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December 4, 2012  
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ANT 5120

Junior Appalachian Musicians, Inc  
A Model of Participatory Development in Appalachian Communities

Junior Appalachian Musicians, Inc. (JAM, Inc) was founded by Helen White in the spring of 2000, with the mission of linking and helping communities provide opportunities for children to participate in the music traditions of the Southern Appalachians. Starting in Alleghany County, North Carolina, JAM has continued to grow, and has provided consultation and resource materials to twenty-two programs throughout North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina.<sup>1</sup> According to Susan E. Keefe, the participatory development model for community building in Appalachia, “assumes that local culture has value, that local communities have assets, and that local people have the capacity to envision and lead their own social change.”<sup>2</sup> Junior Appalachian Musicians focuses on the value of local culture by keeping local, traditional music vibrant in communities. JAM also acknowledges the assets of local communities by tapping into bonding social capital networks, such as the network found among traditional musicians, and works to build bridging social capital, by encouraging collaboration among community organizations. Furthermore, in each community that JAM serves, the program pushes the community to lead “their own social change,” by encouraging the community to design their JAM program, according to their needs.

In 2007, Helen M. Lewis developed her “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program,” to try and change what she saw as a pattern of reliance that communities

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<sup>1</sup> “Our Mission, Vision, and History.” *Junior Appalachian Musicians, Inc.: Connecting Communities and Youth through the Music of the Southern Appalachians*. Web. <http://regionaljam.org/wordpress/our-mission-vision/>

<sup>2</sup> Keefe, Susan E. “Introduction.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. Ed. Susan E. Keefe. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2009. 1.

had in using the destructive industrial recruitment model. Although Lewis's twelve-step model focuses on, "those communities that have been devastated by industrial exploitation and abandonment... her twelve-step recovery program identifies actions that every community might consider in creating a plan for sustainable community development."<sup>3</sup> Judged off of Susan Keefe's definition of participatory development, and analyzed through Helen Lewis's twelve-step model, is Junior Appalachian Musicians, Inc. a successful community building organization?

In order to understand the capacity that JAM has as a community building organization, one has to understand the reasons behind the founding of the program and the demographic that JAM serves. Helen White, the founder and current director of Regional JAM, Inc., has a background as a school guidance counselor, a public health worker, and a juvenile probation family counselor, which caused her "perspective on life in the mountains [to be] skewed towards the families that struggled." As a longtime musician, White has noted that music has always held an important place in her life and has really "been the backbone" of her social life. The first spark for the idea of JAM, came during a summer she spent as a teacher in a camp called Fiddle Kids, located in the Bay Area of California. While she taught students, who included the first and second chairs of the San Francisco Youth Orchestra, traditional fiddle music, she claimed that "I just kind of had a visceral reaction and said, 'What am I doing here?'" This experience led her to reflect on the fact that, "Our kids do not have access to learn to play the music that by all rights they should. This music was molded and formed in these mountains, and because of generations of poverty, out-migration, hillbillies being slammed two generations ago and this stuff becoming very uncool, it just kind of dropped out of being an active presence in the

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<sup>3</sup> Keefe, Susan E. Introduction to "Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program." *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 67.

culture.” White then had the idea of combining the music and guidance class at the elementary school, so she could bring the traditional instruments she owned into class, which allowed the students to touch and play them. White reflects that, “each [student] got thirty seconds on the instrument of their choice and the excitement... I mean, that place exploded! That night I came home and knew I had to get these instruments to the kids.”<sup>4</sup>

From the onset of the program, White claims that her goal was to serve every child making sure that those students who lacked financial means or parent support for more typical music lessons could participate. She held as strong a conviction, however, that the program reach a representative cross section of the host school or community - not just those classified as “at risk” or “underserved”. She felt it important to involve students of all demographics for two main reasons: the association traditional mountain music has with being the music of the underclass, and the stigmatization that this music has as being the music of the still prominent, stereotypical, Appalachian hillbilly. Keefe expands on the problems associated with Appalachian stereotyping by explaining, “through the creation and manipulation of these images of ‘Otherness’ by those from outside the region, Appalachian people came to be seen by the nation and often to see themselves as a social problem in need of being solved.”<sup>5</sup> White felt so strongly about being an inclusive program that she decided to break away from an original partnership with the 21st Century Learning Initiative. She explained that while under the 21st Century Learning Initiative, eighty percent of the youth enrolled in the JAM program had to meet the criteria for being classified as “at risk.” According to the said criteria, one would be considered “at risk” if they received free or reduced lunch, were served through special education programs, had test scores below a certain cutoff, had a 504 plan and were treated for

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<sup>4</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Keefe, Susan E. “Introduction.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 5.

attention deficit disorder, or had a certain pattern of “unfavorable” behavior. White did not want JAM to be seen as the program for the “dumb, poor or bad kids”, and above all, did not want the program to be stereotyped. However, White claims that, “we tried to build a case, and there is a case to be built that every child in a rural mountain county is ‘at risk,’ because there just isn’t the same cultural advantages and exposures that there are in more urban settings.”<sup>6</sup>

Keefe has stated that the “participatory model is founded on the value of diversity and respect for local cultures and people,”<sup>7</sup> and Lewis has stated that, “There are some basic values and assumptions underlying the community-based [participatory] model of development... the model is *inclusive*.”<sup>8</sup> White’s decision to break away from the 21st Century Learning Initiative and to use local, traditional music as the focus of the program, epitomizes these claims made by Keefe and Lewis. White’s decision also shows that the foundational idea behind JAM, is the same foundational idea behind the participatory model of community development.

Furthermore, three western North Carolina counties’ JAM programs showcase the diversity of youth JAM serves: Watauga JAM, Alleghany JAM, and Ashe Arts JAM.

The Watauga JAM program differs from the Alleghany and Ashe programs in two distinct ways. First, the Watauga program is held on Thursday evenings at the Jones House Community Center, which is located in the downtown area of the county seat. On the contrary, the Alleghany JAM and the Ashe Arts JAM are both held in elementary schools, as after school programs. The other major difference is highlighted when the demographics of each county are analyzed. The harboring of a major academic institution, Appalachian State University, has in large part influenced Watauga County to have a larger population (51,079 in 2010) and lower

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<sup>6</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Keefe, Susan E. “Introduction.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 73.

rate of unemployment (8% in 2010), when compared to Alleghany County (11,155 and 11.5% in 2010) and Ashe County (27,281 and 12.3% in 2010). However, the low rate of unemployment has not caused the poverty rate in Watauga County (24.8% from 2006-2010) to significantly change. Alleghany County has a similar poverty rate (26.2% from 2006-2010) to that of Watauga and although Ashe County has the lowest rate of poverty (17.8%) among the three counties, it is by no means good.<sup>9</sup>

Because Watauga JAM is located in the county seat and within walking distance to a major university, most students come from more affluent backgrounds and there are many students who are first generation Watauga residents. With the Alleghany and Ashe programs being held in the schools, directly after school, these programs are more accessible to students who may not have the same means of transportation or the same support system at home that the more affluent students have. Mark Freed, the director of Watauga JAM, explained that, overall, his student demographic consists of more advantageous youth. Freed has had instructors who have taught in Alleghany and Ashe, before teaching in Watauga, that have noticed a difference in the more affluent students' motivation levels.<sup>10</sup> White elaborated on this by stating that, "I have had teachers that have taught there [Watauga JAM] and other programs and they say it is night and day... Those kids are from by and large more affluent, educated, motivated families, so they have a huge support advantage."<sup>11</sup> Cecil Garganus, an instructor who taught in Ashe County before teaching at the Jones House, discussed the diversity he noticed among JAM students. He claimed that there is a difference between the afterschool programs and evening programs, mainly because the students who come to the evening lessons make a real conscious decision to

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<sup>9</sup> Statistics from: "Data Reports: Socioeconomic Data by County." *Appalachian Regional Commission*. Web. <http://www.arc.gov/data>

<sup>10</sup> Freed, Mark. Personal Interview. October 11, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

become involved and are not pushed into an after school program by their parents. However, it should not be overlooked that there are students in the afterschool programs who also come from very supportive families and occasionally from families with extensive musical backgrounds.<sup>12</sup> White further elaborates on the importance of inclusion by stating, “you do not want to exclude those [more affluent] kids from your after school programs, because you want those kids modeling for the ‘at risk’ kids that they are going to get left behind if they are not practicing.”<sup>13</sup>

Although there are twelve-steps to successful community building in Helen Lewis’s model, she claims that, “The twelve-steps are not a straightforward stairway to community revitalization.”<sup>14</sup> In this vein, some of the steps apply more directly than others when analyzing the success that Junior Appalachian Musicians has as community building organization, and some steps should be combined together. This is in large part due to the fact that Lewis intended these steps to be a guide that leads communities to sustainable economic practices, in order to break away from the industrial recruitment model. However, Lewis emphasizes the importance of people development, through culturally based local resources in her twelve-steps. Traditional music is a prime example of a culturally based resource that encourages people development, in not only the youth involved in the program, but also in the instructors. Junior Appalachian Musicians exemplifies Keefe’s statement that “local culture has value, that local communities have assets, and that local people have the capacity to envision and lead their own social change,”<sup>15</sup> by using traditional music as the center focus, identifying and tapping into bonding social capital networks, working to build bridging social capital by encouraging collaboration

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<sup>12</sup> Garganus, Cecil. Personal Interview. November 15, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 73.

<sup>15</sup> Keefe, Susan E. “Introduction.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 1.

among community run organizations, which will “lead their own social change,” by designing a JAM program to best fit their needs.

JAM can first be analyzed through a combination of Lewis’s first step to successful community development, “understand your history: share memories” and her fifth step, “educate the community.”<sup>16</sup> Although JAM does not focus on gathering work histories or understanding the past economic history in order to develop a sustainable economic future, it does establish “a sense of identity and roots,”<sup>17</sup> through the implementation of unique educational curriculums.

When asked about the process of establishing a curriculum for his program, Mark Freed said that he was given autonomy, and encouraged by White to focus on the cultural traditions native to Watauga County. Freed thus chose to focus on the traditions of Beech Mountain, home to the great Frank Proffitt, as well as the revered tradition bearing Ward and Hicks families.<sup>18</sup> Rebecca Herman, the director of the Ashe Arts JAM, also stated that the music traditions her instructors focus on are native to Ashe County. According to Herman, the musical traditions of Whitetop Mountain are particularly emphasized, in large part because one of her instructors is a Spencer, which is a family that has been a purveyor of these musical traditions for generations.<sup>19</sup>

By focusing on the musical traditions native to each particular county, JAM demonstrates the value placed on local culture, which in turn fosters students to “own” the music. Freed claims that even though a student might be a first generation resident of Watauga County, Watauga is still their home, and JAM effectively provides these students with an opportunity to learn more about the local traditions and culture. Freed told the story of a Chinese student, who

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<sup>16</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 74.

<sup>17</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 75.

<sup>18</sup> Freed, Mark. Personal Interview. October 11, 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Herman, Rebecca. Personal Interview. November 8, 2012.

was the son of a university professor and classically trained on the violin, but became involved in JAM because he wanted to learn something different. This student not only learned a new style of music, but he also gained an appreciation of the traditions and culture of his new home, leading him to feel that he “owned” part of his community.<sup>20</sup> Erika Godfrey, an instructor who taught at Alleghany, Ashe, and Watauga, related a similar story. One of her best students was of Hispanic descent, and she fondly remembers him taking a lot of ownership over the local music and the local culture.<sup>21</sup> Rebecca Herman, the director of the Ashe Arts JAM, further elaborates this point by explaining that although every student will not come out as being a proficient player, these students still learn to understand local traditional music better, which fosters a lifelong appreciation. Also, in the fourth grade curriculum of North Carolina Public Schools, the geography classes focus on North Carolina, and in Ashe County there is a goal of establishing a unit of traditional music within the elementary school music class. Herman states that, “They are learning about their area anyway and I know a lot of teachers focus on traditional music... so, they have a connection to what they are learning in those [JAM] classes to what they are learning in their actual classes, which is a great thing.”<sup>22</sup> [To enhance local learning within the classroom, JAM, Inc has developed a 14 lesson plan curriculum guide, *The Appalachian Music Module*, tied to state and core essential learning standards for 4th grade language arts, social studies and music.]

The success Junior Appalachian Musicians has as a community building organization can also be analyzed through a combination of step three, “profile and assess your local community,”

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<sup>20</sup> Freed, Mark. Personal Interview. October 11, 2012

<sup>21</sup> Godfrey, Erika. Personal Interview. November 7, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Herman, Rebecca. Personal Interview. November 8, 2012.



and step nine, “collaborate and build coalitions.”<sup>23</sup> A central theme in Susan E. Keefe’s *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability* is social capital, which is a vital element in successful community building. Keefe explains that there are three types of social capital and that it is important for an organization to identify, and build upon, the inherent social capital within a community. The first type is referred to as bonding social capital because it helps to build cohesion within a community. The second type is referred to as bridging social capital because it helps to connect across the bonding social capital lines, in order to connect community organizations. The last kind is referred to as linking social capital, which helps to connect organizations beyond the county level, as well as bring in experts that can help educate and identify crucial problems a community faces. The way in which JAM programs profile and assess local communities, as well as collaborate and build coalitions, demonstrates the programs’ ability to identify and build upon pre-existing forms of social capital within the communities they operate.

Helen White emphasizes the importance for new programs to establish a “CORE (community, outreach, research, and evaluation) Team,” in order to effectively profile and assess the community the program intends to serve. Just as Keefe explained that the, “researcher is not the external expert but the facilitator working with a community,”<sup>24</sup> and Lewis described, “the researcher/educator comes to the community at the invitation of the community to help them ask the questions and find their own answers,”<sup>25</sup> White stated, “I feel that it is really critical that you talk to the people of the community and you make yourself available as a resource person. You

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<sup>23</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 74.

<sup>24</sup> Keefe, Susan E. “Introduction.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 82.

do not go in there and say, ‘I am going to set up a program for you, here is the way I can help you run it.’”<sup>26</sup> Holding onto that perspective, White’s first step in establishing the initial JAM program was to create her first CORE team, by pulling together the head of the Partnership for Children, the local 4H agent, the head of the 21st Century Learning Initiative’s after school program, the head of the music program in Mt. Rodgers School, two organizers of the Alleghany Fiddlers Convention, the head of the Alleghany Arts Council, and a few parents.

Lewis also claims that, “In order to build from within, the community needs to survey and map local resources and needs,”<sup>27</sup> which is exactly what the CORE Team does. Once a community establishes their team, the team works together in designing the program and appointing a fiscal agent. White advocates that programs start small and that the team focuses on sustaining the program, which in turn lets the program “grow organically.” As the CORE Team profiles and assesses the local community, it is imperative that they place the program, not only where it has the best chance to be successful, but also where it will be able to serve youth that often lack access to such programs.<sup>28</sup> The establishment of a CORE Team would not be possible without the identification of pre-existing bonding social capital networks, particularly the old-time musicians network. The CORE Team’s identification and implementation of the old-time musicians network is absolutely critical for the success of a JAM program. This particular bonding social capital network is used to identify the local traditions that the program will focus on, and to recruit capable instructors to teach these cultural traditions. JAM also demonstrates the ability to build bridging social capital, as a CORE Team is essentially a coalition of community organizations. Although this has not yet happened, White theorizes that if a

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<sup>26</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 76.

<sup>28</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

community can come together, organize, and work as an effective, cohesive unit for the establishment a JAM program, the community should be able to organize for anything.<sup>29</sup>

As Junior Appalachian Musicians identifies bonding social capital by profiling and assessing the community and builds bridging social capital by collaborating and building coalitions within the community, the program transitions into the step that Lewis calls “mobilize/organize/revive a sense of community.” The goal in this step is the establishment of a gathering place because, “you need a gathering place to share stories... that is open to all and accessible is most important to begin a revival process.”<sup>30</sup> White claims that by placing JAM programs in strategic places, it not only gets students involved who might not have a strong support system or means of transportation, but strategic placing also influences parental involvement. Many of the JAM programs function in the schools and White claims that the schools have become informal gathering places for some families as they await their children. As well, these programs have fostered community gathering beyond the school setting by involving students as performers at festivals and civic events, which leads to an overall increase in family community involvement.

The Alleghany JAM program serves as the prime example of a program that effectively encourages community gathering while operating within the school system. White stated that when she was on the “ground floor” with the program, the school superintendent of Alleghany County and the principal of Sparta Elementary became “huge fans” of JAM, because the program brought families into the schools that would not normally come. White went on to explain how some families have seen school as a place where they have generationally not been successful. However, when a child in the family excels at music and is onstage performing, the

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<sup>29</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 75 & 76.

extended family will always be there. White recalled that, “it was phenomenal how many people would come out.” White also reflected that while she was a school counselor, she knew many of the families who were struggling, and thought that it was fantastic to have families come to the schools celebrating the successes of their youth. As students begin to take off with their instruments and begin to develop a love of local traditions, many start attending local music festivals and fiddler conventions. This in turn causes the extended families of these students to also attend the festivals, which further encourages community gathering. JAM is not unique in its interest in the establishment of a distinct local gathering place, such as the conversion of a local hardware store in Wise County, Virginia into a music venue, but the addition of a JAM program and student performances fosters an increase in community gathering, which in turn fosters community involvement.<sup>31</sup>

The success JAM has in community building can also be analyzed through the step that Lewis calls, “develop local projects.” Lewis states that “[community-wide and small group projects increase participation and involve new and different groups in the community... these projects may be the way to mobilize, to build community... the community needs to encourage youth enterprises...”<sup>32</sup> The current director of Alleghany JAM explained how the program works to develop community-wide projects that focus on youth enterprises. The program has worked with the local hospital and the local Hospice center to put on local concerts for the patients of these centers, and for community members. Also, the Sparta Elementary school has a large, state of the art theater, which the JAM program can use free of charge. Hence, JAM frequently uses this space to develop local projects with other community organizations, such as corporate benefit concerts and a community wide Christmas show, as a way to say thank you to the

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<sup>31</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 79.

supporters of the program. All of these small projects mobilize and build community, because these community performances encourage community gathering and involvement. These performances have also led to the community truly embracing the program.<sup>33</sup>

Although Rebecca Herman, of the Ashe Arts JAM, claims that they have not worked with community organizations enough in developing local projects, they do have a JAM Club band that frequently performs. The JAM Club of Ashe County primarily serves as an avenue for students, who have graduated from Ashe Arts JAM, to continue to be involved, and to continue to learn. The JAM Club comes together every Monday evening from about 6pm until 7pm, two nights a month at Mountain View Elementary and two nights a month at either the Ashe Services for Aging or the Margate Health and Rehab Center. These Monday gatherings at the Ashe Services for Aging and the Margate Health and Rehab Center are performances, which according to Herman, have recently gained the JAM Club band a “little following.” Herman noted that community members know when these performances are, and Herman believes that these bi-monthly performances encourage community gathering, because they provide a place where locals can share their stories. The Ashe Services for Aging gatherings have even become pretty lively as of late, with audience members singing and dancing along.<sup>34</sup> Junior Appalachian Musicians’ success in educating by sharing local traditions and history, profiling and assessing community resources, building coalitions among community organizations, influencing local gatherings through musical performances, and developing local projects centered on youth, demonstrates how JAM programs are successful community building organizations within the Appalachian communities they serve.

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<sup>33</sup> Callison, Jean. Personal Interview. November 1, 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Herman, Rebecca. Personal Interview. November 8, 2012.

However, the most important element of community building that Junior Appalachian Musicians programs have, is their ability to “build confidence and pride.”<sup>35</sup> As JAM works to preserve and transmit local, traditional music, an increase in community members self-esteem, confidence, and pride has been a continued byproduct. Another byproduct has been the development of leadership among students and also among the local instructors. JAM’s use of traditional music, a culturally based local resource, to impact people development can not be overlooked.

Although the Watauga JAM program does, by and large, have students who come from more affluent familial backgrounds, there are students in the program that would meet the criteria for “at risk.” Mark Freed related a story of a male student (who I will refer to as Matt), who came from a split home, had no idea how to play, was socially awkward, shy, and had learning disabilities. Matt came to the program as a left handed eighth grader, who did not even know whether or not to try a right or left handed guitar. Freed explained that Matt had a desire to learn but it was a real struggle. In spite of this, by the time he graduated high school, Matt was singing, playing, and truly performing in front of audiences. Freed claims that the JAM program really changed his life and gave him an identity.<sup>36</sup>

Instructors that have taught in multiple programs, such as Erika Godfrey and Cecil Garganus, claim that as their students learned the music, they noticed an increase in self-confidence and self-esteem. Garganus reflected on a recent student who was extraordinarily shy and timid when they started the program. As her skills as a musician developed, her confidence increased, and Garganus noted that she has recently started to perform in front of audiences.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 78.

<sup>36</sup> Freed, Mark. Personal Interview. October 11, 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Garganus, Cecil. Personal Interview. November 15, 2012.

Godfrey claimed that, “the extracurricular involvement is just plain good for any young student and leads them to gain more self-esteem. The music brings them out more... makes them more well rounded.” Godfrey also explained that the program provides an outlet for students who might have a difficult home life, split family, problems at school, or learning disabilities. She even reflected on her own personal experience growing up, and explained how she believes that in general, music helps build one as a person.<sup>38</sup>

As students’ self-confidence and self-esteem improve, many emerge as leaders, not only within the JAM classes, but also within their respective elementary school classes. Godfrey and Garganus both stated that they observed leadership development within their classes, as the more advanced, and often times older students, took on a role of helping the younger students.<sup>39</sup>

During an observation of Steve Kilby’s class in Sparta Elementary, students were continually pushed into taking on leadership roles, as many were encouraged to help a fellow classmate that might have been struggling with a particular piece.<sup>40</sup> Godfrey and Garganus have also stated that some students even take on the role of becoming leaders outside of the classroom setting, as they form bands and emerge as bandleaders.<sup>41</sup> White further elaborates students’ leadership development, by explaining how she witnessed a transformation in students that took on roles as bandleaders. She related a story of a student that was a “geeky and unpopular” student in school. However, one day she witnessed this student playing banjo with a “cool” student that was playing the guitar. White recalled her astonishment as the geeky student and the popular student came together to play music, and had their elementary school peers standing around, watching in amazement. White also recalled a student who had learning disabilities, but was a “musical

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<sup>38</sup> Godfrey, Erika. Personal Interview. November 7, 2012.

<sup>39</sup> Garganus, Cecil. Personal Interview. November 15, 2012.

<sup>40</sup> Kilby, Steve. Personal Interview. November 8, 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Godfrey, Erika. Personal Interview. November 7, 2012.

genius.” In the 5th grade, this student was elected into class office, and White recalled, “his mom came up to me one day and said you would not believe what JAM has done for my kid!”<sup>42</sup>

Although the direct correlation between involvement in Junior Appalachian Musicians and increased academic performance is currently not tracked, it was when the program was affiliated with the 21st Century Learning Initiative. Before White decided to break away, in order to develop an inclusive program, the initial tracking of student progress noted an increase in test scores, a decrease in discipline problems, and an increase in attendance.<sup>43</sup> Those affiliated with the program still believe JAM has this effect on students’ academic lives, as directors and instructors have commented on the positive feedback they continually hear from school teachers. Rebecca Herman stated that, in particular, the elementary school music teacher has observed the emergence of JAM students as leaders within her classroom, time after time. The music teacher has stated the students involved in JAM participate more than the other students and are always willing to volunteer. Herman also noted that while students grow as leaders, they also develop critical time management skills, because they have to find the time to balance a practice schedule on top of homework, and any other extracurricular activities they may be involved in.<sup>44</sup>

Junior Appalachian Musicians also influences people development within the instructors. Godfrey claimed that while she was noticing her students emerge as leaders, she was also noticing herself emerge as a leader. Godfrey explained how she gained skills by helping the director of Alleghany JAM with her work, helping connect and reach out to parents, and most importantly, becoming a role model for the students.<sup>45</sup> White believes that although “many traditional musicians may not be professionals in work a day life, they are still very bright... they

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<sup>42</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

<sup>43</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

<sup>44</sup> Herman, Rebecca. Personal Interview. November 8, 2012.

<sup>45</sup> Godfrey, Erika. Personal Interview. November 7, 2012.



just might not have gone to college and so they do not end up not on high end of our wacky society.” She claims that if a traditional musician is put into setting where they clearly have expertise, they clearly emerge as leaders, and she has in fact witnessed this multiple times. White recalled the story of the first Alleghany JAM director, whom she claimed became the “poster child” example of this. White rehashed a story about the initial founding of the program. The head of the 21st Century Learning Initiative’s afterschool program mentioned a woman who was driving the school bus for the program and washing dishes in the cafeteria, and could really play the guitar. White knew her and concurred that she would be perfect. White went on to state, “She was a brilliant, underutilized resource in the school system and she ended up being a hugely successful first director of the program. I have to credit her with working out a lot of the systems. The kids absolutely adored her and the program just shot off.”<sup>46</sup>

The type of leadership development Junior Appalachian Musicians influences, is reflective of the leadership roles highlighted by Helen Lewis in *It Comes from the People: Community Development and Local Theology*. When examined within the roles described by Lewis, Helen White truly “fits the model of the transformational leader who is charismatic... she provides the vision, but she also has taken the risks to encourage others to move out and become leaders.”<sup>47</sup> White demonstrates these attributes with her policy on the process of establishing new JAM programs. She claims that the methods she primarily established in the initial Alleghany program are only meant to be used as a guides and that once a community establishes their CORE Team, they can keep what they like and change what they believe will not work. It is up to the individual community to build coalitions between community organizations, and map out their local resources. White states that, “we offer sample policies but it is really up to each

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<sup>46</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Lewis, Helen M., Mary Ann Hinsdale, and S. Maxine Waller. *It Comes from the People: Community Development and Local Theology*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995. 141.

program to create their own set of policies and come up with their own agenda.”<sup>48</sup> And, JAM, Inc is continually updating its materials as a result of input from other JAM affiliated programs in the field. The emergence of that first Alleghany director as a leader, as well as the way in which White set up the expansion policies of JAM, represents the shift of the program, from being under “charismatic leadership to community-based or group leadership...” where there is not a gap, “in sufficient integrative, reconciling, negotiating, and supportive types of leadership to keep the various groups involved and working together in harmony and facilitating the work.”<sup>49</sup>

Junior Appalachian Musicians, Inc. is continually working on the steps Lewis described as “strengthen your organization” and “enter local/regional/national/international planning processes.”<sup>50</sup> While JAM is effective at people development, White claims that they are only a “baby” organization and do not yet have the resources or money to implement large scale evaluations, such as gathering data on the correlation between JAM involvement and academic performance. Itself a non-profit organization, JAM, Inc continually has to raise funds in order to effectively function. A previous instructor of Jackson County, noted that there were not enough instructors to cover the diverse range of skills that the students possessed. The instructor claimed that in Jackson, they were actually struggling to find instructors, and even though an individual might be a good musician, they were not interested in teaching or they were not good at teaching.<sup>51</sup> Even though the Alleghany JAM program serves four different elementary schools,

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<sup>48</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.

<sup>49</sup> Lewis, Helen M., et al. *It Comes from the People: Community Development and Local Theology*. 143.

<sup>50</sup> Lewis, Helen M. “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program.” *Participatory Development in Appalachia: Cultural Identity, Community, and Sustainability*. 74.

<sup>51</sup> Ritter, William. Personal Interview. November 6, 2012.

the director of the program explained that they are currently at capacity with eight instructors serving sixty students.<sup>52</sup>

This could lead to the question, how much influence do the programs actually have in the communities they serve? In a county with a population of 11,155 in 2010,<sup>53</sup> Alleghany JAM only serves sixty students a year, representing only about half a percent of the population. One can assert, however, that over time, a greater percentage of the population will have been served. Beyond the numbers of students enrolled each year, JAM programs are truly loved in the counties they serve, and have a wide range of influence. For example, the director of Alleghany JAM stated that the program performed nineteen times in public the previous year, and in one performance, students played in front of a crowd of eight hundred. These public performances not only instill confidence and pride within a student, but they also instill pride within the community at large. The Alleghany JAM director further explained that, “the Alleghany community really loves the program and JAM has been in the paper multiple times for performances which highlight students. Grandparents and parents and community members see these [articles], and that increases overall pride within the community. They see the youth just being so out there and accomplishing great things.”<sup>54</sup> Rebecca Herman elaborated on this, by explaining that, “as far as the community at large is concerned, there is always positive feedback.” Herman states that, “for the kids and parents it has become what is there and what is available... I get calls from parents of kids in first and second grade that want to enroll their child... in the minds of parents and kids, JAM is something that is there... it is available and

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<sup>52</sup> Callison, Jean. Personal Interview. November 1, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Statistics from: “Data Reports: Socioeconomic Data by County.” *Appalachian Regional Commission*. Web. <http://www.arc.gov/data>

<sup>54</sup> Callison, Jean. Personal Interview. November 1, 2012.

something they get to be a part of.”<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, JAM works to “enter local/regional/national/international planning processes” by holding events such as regional JAM teacher sharing workshops, administrator workshops and invitations to students to participate in regional performances, encouraging students and families to attend local community and regional music events.

When judged on Susan E. Keefe’s definition of the participatory development model and analyzed through Helen M. Lewis’s “Rebuilding Communities: A Twelve-Step Recovery Program,” Junior Appalachian Musicians is a successful community building organization within the communities it serves. JAM acknowledges the value of local culture by using traditional music as the center focus, and builds bridging social capital by establishing coalitions within community organizations, in order to profile and assess community resources. JAM also demonstrates the belief that each community has “the capacity to envision and lead their own social change,” because JAM encourages emerging programs to design policies that will serve their community’s needs the best. This also reflects what Lewis describes as a shift from “charismatic leadership to community-based or group leadership...”<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, JAM programs work to educate community members with curriculums that focus on the particular traditions of each community. JAM programs also work to develop local projects, such as youth centered community performances, which stimulate community gathering. While all of these elements of JAM are also vital elements in successful community building, the greatest impact JAM has on communities, is the ability to continuously build confidence, self-esteem, and pride, in not only those directly involved with the program, but also within the community at large. This can be seen by the impact the Ashe County JAM Club and the Alleghany County JAM

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<sup>55</sup> Herman, Rebecca. Personal Interview. November 8, 2012.

<sup>56</sup> Lewis, Helen M., et al. *It Comes from the People: Community Development and Local Theology*. 143.

program have within their respective communities. In conclusion, Helen White said, “I see JAM or traditional music, as being the quintessential, culturally appropriate way to bring kids and families together and engage them in healthy community activities.”<sup>57</sup>

JAM Founder, Helen White was a student of John Hatch, PhD, Kenan Professor of Health Behavior and Health Education at UNC School of Public Health in the 1980s. His work and the department had an emphasis on community organizing to gain results in projects aimed at improving the health behavior of minorities and underserved groups.

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<sup>57</sup> White, Helen. Personal Interview. October 29, 2012.