



RICHARD GREEN/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Jesse Hernandez is a youth soccer coach and parent volunteer in Greenfield and Soledad.

Coaching helps Hernandez remain on the soccer field

He helps kids excel in the sport through local YMCA programs

By VICTOR CALDERON
The Salinas Californian

Jesse Hernandez says he doesn't believe there should be limits to doing what one loves best. What Hernandez loves best is coaching youth soccer. He coaches youngsters in grades 2, 3, 7 and 8 through YMCA programs in Soledad and Greenfield. Hernandez, 23, was born with his left leg shorter than his right leg, which affects his ability to stand for long periods of time, but it hasn't stopped him from coaching soccer for three years.

"It can be a little challenging out there on a field, because I can get tired easily, but I'm there for the kids, to see that they're having fun," Hernandez said. "Win or lose, as long as they have fun, I'm OK." Hernandez lives in Greenfield with his wife, Maria, and their daughter, Marisela, 16 months. The couple are expecting a boy in late December. During the soccer season, which is roughly from August through December, Hernandez said, coaching is his focus outside the home.

JESSE HERNANDEZ

- **AGE:** 23
- **YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:** Youth soccer coach in Greenfield and Soledad.
- **EDUCATION:** Attended Soledad Christian Academy.
- **PERSONAL:** Lives in Greenfield with his wife, Maria, and their daughter, Marisela, 16 months. The couple are expecting a boy in late December.

Games are held once a week, and Hernandez's teams practice on Wednesdays. He said he grew up around soccer and he decided to coach because it was his way of getting into the sport. His nephew, Alex, plays for

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— Jesse Hernandez,
Youth soccer coach

Greenfield High School, he said. Hernandez said he will consider putting his own kids in the soccer league when they're older. "I just love coaching soccer," he said. "Maybe they'll like playing it too."

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In King City, it's music — with strings attached



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Steve Ettinger conducts the youth orchestra during a rehearsal Nov. 22, in the King City High School band room. Ettinger is the school district's music instructor and maestro for Youth Music Monterey's South County Strings Program.

Ettinger believes orchestral training is instrumental

By JOLI SPENCIER
For The Salinas Californian

About 300 students in the King City Union School District learn music this year from instructor Steve Ettinger, with some of them also getting unique training. Ettinger believes stringed instruments play a major role in a well-rounded music education, and he sets aside special time to teach violin, viola, cello, bass and other instruments to 70 students through Youth Music Monterey's South County Strings Program. Of those, the Monterey County Youth Orchestra gives 30 serious students an opportunity to specialize in a stringed instrument, providing them a more advanced musical background. Ettinger said he believes the orchestra fulfills a special niche. "A lot of kids don't fit into band," he said. Bands are mostly

composed of wind instruments. Ettinger organizes four concerts for the orchestra each year, including a collaborative concert with the Hartnell College Community Orchestra in Salinas. The next concert with Hartnell is slated for March 28 at the King City High School auditorium. The concerts provide a venue in which all levels of performance can be appreciated. Middle school students may perform easy tunes, such as "Hot Cross Buns," while older students execute more difficult pieces. "All the kids in the string program have an opportunity to be a part of this orchestra," said Ettinger. "They get to see and play with other kids who are doing the same thing." Perhaps just as important as the additional practice, kids get a chance to have a good time. With at least 70 percent of King City-area families having roots in Mexico, the addition of mariachi music to the program four years ago was a huge success. "Parents come up and say how much they enjoyed the mariachi music," Ettinger said. Mariachi guitarist Arcadio

Ledezma from Salinas, who performs in one of the top groups in the area, Mariachi Salinas, along with singer Leo Trujillo from Greenfield, perform a mariachi number during the concert. Ettinger said he believes musical experience helps young people in many areas of their lives. Orchestral work also helps young people learn to focus and work together as a team, he said. "When kids start to learn how to read music, they tend to apply that in their classes and in language," Ettinger said. The creative aspect is particularly valuable to building self-esteem, he said. "They feel like they've made something beautiful that wasn't there before," Ettinger said. "They did something that they didn't think they could do before." He said that experience is rare in the students' everyday lives. Ettinger also takes the orchestra on tour. The South Monterey County Youth Orchestra will visit the Central Valley in 2007, and top middle school string students will join peers from throughout the counties of Monterey, San Benito, San Luis

STEVE ETTINGER

- **AGE:** 37
- **YOUTH INVOLVEMENT:** Founding member of King City Arts Charter School in King City; board member for Central Coast section of California Music Educators Association.
- **WORK:** Music instructor for King City Union School District in King City; Youth Music Monterey's South County Strings Program
- **EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree from University of California, Los Angeles, 1991; master's degree from University of Oregon, 1994; teaching credential from San Jose State University, 1999.
- **PERSONAL:** Ettinger and his wife, Aya, a music teacher, live in King City with their daughters, Kayla, 5, and Hannah, 16 months.

Obispo and Santa Cruz for a concert in Pacific Grove in February. That concert is organized through the Central Coast section of the California Music Educators Association.