



YAM NOTES

SPRING 2025

NEWS FROM THE NEXT GENERATION OF MUSICIANS

TAM YAM CAMP — AN ADVENTURE IN TRADITION!



For those parents wishing to immerse their children in rich historical culture combined with an appreciation of learning to play stringed instruments in the traditional method, “by ear”, the Traditional Arts and Music YAM Camp is the perfect fit! TAM YAM Camp will take place Monday – Friday, July 14 – 18th from 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM at the Pavilion at historic Hagood Mill. This camp is open to any child who is a rising 3rd grader through rising 9th grader. He/she does not need to have been enrolled in prior YAM classes.

Extended care is also offered from 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM and 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM for an additional fee.

Relating to the Appalachian life and traditions, several of the afternoon activities and Appalachian games will be held on the historical site at Hagood Mill. Additionally, on Thursday evening there will be a cookout for middle school

and high school campers. There will be jamming and other entertaining activities during the cookout. All campers will have opportunities to jam together during the week and also to perform.

Registration is currently underway, and parents should register soon to reserve their child’s slot at this highly popular camp. Typically, enrollment fills to capacity each summer! The cost for each camper is based on his/her Tier Status and a T-Shirt is included in the price. Tier 1 campers pay \$110, Tier 2 pay \$150, and Tier 3 pay \$220. The first half of tuition is



due on May 30th and the balance is due on June 30th. You may pay when registering or you may register and pay by the due dates. Payments should be mailed to Tiffany Short, 205 Oakfield Ave., Easley, SC 29640 or email Tiffany at tdgshort@gmail.com to arrange cash or Venmo payments or if you have questions. Registration may be accomplished online by using the QR code below or on our website (www.yamupstate.com). You may also register with a paper copy that will be sent to the parent upon request to Tiffany Short.

The absence of a stringed instrument does not prevent a student from attending camp, as instruments can be rented for the week for \$10, or if campers do have an instrument, they may bring their own.

For a camp experience like no other where the camper is engrossed in learning to play a musical instrument and receiving an exciting education into the rich Appalachian culture, seize this opportunity to make this a camp in which your child will choose to return year after year!



SATURDAY MUSIC CAMP ADVANCING SKILLS

The 2nd annual Saturday Music Camp was held on April 26th, with its purpose being to increase the proficiency of middle and high school students, not only in tone, timing, and technique, but also in bluegrass history and honing in on the skill of improvisation.

Presenting at the workshops that took place in the morning were Stephen Hudson for Fiddle, Elijah Ellenburg for Banjo, Joseph Welborn for Guitar, and Andrew Jones for Mandolin. Afternoon workshops were led by presenters Stephen Hudson on Vocal Techniques, Trey Ward on Song Writing, Ryan Wilson on Bluegrass History, and Ryan Wilson on Sound Engineering.

Participants were treated to a free lunch from Heidi's Hotdogs and were invited to participate in the bluegrass jam in the evening as a culmination of the day's events.



2ND ANNUAL RYAN HOOD MEMORIAL MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP TO BE AWARDED

Drs. Charles and Anita Hood and their family and the POSAM Board are again offering the Ryan Hood Memorial Music Scholarship, to be awarded to two YAM alumni who are in the category of 9th grade through 23 years. The scholarships will be awarded based upon character, commitment, attitude, music experience, leadership, musical ability, and financial need.

This Scholarship, bearing Ryan Hood's name, has been established to continue his legacy of love for music and imparting it to others. Ryan was the gifted young musician who brought much into the musical realm during his brief life. Since the scholarship's inception, funds have been donated from various sources to allow many young students to learn the art of playing a stringed instrument either in YAM After School lessons, Evening Music Program lessons, or the Traditional Arts and Music Camp held during the month of July. In addition, for the second year two \$500 scholarships awarded to alumni recipients are also offered.

The scholarship funds may be used for lessons, attendance at festivals, conferences, or the purchase of an instrument, etc. Applications must be completed in their entirety and submitted to Tiffany Short at 205 Oakfield Ave., Easley, SC 29640 by Friday, June 20th. Winners will be announced on Friday, July 18th.



THE TORCH IS PASSED!



We wish to express our sincere gratitude to Mary and Josiah Roper, our SPPKids Directors, who have faithfully served in this position for six years.

Mary began playing the fiddle when she was in 3rd grade. Josiah began his musical journey on the bass when he was in sixth grade. As both progressed in their musical abilities, both began playing in a band called Left Lane. This is the point at which their paths crossed and they officially met. The year was 2015.

Mary was an instructor at Pickens Middle for several years, and in various After School locations. She also served as Program Director at Chastain Road Elementary. Josiah, too, was an instructor for the YAM Program, teaching at Liberty Elementary and also in the Easley Evening Program.

Mary attended school at Tri-County Technical College and graduated with a degree in Medical Office Administration. Josiah attended Southern Wesleyan University and received his degree in Forensic Science and Chemistry. In 2021, Mary and Josiah became husband and wife. They are also now parents of two small daughters, Miryam, who is two and a half years old, and Annelise who is 8 months old. Both are already very attuned to musical instruments and love to hear the guitar and fiddle.

During many of these major life events they were also instructing the Sweet Potato Pie Kids, the showcase band for the YAM Program, and have done a fabulous job!

It is bittersweet that they are needing to relinquish this position due to time constraints now that Josiah has been promoted to Process Chemist at Ortec, Inc. of Piedmont. However, we are extremely proud of Josiah's accomplishment and wish him and his entire family the absolute best with this nice promotion in his career.

Logan Redding, assisted by Chad Simpson, has agreed to assume the SPPKids Director position and continue with

the new SPPKids group. Neither of these two are strangers to bluegrass music. Logan also "came up" through the YAM Program and began playing the banjo in elementary school. He progressed through his elementary years and qualified for SPPKids, became an instructor for YAM in several after School programs, and performed in the Left Lane Band. Logan graduated from the Citadel with a degree in business in 2023. He is presently Assistant Director with the YAM Program and instructs in the Easley Evening Program. Logan and his wife, Stephanie, reside in Pickens.

Chad Simpson is proficient on the guitar, banjo, and bass. He started playing bluegrass in 2010 after meeting several friends at a local jam session. He joined his first band "Shades of Blue" (2012-2014). He also was a band member with "Last Road Bluegrass" (2014-2017). In 2017, Chad joined Josh Johnson to help form the Mountain Bridge Band.

His other activities include serving as part of the Worship Team at East Pickens Baptist Church. His youngest daughter, Kamdyn, has played guitar for two years. She was also involved in the After School and Evening Programs and now is a member of the SPPKids Performing Band. Chad's older daughter, Kadence, also took YAM lessons for several years on both the fiddle and mandolin.

Chad and his wife, Kela, served on the committee for the Winter Bluegrass Jubilee (2015-2018) and Kela is currently the Program Director at West End Elementary. Chad earned his degree in Business Management from Tri-County Technical College and began working as a Quality Manager in manufacturing in 2000.

Thus, the torch is held high as it is faithfully passed from very capable hands into the hands of other capable ones who will also carry the SPPKids forward!



YAM 2025 GRADUATES



Alyssa White is a homeschooler graduating with Honors on May 16, 2025, with the Rock Springs Co-Op, supported by her family and the Academic Advantage Association. Her interests include playing and listening to music, singing, reading, jewelry-making, hiking, taking beach trips with her dad, Jason, and her brother, Hunter, and also doing luthier work.

Alyssa's involvement with YAMs began in the summer of 2018 when she started taking guitar lessons from Susan Ware-Snow at Easley's Evening Music Program. She auditioned for the Sweet Potato Pie Kids Band and was accepted from spring 2019 through fall 2021. Upon aging out of the SPPK, she and a few of her friends started their band, Bluegrass & Company. They have just recorded their 2nd CD.

In addition to guitar, she plays the mandolin and serves as an instructor for the YAM Program. Alyssa currently teaches at Easley's Evening Music Program, and has taught at Six Mile Elementary, West End Elementary, Crosswell Elementary, and McKissick Academy, while also volunteering or substituting at other locations. She has enjoyed being a presenter at East End's Artist-in-Residence, and most recently was a presenter for Dacusville Elementary's ArtsJAM, instructing their 2nd graders in bluegrass music and the instruments used.

Alyssa was one of the two recipients of the 1st Ryan Hood Memorial Music Scholarship awarded in July 2024.

She advises any future YAM students to keep practicing and not give up when it gets tough because nobody expects a rock star after just a few lessons.

After graduation, Alyssa plans to attend Tri-County Technical College to earn her business degree before pursuing her goal of owning her own luthier business.



Elijah Ellenburg is a 17 year old homeschooled student that will graduate on May 16, 2025. He has been playing with the band Bluegrass and Company for five years and they just released their 2nd CD.

He enjoys leather work and making things with his hands. When he was 10 years old, he decided to learn banjo and that is how he got started in YAMS. He wanted to be a

SPPKids member because it was the next step in becoming a better musician.

It's been seven years now and he plays banjo, guitar, and upright bass. His advice to YAM students and musicians in general is to practice every chance you get because all good musicians are always learning.

Elijah has been an instructor at Dacusville, Six Mile, Hagood, Crosswell and East End Elementary schools as well as the Mill Church, Six Mile Evening Program, and many other schools as a substitute. After graduation, his plan is to expand his leather working business and continue playing with Bluegrass and Company.

Ozzie Carpenter, will graduate from his homeschool group on May 16, 2025.

My interests and hobbies include writing and composing songs, playing in my church's orchestra, auditioning and participating in play performances, as well fishing, hunting, and camping.

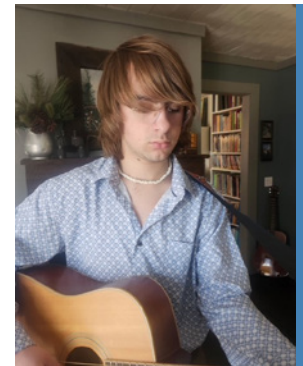
I started with the YAM program on mandolin, but also play guitar (especially electric guitar), although I also play acoustic guitar and instruct classes in it. Other instruments I play are banjo, bass, piano, drums, and harmonica.

My advice to YAM students is to find songs you love and play them. You'll enjoy your instrument even more using that approach.

I have been an instructor with the YAM Program for several years and have taught at Ambler Elementary, Six Mile Elementary, and the Pickens Evening Program.

I tried out for the SPPKids performing band because I love playing music and I wanted to take it a step further. It was a fun experience to be able to play before an audience.

My plans after graduation are to continue working on a ranch while writing and hopefully releasing music.





JAM SUMMIT

The JAM (Junior Appalachian Musicians) Summit will be held this year on the campus of Emory and Henry University located in Southwest Virginia from July 9 – July 12th. The purpose of this summit is to promote JAM sessions and traditional music education. It is open to all JAM teachers (YAM is an affiliate of JAM), student teachers, and hands-on administrative staff.

Those attending will be staying in the new dorms, which will house two people to a room with private baths. JAM is paying all expenses for this conference, including YAM staff choosing to attend, with the exception of a \$50 non-refundable deposit per individual. There are 100 spots, so register soon to reserve your space. You may register online at jamkids.org/summit2025.

This year's summit will feature hands-on workshops. You may select a relaxed schedule or one that is more focused. The purpose of this summit is for your own enrichment opportunities and for networking.

The teacher stipend will not be earned through attendance at the summit this year. That is only available now through the online Teacher Certification course pack.

Special guests this year are Wayne Henderson and Tim Stafford, special guests who attended in 2024, and our own Wilder Flower!



2025 JAM Sessions

Traditional Music Education Summit

Wednesday, July 9 - Saturday, July 12, 2025

Emory & Henry University, SWVA

\$50 all-inclusive for JAM Teachers, incl. room & board

Share, learn, grow, and explore with fellow instructors from JAM's 60+ programs across Central Appalachia at Junior Appalachian Musicians' second teachers' conference!



Special Guests include Wayne Henderson, Tim Stafford, Jerry Bigfeather, Laura Boosinger, Beth Cantrell (Suzuki Method), Petrea Warneck (Alexander Technique) & more, TBA!

Attendance is limited - Register now at jamkids.org/summit2025



CONCERT - FRIDAY, JULY 11, 7:00 PM

McGlothlin Center for the Arts (E&H Campus)

Open to the Public with Performances by

WAYNE HENDERSON & FRIENDS, TIM STAFFORD, & THE WILDER FLOWER



YAM EVENING PROGRAMS ARE GOLDEN NUGGETS!

YAM Evening Programs are golden nuggets, sometimes undiscovered, but are treasures nonetheless!

Things we'd like for parents to know:

- Children can be enrolled in YAM lessons right in their own community when the After School Programs end their cycle in March.
- Children can also be enrolled concurrently in the After School and Evening Programs if they so desire.
- Adults can also enroll and take lessons in their own classes, separate from youth.
- Homeschool students are very welcome!
- The same quality instructors that teach in the After School Programs also instruct in the Evening Programs.
- Lessons are offered during the summer in Pickens, Easley, Six Mile, and Salem.
- Children under 8 years old can enroll in ukulele classes at the Pickens location.
- Evening Programs are wonderful means to making meaningful friendships with others.

THANK YOU HIOTT PRINTING!



Sometimes it's just nice to stop amid all the "busyness" of daily life and express gratitude to those who have helped us along the way! We are experiencing one of those needed pauses at present, feeling appreciative and thankful for our wonderful friends at Hiott Printing on Johnson St. in Pickens. Representative Davey Hiott and the folks at Hiott Printing have taken care of YAM printing needs for numerous years at no charge to our program! Over the years we have had all types of forms, flyers, cards, and signs that needed to be printed, and we continually called upon Hiott Printing to help us out. They have always accommodated our needs in the kindest way possible. And thus, it is no wonder at all that they are considered a 5-star business! In view of the kindness of Hiott Printing and all the many things they have done for the YAM Program, we would just like to say a genuinely sincere THANK YOU!



YAM TO REACH A MAJOR MILESTONE!

The fall of 2025 will mark a major milestone for the YAM Program. Having its humble beginning back in 2008, with just 30 students at a small elementary school, the program has blossomed into an enrollment of approximately 500 students at all YAM Programs combined (After School, Evening Music Programs, etc.)

First, West End Elementary and McKissick Academy joined with new after School programs at their schools. This year, Crosswell and East End Elementary joined the ranks. Next year, Forest Acres and Clemson Elementary plan to join with after School programs as well. With these two schools joining the YAM Program, every elementary school in The School District of Pickens County will now be offering lessons in fiddle, guitar, banjo, and mandolin and teaching the students to learn to play “by ear”!

This is quite a cause for celebration! Founder, Dr. Betty McDaniel has led this program from its humble beginning to the major milestone it will reach in the fall of 2025.

Hats off to “Miss Betty” and to the POSAM Board, the administrative team, all the instructors, program directors, staff, volunteers, parents, and students who have assisted in reaching this lofty goal!



KUDOS TO LEO PEARSON AND THE SCBTMA



We applaud Leo Pearson and the South Carolina Bluegrass and Traditional Music Association and their work in engendering and fostering the love of bluegrass music in the youth of South Carolina.

Leo is a graduate of the University of South Carolina with a BS in Management and Marketing. He also served in the military and spent a year of his service in Vietnam. Upon graduation, he went into the insurance industry,

and upon retirement was a senior claims manager with Allstate Insurance Company.

Leo's love for bluegrass music has spanned many years as an avid fan and musician. He is also a member of the International Bluegrass Music Association, SPBGMA, and the POSAM Board of Directors.

The South Carolina Bluegrass Traditional Music Association (SCBTMA) was co-founded in 1991 by the late Bill Wells and Pat Ahrens. Their goals are aimed at a “family setting” to allow seasoned musicians to pass on their musical heritage to SC youth. The Association also strives to recognize outstanding SC musicians by holding educational workshops on the acoustic instruments, presenting concerts by local amateur bluegrass bands as well as professional bands, and partnering with organizations such as the SC State Museum to present the history of bluegrass music, and Parks, Recreation, and Tourism to

produce bluegrass festivals. Two workshops that are being held this year are a three-day workshop called “The Little House Songwriting Workshop” conducted by Donna Ulisse, Rick Stanley, and Jerry Salley who are well known writers from Nashville and a two-day workshop by “The Burnette Sisters.” This is a multi-instrument and vocal harmony workshop.

Additionally, the SCBTMA donates instruments as they are made available to them to other organizations who need them. Each year they also award the “Bill Wells Memorial Youth Scholarship” in the month of December to SC youth, ages 6 through senior in high school through an application selection process. Several of the YAM students and alumni have been benefactors of these wonderful scholarships.

Kudos to Leo Pearson and The SCBTMA for their tireless efforts in promoting bluegrass music across our state!



SPOTLIGHT ON OUR NEWEST PROGRAM DIRECTORS



Megan Carrasco

“What I love about the YAM Program is witnessing my elementary students shine as they embrace opportunities ...”

Over the past few years, the YAM Program has added four elementary school programs to their network of schools. With that, new students have had their interest sparked for the love of bluegrass music, and new staff have been added to our excellent slate of program directors.

A couple of years ago, we added McKissick Academy of Science and Technology, and with it has come Megan Carrasco, a phenomenal music teacher, who has been in the teaching role for four years, most currently at McKissick Academy. She graduated from Southern Wesleyan University with a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education, specializing in flute performance.

Megan states, “What I love about the YAM Program is witnessing my elementary students shine as they embrace opportunities to perform on

various stages alongside their classmates from the school district of Pickens County. Their growth and enthusiasm bring me immense joy, and I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of such a welcoming, loving, and supportive YAM family. My goal is to instill in my students a deep love for music and a passion for lifelong learning, just as my previous teachers poured into me. As I continue my journey in music education, I am excited to explore new ways to nurture my students’ talents and inspire their appreciation for music.”

Heather Hennessee assumed the role of YAM Program Director at Pickens Elementary this year. She has been in the teaching profession for 25 years, 19 of which have been at Pickens Elementary in special education. She is married to Jeff, and they have one daughter, Mady. They are extremely proud of Mady, who will be a 2025 graduate of Pickens High School and through the Career Center she has also obtained her cosmetology license.

“YAMS is an amazing program! I started working with the program when my predecessor, Tiffany Short, retired and I LOVE it! I love building relationships with the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders at my school. I am so proud of the progress they have made in the program. My special YAM story is that Ella Hennessee is my niece; she started in YAM and has already played the fiddle at the Grand Ole Opry,” says Heather.

“YAMS is an amazing program! I started working with the program when my predecessor, Tiffany Short, retired and I LOVE it!”



Heather Hennessee



Allison Gillespie

“This is one program that needs to expand! ...they provided so many opportunities in music for our students. We love it at Crosswell!”

Crosswell Elementary’s Program Director is Allison Gillespie, who is in her eighth year of teaching music. She possesses a Bachelor of Arts degree from Anderson University and a Masters in Administration and Supervision from Southern Wesleyan University.

Allison states, “By having students participate in YAMS, my teaching has flourished more in the classroom. This is through students who participated in YAM this year being able to share their experience and knowledge as it applied to our content. For example – During Ukuleles class this year, my 5th grade banjo players and guitar players were able to talk about how similar and different playing the banjo was compared to the ukulele. Students always love listening to their peers, so this was amazing, and it pushed my other students to strive to learn the basics of Ukulele to

one day play guitar or banjo.

This is one program that needs to expand! There were not only amazing instructors who loved our kids as their own, but they also provided so many opportunities in music for our students. We love it at Crosswell!”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Kela Simpson, Title I Facilitator, has headed up the YAM Program at West End Elementary since it was implemented there. Kela has been an educator in Pickens County Schools for 21 years and has attained the special honor of District Employee of the Year in 2012-2013 as well as West End Employee of the Year three different years. Kela's entire family is involved in the YAM Program! Kela and her husband, Chad, served on the Winter Bluegrass Jubilee board for several years, and her two daughters have taken classes in the program, and most recently, Kamdyn is a member of the YAM performing band, the Sweet Potato Pie Kids.



"I love taking part in this program to see kids along with their families catch the "bluegrass bug" and enjoy becoming a part of the family that is bluegrass music!"

Kela remarked, "I would definitely call myself a bluegrass music fan and love to travel to hear bands near and far with my family. I love taking part in this program to see kids along with their families catch the "bluegrass bug" and enjoy becoming a part of the family that is bluegrass music!"

Celia Stockton heads up the YAM Program at our newly added YAM school, East End Elementary, where she is the Pk - 5th grade music teacher. She obtained her BA degree in General Studies with a Fine Arts concentration from Indiana Wesleyan University. In addition, she also attended Miami

University in Oxford, Ohio and Wright State University of Dayton, Ohio for Musical Theater, and Brenau University and Southern Wesleyan University for Choral & Instrumental Music Education, and obtained her Master's Degree in Music Education from Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio.

Celia has held many impressive positions in the performing arts. She was an Actor's Equity eligible actress, an Executive Producer and performer, and worked for such impressive locations as Paramount Parks. She also spent numerous hours at sound studios doing voice-overs and performing the voice of the Smurf character, Smurfette, for licensed theme parks. This took her and her husband to Hollywood to be the co-musical hosts for the 50th Anniversary Tribute for Hanna-Barbera Animation Studios!

Additionally, she was the head costumer for the SC Children's Theatre for "Peter Pan" and "The Sound of Music."

Celia comments, "I love children and directing their musical talents to be the very best that is inside of them. The opportunity to launch the YAM Program at East End Elementary was a fantastic opportunity to share authentic Bluegrass Music with these young musicians."

We applaud each of these Program Directors and the fabulous job they have done in promoting the YAM Program in their schools and fulfilling our mission to foster the love of bluegrass music in youth for generations to come.

"The opportunity to launch the YAM Program at East End Elementary was a fantastic opportunity to share authentic Bluegrass Music with these young musicians."



Celia Stockton

YESIYAM BOOSTER CLUB

The YESIYAM Booster Club is dedicated to promoting community interest and cultivating support for the Young Appalachian Musicians Program, which is sponsored by Preserving Our Southern Appalachian Music, Inc., (POSAM), a charitable non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible. Your support will help ensure the continuity of the excellent instruction the children have come to expect. Those wishing to become YESIYAM booster club members or otherwise contribute to the program, may do so by sending to: POSAM, c/o Betty McDaniel, 792 Holly Springs School Rd., Pickens, SC 29671. For further information, please call Betty at (864)230-9695 or email yam.upstate@gmail.com.

Newsletter contributing photographers:
Kirby Allen, Brenda Pascal

Editor: Pauline Blackston
Designer: Jennifer Bryan

