Gini Phillips of Wallace Public School is one of 285 high school students from across Nebraska who participated in the 18th Annual Masonic All-Star Marching Band, which performed Saturday, June 2 during Shrine Bowl festivities in Lincoln.

Phillips is the daughter of Joel and Mickey Phillips of Wallace.

The band members devoted four days of intense practice starting May 29, to learn the music, marching steps and field formations. The band gave their first public performance at SouthPointe Pavilions Shopping Center Friday evening, June 1. The band led the Shrine Bowl Parade down Lincoln's Havelock Avenue on Saturday morning, June 2, and it also performed the pre-game National Anthem and during half-time of the 54th Annual Shrine Bowl football game in Memorial Stadium on Tom Osborne Field, at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

The band members were hosted by the Masons of Nebraska, and were directed by Brad Weber, Dan Sodomka and Dr. Dave Bohnert, band directors from Wayne High School, Aurora High School, and Wayne State College, respectively. Phillips received a scholarship from Wallace Masonic Lodge No. 279. The scholarship covered the costs of the camp.

"We demanded a lot of the students during the past week," Weber said. "They responded professionally and worked very hard. That was evident by the high-quality shows they performed Friday and Saturday. There's no doubt these young musicians are among the best in the state."

Coupled with hard work, the members also participated in a pool party, bowling, and a dance. Many are looking forward to the opportunity to use the instruction provided by the band directors when they return to their respective high school bands.

"The band members worked hard during the week preparing for the Shrine Bowl performances," said Rex Moats, Grand Master of Nebraska Masons. "They also had a lot of fun meeting new people and enjoyed the activities, but they also understand the main reason for the long hours and hard work. Patients at the Shriners Hospitals for Children will benefit the most from the band's efforts this past week. We sincerely appreciate their contribution to raise awareness and funds to enable the Shriners to help even more children."

"Masonic lodges across Nebraska support local youth and community projects, humanitarian efforts including a child identification program, academic scholarships, and providing calling cards to troops deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan," Moats said. "At the statewide level, the Grand Lodge helps to maintain two homes: The Nebraska Masonic Home at Plattsmouth for Masons and their female relatives, and the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children in Fremont. The combined philanthropic efforts of Masonic-related organizations amount to more than $2 million a day."

Freemasonry is the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world and is based on the lessons of living a life of brotherhood and high moral standards as portrayed symbolically in the

work of stone masons who built the cathedrals, abbeys and castles of Europe.