

June 16, 2022

APPALACHIAN MUSIC IS SURE TO STAY ALIVE AND WELL WITH THE YOUTH OF OUR AREA...

Nationally renowned musician and instrument maker Wayne C. Henderson of Rugby, Virginia is not only a man whose guitar picking has been enjoyed across Grayson County, but in Carnegie Hall and in “seven nations of Europe, Asia and Africa”. He also believes in giving back to ensure that the music he enjoys so much is passed down to future generations. Each year, on the third Saturday of June, this year June 18th, the Wayne C. Henderson Music Festival and Guitar Competition is held to “express appreciation for this living legend”. This competition features Wayne and many of his fellow musical friends, where bluegrass and old-time music are the music de jour! A portion of the proceeds of this event are then placed into a scholarship fund to aid local musicians in continuing their education.



The Franklin County Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM), sponsored by the Smith Mountain Arts Council (SMAC), and run by Jim Mullens for the past nine years, was proud to receive a \$1,000 grant from the fund again this year to support their work with Franklin County youth. Each year at the Wayne C. Henderson Music Festival all scholarship and grant recipients are brought on stage to be introduced to the crowd, and this year instructor Roger Handy will accept the grant check for our local JAM.

JAM is a student outreach program that teaches elementary and middle school students how to play Appalachian music on guitar, mandolin, banjo, and fiddle. Arts are such a necessary skill to inspire in our youth, and SMAC is please to be a part of that community outreach. SMAC firmly believes, as do educators, that the arts encourage fine motor skills, neural development, and

problem-solving abilities. Research has found that the arts are critical to teach and understand reading, writing, math, and science. As the Wayne C. Henderson committee told us in their announcement letter, our JAM Program and so many others like it provide countless numbers of children with an otherwise unaffordable opportunity to learn to play and love traditional music. The more JAM programs.... the better!

Our local Franklin County JAM chapter demonstrates their acquired skills in regional competitions and two concerts yearly: one in mid-December, and the other towards the end of the school year, usually in mid-May at the Gereau Center in Rocky Mount. Three JAM brothers recently competed in an Abingdon competition where two of the brothers, Pierce and Cort Workman won second place for guitar and mandolin respectively. If you have not had an opportunity to attend one of these talented JAM youth performances, be sure to stop in on Friday, September 16th where the Franklin County Junior Appalachian Musicians will be playing at the Franklin County Agricultural Fair at F.C. Recreation Park.

The Smith Mountain Arts Council would also like to take this opportunity to thank Jim Mullens and his team of dedicated instructors for their many years of service to ensure this important musical heritage continues to be passed down to the youth of Southwest Virginia and to congratulate them on their well-deserved grant.

