



**Junior
Appalachian
Musicians®**

*Annual
Report
2016-2017*



From the Director



Brett Morris Martin, Independence, VA

Dear Friend,

As festival season winds down and we move into another season of school and JAM programs, I want to share with you some of my memories from the past year.

I am in the basement of a community building where more than 70 kids meet for JAM each week. Instrument cases are being unlatched and strings are being cranked into pitch. Excited voices of kids compete with a chorus of booming G chords and squealing E strings. Suddenly, it is time for half of the kids to disperse to classrooms for their instrument lessons. The remaining children quickly sit in a circle and are immediately enraptured as a storyteller starts into a Jack Tale. This is JAM.

I am coordinating a regional event for JAM kids in our Western North Carolina, Upstate South Carolina and Eastern Tennessee programs. I peek into the string band workshop where more than 20 kids from several different programs are sitting in a circle, playing "Liza Jane" together for the very first time. They just met one another today, and the skill levels range from pure beginners to advanced pickers. This is building community one tune at a time.

I am meeting with a community group striving to revitalize a JAM program that went by the wayside several years ago. When I ask about the ghost town I passed through coming in, they tell me about the depleted industrial community and the problems surrounding the families who live there. Together, we develop a plan to communicate with the children and their families so that their program is accessible and inclusive for everyone. At the end of the semester, I hear that 80% of the students stuck with it and will be coming back again. This is the power of JAM.

But what about all of the lost communities where JAM does not yet exist? Arts education is not available everywhere, and not every child is fortunate enough to have a family member or neighbor to connect them to meaningful Appalachian traditions such as music and dance. More so, many children live in a world of no opportunities that would shock many of us.

However, I feel that our work here as the parent JAM organization only helps to further encourage the right kind of growth in children through place-based education. If all of us continue to support traditional music education throughout Central Appalachia, perhaps twenty years from now, JAM will be an option for every child growing up in the mountains, helping tie kids to their home communities for a lifetime and beyond. This is our vision.

I want to thank you so much for also believing in our vision. I hope that we can continue to count on your support, and that you will continue to share our journey as we go forward!

Building Community One Tune at a Time

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JAM Kids Pickin' Across the Region



More than 50 students from 11 different JAM programs participated in our free Regional JAM Kids Day Camp held at Western Carolina University in May. Kids chose 3 workshop activities, jammed and performed for their families.



An additional 30 students from 6 programs attended our second Regional JAM Kids Day Camp held at the Bue Ridge Music Center. Participants learned from master artists and also performed on a state-of-the-art stage.



"My son was happy to be around people who were interested in the same style of music he enjoys. He said it was "inspiring". It was very helpful and he felt like he learned more in one day than he had in a while. Thanks for this event!"

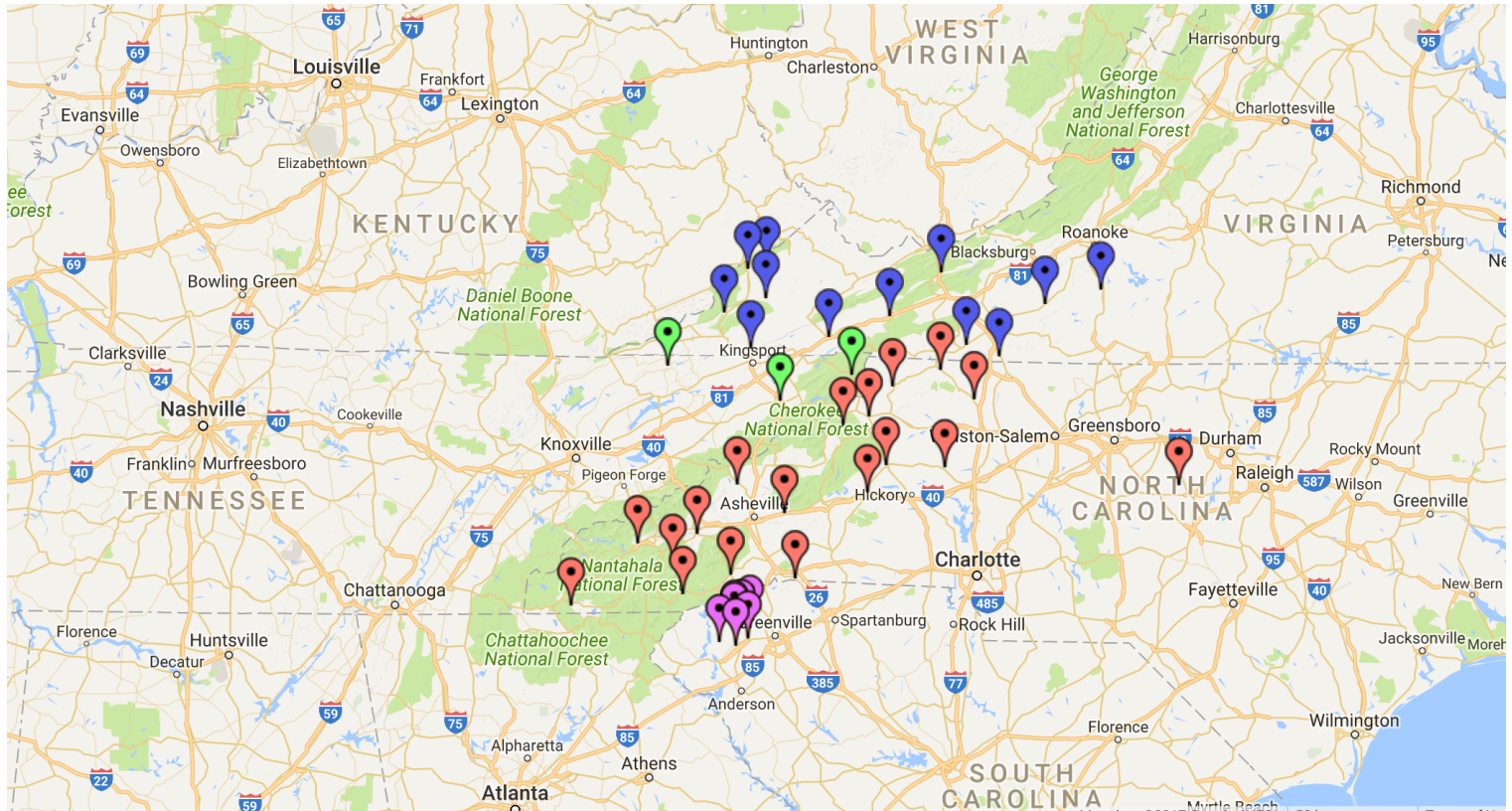
- Parent of JAM student who attended Western Carolina JAM Kids Day Camp



JAM also provided performance opportunities to current and previous JAM kids at major music festivals. 10 groups showcased at IBMA's Wide Open Bluegrass in Raleigh, and 4 programs represented JAM at HoustonFest!

Our Affiliates

40 programs & 1,500 kids!



We asked our affiliates which of our resources they appreciated most this year:

1. JAM instructor training events
2. Instruments on loan
3. Being part of the JAM network
4. JAM guides, resources & materials
5. Regional JAM Kids events

We also asked our affiliates about their challenges, so we can develop helpful tools that fit their ideas for the future.

1. Retaining older students
2. Fundraising
3. Parent communication
4. Enrichment activities
5. Accommodating all levels

Success Stories

"We expanded learning by starting a community jam session."

"We had the most students EVER to enroll this year!"

"Only one student dropped out from start to finish."

"Our kids played for their classmates at school assemblies and for community festivals throughout the year."

"Our first year, we were able reach over 30 students from low-income families."

Highlighting New Programs

This year, we welcomed 5 new programs to the fold while some others consolidated

Blue Ridge JAM - Cashiers, NC

Carroll County JAM - Hillsville, VA

Johnson County JAM - Mountain City, TN

Hancock County JAM - Sneedville, TN

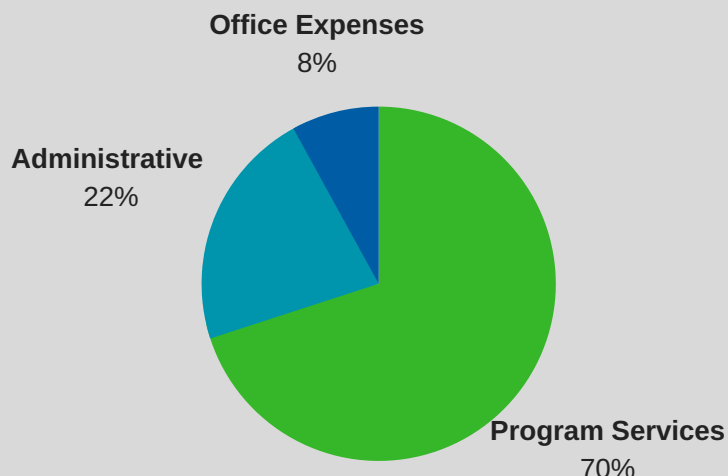
Shakori Hills JAM - Pittsboro, NC

66% of the programs retained 75% or more of their kids from start to finish this year!

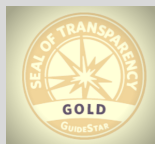
Our Financials

July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

Expenses



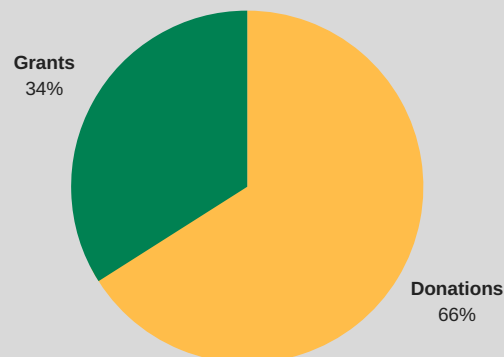
Program Services include 80% of the director's time, which is spent providing the tools and support communities need to teach children how to play and dance to traditional old time and bluegrass music. Administrative expenses include fundraising, marketing, and costs associated with maintaining a nonprofit.



In our commitment to transparency, JAM's full financials, including copies of our 990 tax returns, are available upon request at any time. You may also explore JAM's full non profit profile on Guidestar.org

Income

*The Grants category is solely comprised of funds awarded to JAM from private foundations. Donations include those made by individual donors, as well as gifts from corporations.



FINANCIAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Total Revenue \$75,449

Total Expenses \$69,196

See the full donor list on page 7

Increasing Sustainability

Over 60 JAM instructors and directors participated in our professional development opportunities this year. In addition to hosting two regional teacher training workshops, JAM organized a fundraising workshop for program directors. Our efforts help ensure that JAM programs have high quality instructors and the ability to balance their budget each year, which is key to sustaining healthy JAM programs for our kids.



hungry for music
ESTABLISHED 1994

"JAM has been a great opportunity for our daughter to learn about music and performance, make new friends, and has also given her self-esteem a boost!"

- Parents of JAM student



THANKS TO OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH HUNGRY FOR MUSIC, WE LOANED 92 INSTRUMENTS THIS YEAR TO CHILDREN WHO COULD NOT AFFORD THEIR OWN!

Student Impact Story

by Brett M. Martin



If you have ever spent any time around old time music in the Blue Ridge Mountains, you have probably heard the surname Blevins. We could start with Nancy Blevins, the gal from Ashe County with the fiddle tune named after her. As you might imagine, there is a long line of banjo pickers, folk singers, fiddlers and more who have a Blevins in their family tree.

In today's world of Generation Z, we also have Allee Blevins, who is an ambitious Junior Appalachian Musician from Chilhowie, Virginia. I first met Allee at our regional JAM Kids Day Camp at the Blue Ridge Music Center this spring. On the day of the event, she was one of the only students to attend from her program and surrounded by groups of kids who were ready to play the tunes they learned this year. However, Allee's unfamiliarity didn't stop her from introducing herself to a group of kids from Hiddenite, NC.

In just a few minutes, she had fiddles, guitars, and a stand-up bass backing her up as she sang a head-turning version of 'House of the Rising Sun.' Since this young lady is only 10 years old, I later had to ask where she learned this American folk song dating back to the popular music of the 1930s. Allee told me that she has known the ballad practically her whole life, and in fact, has already taken to writing songs herself.

"Music lets you feel free with the words, and you can let your mind go anywhere. You can say pretty much what you want to say," remarked Allee when asked about how songwriting and music make her feel.

Her grandpa, Buddy, is a luthier of mountain string instruments, and many of her uncles and cousins have shared music-making traditions. Allee told me her first experience learning to play was on her grandmother's guitar until she enrolled in the Henderson JAM program in Marion, VA this school year. Allee is one of many students learning to play traditional mountain music from regional musicians such as Jim Lloyd and Steve Kilby, and is lucky enough to continue lessons from Lloyd during summer break.

When I asked about her experience in the JAM program so far, Allee had a lot to say about the community vibe of traditional music. "There is nobody there that I wouldn't want to hang out with. Everyone is nice. It feels like you're at home – a place filled with people who like to do what you like to do."

In the future, she hopes to continue on the musical path in memory of her late uncle. "When I first came to JAM, I was really shy, but now I want to play for my neighbors, learn the piano and ukulele, and keep writing lots of songs!"

I feel confident that this young lady will continue to fulfill her musical destiny and carry on her family's traditions. Please stay tuned for Allee Blevins playing and singing on a stage near you!

Did you know?

"Benefits of music education for children include learning cooperation, compromise, sharing, creativity, and concentration - skills that become invaluable as they enter school, face new challenges, and form friendships and social skills."

© 2015 Program for Early Parent Support

"Cognitive and neural benefits of music experience continue throughout the lifespan, from childhood through senior adulthood, and counteract some of the negative effects of aging."

- Association for Research in Otolaryngology Symposium

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without you, JAM would not exist! THANK YOU!

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Building community one tune at a time.

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using enclosed return envelope**
- > **Donate securely online at
www.jamkids.org/donate**
- > **Recycle an instrument!**
- > **Explore planned giving**
- > **Volunteer to help start a new
program in your community**

Stay tuned!

We invite you to join us at the Courthouse JAMboree concert series, which will feature current & past JAM students, as well as regional musicians the first Fridays of October and November at the 1908 Courthouse Baldwin Auditorium in Independence, VA



Find out more by contacting us anytime!

**PO Box 44
Independence, VA 24348
(276) 773-0573**

*After Oct. 1, the JAM office will be
located at 111 Courthouse St.,
Independence, VA*



**www.jamkids.org
brett@jamkids.org**

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annual report on the JAM website*