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West Linn Tidings

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A2 NEWS

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MORE cowbell!

Youth Music Project sets up shop in West Linn-Wilsonville area

Kickstarting an effort to bring music education to the masses, the Youth Music Project is giving local kids a chance to rock this summer, right in their own backyard.

The recently formed YMP is a project of the Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation, a West Linn-based nonprofit organization that provides grants to projects that focus on the health and welfare of children.

"The idea is to complement the programs that are already existing in schools in the area," Executive Director Charles Lewis said, giving students the opportunity to learn skills they might not acquire with in-school instruction.

To start, YMP will offer a variety of weeklong full-day camps for children in grades K-12 throughout the summer, focusing on guitar, drums and piano with rock and country music themes.

Starting June 25 and beginning every other week, the camps will be held at Rosemont Ridge Middle School in West Linn and Wilsonville High School on an alternating basis.

During all of YMP's camps, students will form bands based on their ages and experience levels and immerse themselves in the world of rock, pop and country music.

Aside from music lessons, campers learn about booking gigs, making demo CDs, designing posters, setting up public address systems, screen-printing band T-shirts, editing videos and more.

"The idea is to give them kind of a holistic band experience," Lewis said.

A twist on its other camps and a play off of a famous "Saturday Night Live" skit, YMP's first annual Cowbell Camp — to be held July 23 to 27 at Rosemont Ridge — will

focus on songs that feature the instrument prominently. "We thought it would be a neat way to have a focus for the camp," Lewis said.

STORY BY
CLAIRE OLIVER

Along with two district-certified teachers, camp instructors include professional musicians and educators who have worked at places such as Portland's School of Rock, the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls and the Americana Project.

Lewis himself was director of Portland's Ethos Music Center — the largest nonprofit music school in Oregon — for 13 years.

"We have a lot of people coming to it with a wide variety of experiences," he said.

Campers are not required to have previous music experience and, although the YMP focuses on the West Linn-Wilsonville area, the camps are open for anyone to attend.

And, YMP offers scholarships and free instrument rentals to students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in school. Those who qualify for reduced-lunch programs can attend the camp for half price, and those who qualify for free lunch can attend for free.

Once summer is over, Lewis said YMP plans to plant permanent roots in the community.



Youth Music Project Executive Director Charles Lewis, right, provides piano instruction to a student.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



"The idea is to give them kind of a holistic band experience."



— Charles Lewis, YMP executive director

making sure kids have a wide variety of options and opportunities out in the community as well."

Lewis said YMP is always looking for volunteers and tax-deductible donations of either money or instruments.

For more information and to register for one of YMP's camps, call 503-616-5967 or visit youthmusicproject.org.

Left: Youth Music Project's summer camps are open to kids grades K-12 will all levels of music experience.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

"We're hoping we'll have our own headquarters where we can hold lessons and, if not, probably do outreach in the schools directly with after-school (programs)," he said.

He said the project is looking for a building in the West Linn-Wilsonville area. The Youth Music Project

will also offer district schools the option of scheduling an educational music assembly free of charge once each academic year.

"It's about giving kids a

wide variety of opportunities," Lewis said. "West Linn and Wilsonville are really fortunate to have (music education) programs in the schools, and so we want to help out by