

Here is a story about two leaders who raised eight more leaders. Lori and Bret Niedens (far left and far right, with Bozeman High band director Kelly Berdahl in the middle) moved to Bozeman in the early 2000's with their eight children, ranging in age from a toddler to a high schooler. The high schooler became involved in the band program, and ended up being a good leader in the marching band program. Lori and Bret were volunteers in the band program, from helping to fit uniforms to bringing hot chocolate and cookies to chilly marching band practices, from organizing permission forms to cooking for 250 marching band students and parents (NO KIDDING) on road trips. Their eighth child is now a senior in high school in 2021, and is a leader in the band program. In fact, all eight of Lori's and Bret's children have been positive leaders and role models, including one child who is now a music educator. Though Lori and Bret have been recognized and honored several times for their selfless volunteerism, they wanted to give back one more time. They had a piece of music commissioned for the top band, the Symphony Band, by one of the band director's mentors and friends from Fresno State in California.

With the composer's and band director's permission, here is "Pieces of Eight" by Gary P. Gilroy (recognizing the 8 Niedens children as well as a clever musical play on eight note patterns), premiered on May 27th, 2021 by the Bozeman High School Symphony Band: