

SCHOOL OF ROCK

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Jackson's Music Adds New Rhythm to Your Child's Summer Plans

By Lauren Eberle

It's Friday night and I'm under the bright lights, standing on stage surrounded by my band, looking out into a crowd filled with friends and family. Our drummer starts the beat and I strum my first chord. We're ready to jam!

Whatever your child's rock star dreams are made of, Jackson's JAMZ—an alternative summer camp—helps them come true.

Now in its third year, the two-week camp, created by Jackson's Music, invites students to form a band, write their own songs, perform on stage at a final concert, and even go home with their own CD.

"Recognizing the immeasurable impact of music on the social and intellectual well-being of children, we have made it a focus over the years to give back to youth through instrument donation programs and the VH1 Save the Music Foundation," says Beth Rippey, co-owner of Jackson's Music. "The creation of Jackson's JAMZ takes the fun a step further."

Led by Eric Perrotti and Jeremy Merritt, accomplished musicians and approachable teachers, campers learn the confidence and camaraderie that comes with making music.

"My favorite part of Jackson's JAMZ was discovering an instrument I truly love," says sixth-grader Collin Reese, a guitar player who was encouraged to learn the bass to round out his band. Cracked Velvet was birthed from last year's camp and recently played a gig at Paisley Magnet School's Fine Arts Night.

The band's lead guitarist, sixth-grader Leon "Bug" Masso-Diaz, credits his teachers for inspiring groups to be creative. "The most epic part of band camp was writing our own original music. We've stayed together... [and] we're working on our third original song now," he says.

"We learned how to work well with our band and other musicians," adds Cracked Velvet's drummer, sixth-grader Aidan Batalia. "Whether you've played a day or a decade, camp is a great experience."

As they watch the final concert at the close of camp, parents lend rave reviews as well. "It was the best part of the summer," says Mary Lee Bradford of a previous Jackson's JAMZ, "and it's at the top of the list for things to do next summer."

Jackson's JAMZ runs Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Three sessions will be offered this summer: June 20–July 1, July 18–29, and August 8–19. For more details, or to register, call Beth Rippey at 336-464-0072.



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