



THE  
**JOY** OF  
**MUSIC**  
SCHOOL

*Fall*  
**Newsletter**  
**2025**



# From the Executive Director

## A Season of Momentum at JOMS

We're moving into fall with real energy—growing programs, new partnerships, and student wins across the board. Here are a few highlights from the past months and what's next at the Joy of Music School.

In Music,

**Michael Ray**

JOMS Executive Director



## Staff News

### Two New Roles to Power Our Mission

Anthony Hussey is now full-time Director of Outreach, expanding our partner network and supporting development. Jules Nolan adds Communications Coordinator to her School Administrator role, leading outward communications, social media, and event planning.

**Why it matters:** These changes strengthen day-to-day service to families and widen our community reach.



Team Cook Financial

## Event Spotlight

*Jules Nolan, Communications Coordinator and Susie Haas, Special Events Chair*

### Two celebrations, one purpose: free, high-quality music education.

Two celebrations, one purpose: free, high-quality music education. Dining for Joy, held on Thursday May 22, 2025, was a joyful, high-energy night—dancing, singing, and standout student performances by London (violin) and Cora (voice)—capped by Knoxville favorites Smooth Sailer with classics from the '60s-'80s. On Tuesday, September 16, 2025, Swing for Joy teed up friendly competition with 16 teams, a playful hit-the-

drumset-with-golf-balls challenge, and a first-place finish by team Cook Financial. Seth Tate and Joshua Peterson won closest to the pin and Mitch Turner walked away with the longest drive. Together, these events fueled lessons, instruments, and mentorship for students who need them most. Thank you to every guest, golfer, sponsor, and volunteer who made it happen.



20th Annual  
Joy of Music School  
Holiday Sparkles & Spirits

## SPONSORSHIPS

TITLE	\$20,000
PRESENTING	\$10,000
BALLROOM	\$5,000
BAND	\$2,500
STUDENT MUSIC	\$1,500
BAR	\$1,000
AUCTION	\$750

The Joy of Music School provides high-quality music instruction, instruments, and mentorship at NO COST to children who are underserved in our community.

# Save the Date

## Holiday Sparkles & Spirits

Music can change a child's life. Join us Thursday, December 11 at Cherokee Country Club for auctions, heavy hors d'oeuvres, wine and cocktails, classic swing by Swing Time, and joyful performances by our students—every bid and every toast powers free music education at JOMS.

Tickets & Sponsorships: [joyofmusicschool.org](http://joyofmusicschool.org)

# Strings Spotlight: From Summer Study to Big Stages

*Lisa Muci Eckhoff, Strings Lead*

## JOMS strings students turned practice into progress—and progress into placements.

This year, our strings students stretched themselves in lessons, camps, and auditions—and the results are resonating across East Tennessee.

Summer set the tone. At the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra's "Out of This World" camp, cello student Corban and violinists Indy, Katherine, Nneka, and Samuel explored cosmic-themed repertoire and ensemble skills. In Oak Ridge, Caleb dug into technique and teamwork at the Adolf King Summer Strings Camp, complete with a STEM session on the science of sound presented by ORAU. And at ETSU's String Chamber Music Festival, London worked intensively with Dr. I-Pei Lin—a JOMS Master Volunteer Teacher—balancing orchestral playing with chamber music.

That preparation paid off in the fall. Six JOMS violinists earned seats in the Knoxville Symphony Youth Orchestras: Brielle (Philharmonia); Katherine and Samuel (Preludium); Caleb, Jaslyn, and Madeline (Junior Orchestra). For some, it was a first audition; for others, the next step in a growing musical journey. Each acceptance reflected

Brielle  
(Photo credit: KYSO)



steady practice, family support, and the guidance of JOMS volunteer teachers.

A standout milestone came from London, whose targeted audition coaching with Strings Program Lead Lisa Muci-Eckhoff culminated in a JOMS-run blind mock audition—complete with colleagues serving as judges—to simulate the real thing. The outcome: First Violin with the UT Symphony Orchestra. It's a powerful example of how focused mentorship and access open doors for talented young artists.

Behind the scenes, Director of Music Education Julie Carter orchestrated logistics, School Administrator & Communications Coordinator Jules Nolan kept schedules humming, and our volunteer strings faculty provided the consistent, high-quality instruction that makes growth possible.

Thank you to our donors for underwriting lessons and summer study; your support turns opportunity into achievement. To help sponsor a strings student or donate an instrument, [contact michael@joyofmusicschool.org](mailto:michael@joyofmusicschool.org)

# Spring 2025 Recitals: Joy, Growth, and Community on Display

*Julie Carter, Director of Music Education*

## From sanctuary to screen to studio, JOMS students shared music with heart.

This spring, the Joy of Music School celebrated student achievement across three uplifting recitals, each reflecting the courage, preparation, and community spirit that define our mission.

On May 10, the Marilyn & James Dick Memorial Spring Recital transformed the sanctuary at The Point (formerly First Christian Church) into a stage for discovery. Sixty-seven students performed polished solos and ensemble pieces, supported by 12 volunteer teachers and staff. Families and friends filled the pews with warm encouragement, then gathered for a buffet dinner in the fellowship hall—turning the afternoon into a true community celebration.

A few days earlier, on May 6, our Spring Zoom Recital offered a meaningful platform for three students continuing private lessons remotely. Their performances—shared from living rooms and practice spaces—reminded us that musical growth thrives wherever mentorship and consistency are present.

Rounding out the season, the Music Makers Spring Concert on April 28 brought our youngest learners to the JOMS stage. With songs and simple movement, students performed for proud families, showing the foundational confidence that comes from steady practice and joyful exploration.

Across all three events, the through-line was connection: between students and teachers, families and staff, artistry and growth. These recitals weren't just performances; they were milestones—signaling how far our students have come and lighting the path ahead.

*Thank you to our volunteer teachers, staff, families, and supporters who make these moments possible. If you'd like to help ensure more students can share their music next season, visit [joyofmusicschool.org](http://joyofmusicschool.org) to give or learn how to volunteer.*



Three Littles performing for the Spring Recital



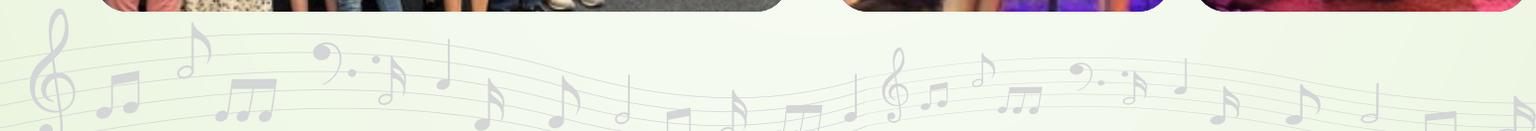
Music Makers Camp Concert



Madeline at School of Rock Camp



Robert at School of Rock Camp



# Outreach Spotlight: Music Where Kids Are

*Anthony Hussey, Director of Outreach*

**From classrooms to block parties, JOMS is meeting young people right in their own neighborhoods.**

Last school year, the Joy of Music School's Outreach team—Will Carter, Anthony Hussey, Joe Jordan, Brittany Mackey, and Tony Wooley—served over 1,000 students through weekly and monthly classes, summer sessions, and community events. This year, we're scaling up again, on pace to collaborate with 30+ schools and community partners so more children can access music education close to home.

New partnerships are already amplifying impact. At The Restoration House of East Tennessee, our teaching artists support a whole-family model that uplifts single-mother families. At Muse Knoxville, a children's science museum, music-making dovetails with hands-on STEM to spark curiosity and confidence. We're grateful to Eva Kyle (Muse), Kelly Strong (TRH), and Nikki Baker (TRH) for helping bring these collaborations to life.

Access isn't just about classes—it's about tools. This fall we began placing instruments and equipment directly at partner sites so students can practice and perform where they gather: PA systems for events, full drum kits and snare drums, classroom sets of ukuleles, and keyboards. When resources live on-site, momentum builds—and music flourishes.

You can spot the Outreach team around town this season: from Lights on Afterschool at the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA (Oct 23), to Spooky Streets/Spooktacular with South Knox and Dogwood Elementary (Oct 24), to the Good Neighbors Block Party at Life International Fellowship (Oct 25). We'll keep the rhythm going at Christenberry Elementary's Carnival (Nov 7), Beaumont's Fall Festival (Nov 9), and into winter with Vine Middle's Arts & Culture Night (Dec 9) and Norwood Elementary's International Night (Feb 26).



A student from the Urban Family Outreach afterschool program plays the trombone while learning about the brass family of instruments



A student plays a small xylophone at the Knox County Public Library, Cedar Bluff Branch.



A student plays an electronic drum kit at the Emerald Avenue United Methodist Church while learning about the percussion family of instruments.

**Want Outreach at your site—or need help outfitting a music corner?**

**Email:** [education@joyofmusicschool.org](mailto:education@joyofmusicschool.org) or [anthony@joyofmusicschool.org](mailto:anthony@joyofmusicschool.org).

*Together, we'll bring the joy of music to where kids already are.*



## Volunteer Spotlight: Milestones That Make Music Possible

*Ed Sublett, Director of Operations*

**Steadfast teachers,  
life-changing  
impact.**



This season we celebrate all of our volunteers and those educators marking 5, 10, 15, and 20 years of service at JOMS: Mike Allen (06/01/2004), Pat Luna (10/19/2011), Joyce Simms (10/15/2012), Kristen Thames (02/27/2015), Rachel (Carvell) Trofatter (03/09/2015), Vicki Bentley (01/30/2018), Michael Ferkany (09/11/2018), Hannah Hagewood (09/24/2018), and Kristofer Rucinski (10/01/2018). Your constancy keeps lessons free and futures bright—thank you for your dedication. Volunteers... you are our lifeblood and we are forever grateful for your belief in the JOMS mission.

**Want to teach or mentor?**

**Email:** [ed@joyofmusicschool.org](mailto:ed@joyofmusicschool.org)  
to get started.

## Board Spotlight: Gratitude and New Leadership

**Honoring service, welcoming what's next.**

A heartfelt thank-you to Board President Jerry Greene for his steady, idea-rich leadership that has strengthened JOMS in tangible ways. Jerry will conclude his presidency in January, and we'll welcome Mick Reed as our new board president. Thank you, Jerry, for your dedication and remarkable commitment to JOMS.

We also extend deep appreciation to Finance Chair Rob Masengill, who has served multiple terms, and to Rachel Ford (CEO, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra), who likewise concludes multiple terms with JOMS in January. Your service and belief in our mission have made a lasting impact—you will be missed.



Jerry Greene



Rachel Ford



Rob Masengill

## How to Help

**Sponsor or attend Holiday Sparkles & Spirits (Dec 11):**

[joyofmusicschool.org](http://joyofmusicschool.org)

**Underwrite a student's summer studies or donate**

**instruments:** [michael@joyofmusicschool.org](mailto:michael@joyofmusicschool.org)

**Volunteer to teach:**

[ed@joyofmusicschool.org](mailto:ed@joyofmusicschool.org)

# Thanks from everyone at Joy of Music & our Sponsors!

## Staff

### Julie Carter

Director of Music Education

### Lisa Muci Eckhoff

Strings Lead

### Anthony Hussey

Director of Outreach

### Jules Nolan

School Administrator/  
Communications Coordinator

### Michael Ray

Executive Director

### Ed Sublett

Director of Operations

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Mike Combs

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Rachel Ford

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