October 2, 2018, when former student and music superstar, Charlie Puth, popped in for a trip down memory lane. The visit was filmed for a segment to appear later this year on *CBS Sunday Morning*.

Students, staff, and parents were notified of the filming, but only as a segment featuring music in our schools and its importance in influencing children in positive ways. Forrestdale music teachers were prepared to showcase various types of lessons they plan for the students, inclusive of different instruments from African



Puth filming in Forrestdale Music Class, over his donated piano



Puth with Music Class he surprised

Drums to desktop keyboards; however, no one expected the surprise guest who stepped out of the black Escalade that morning.

The locations selected for the CBS segment were hand-picked by Puth himself, as he wanted to pay homage to his musical journey. Charlie felt that Forrestdale was one of the significant stops for him, as he developed close relationships from his encouraging middle school music teachers, Mr. John Lebitsch and Mrs. Valerie Wagner. In fact, two years ago when Puth moved to the West Coast, he donated his home piano to Forrestdale School, where it sits front and center in the music classroom all students take classes in weekly. While at Forrestdale, Puth was a part of the Jazz Ensemble and Concert Band.

Upon his arrival on the morning of October 2, 2018, Puth entered the building as any visitor would and then surprised his music teachers on camera, as they were teaching a class of twenty-one students in the very room where his piano is displayed. As he opened the door, and the teachers and students in the class quickly realized what they were really there for, the excitement grew, with students a bit star struck! Puth sat down at his piano and played, “One Call Away,” encouraging the students to join in as he sang. He told the class, that he wrote the beginning parts of this song on the piano they had class with weekly. As humble now as he was when a Forrestdale student twelve years ago, Puth answered all student questions, laughed at their stories, and offered admirable advice to these impressionable teenagers, including being true to oneself, not trying to make it by changing yourself into what you hear on the radio or see in the media, and really going for it with the perseverance and grit they hear their teachers preach about on a daily basis. Puth shared stories about his favorite Forrestdale memories, from the time he asked a girl to slow dance to not turning in his English homework and having to stay in for recess. He ended with a sing along to his popular song, “Attention.” Forrestdale was honored to have Puth select our school as one of the highlights for the CBS program, and remains the pride and joy of Rumson!



Puth with Music Teacher, Val Wagner