

YEAH! FY2026



IMPACT REPORT





Dear Friends of YEAH!,

At YEAH!, we believe access to music is not just a tool for improving grades. It's a doorway to joy, to figuring out who you are or decide who you are becoming, and to feeling okay in your own skin. Youth Empowerment through Arts and Humanities exists to be a place where young people of every kind, can develop their voice and be genuinely, safely themselves.

Here in Middle Tennessee, the numbers are stark. Students in Title 1 schools are far less likely than their peers to have any standalone music instruction at all. YEAH! works every day to close that gap. In FY26, our teaching artists continued to reflect the young people we serve (48% BIPOC, 58% women, 24% LGBTQ+, mirrored by the 48% BIPOC and 52% female youth in our programs), so our students see themselves in the adults who mentor them.

We see firsthand what research from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Urban Institute has confirmed: **when young people feel seen and valued in a creative space, real growth follows.** We've watched shy kids find the confidence to work through conflict instead of avoiding it. We've watched teenagers start to imagine futures they couldn't picture before, a shift researchers measure as a 36% increase in future orientation. That sense of belonging carries into the classroom too. Kids who stay engaged in creative programs read better, do better in math, show up to school more often, and are far less likely to drop out.

YEAH! has spent more than two decades building this work, reaching over 3,000 youth as one of the longest running rock camps in the country. This fiscal year, we served 117 young people, and 69% of them came back for more, which tells us something here is working. Next year, we're aiming to reach 150 youth.

None of this happens without people like you. When you invest in YEAH!, you're helping a young person in Middle Tennessee find their voice, build community, and grow into who they're meant to be, on their own terms.

Thank you for being part of this with us.

With gratitude,

Mariela Moscoso
Executive Director

YEAH! OVERVIEW



Music and creativity change lives. At YEAH! students learn music theory, write their own songs, and form bands. They gain the confidence and professional skills to perform, record, and pursue music pathways.

Our mission

To further empower young people from all backgrounds through music education.

Our vision

A world where every young person has access to music education and an inclusive community that fosters belonging and empowers them to thrive.

Our values

Empowerment: We empower youth through music education, equipping them with tools to express themselves, grow as leaders, and contribute positively to society.

Inclusivity: We celebrate diversity, ensuring every young person's voice, talent, and perspective is valued and embraced in our community.

Collaboration: We cultivate a culture of collaboration over competition, fostering teamwork, mentorship, and creative exchange among youth, educators, artists, and partners.

Access: We remove barriers to participation, providing equitable access to high-quality music education, regardless of background or circumstance.

Justice & Legacy: We honor the historic impact of music as a force for justice and change, inspiring youth to use their voices to build a more equitable future.

By living these values, we create lasting impact on the lives of young people, fostering unity, resilience, and joy through music, and helping build a world where every young person can grow and shape their evolving potential.

Our purpose

To empower young people through music pathways to exploration, appreciation, self-expression, community, justice, and cultural engagement.

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE FIND THEIR VOICES

Music changes lives. At YEAH!, young people find belonging and trust. From that foundation, they take risks, explore, develop their voices, and build essential life skills in a community that celebrates them as they are. Your support transforms rehearsal rooms into a lifetime of possibilities.

117

Unique youth served in FY26

Compared to 90 in FY25 to a goal of 150 in FY27

Centering neurodivergent, LGBTQIA+, and BIPOC youth

32

Original songs written by young people

Compared to 16 in FY25

49% of youth surveyed said they improved their creativity skills during a YEAH! program

16

Stages YEAH! youth performed on in FY26

Compared to 5 in FY25

The Local Legends Tour was launched in FY26, with performances at Ryman Auditorium and more

67

Songs performed onstage in FY26

Compared to 23 in FY25

82% of youth surveyed said they improved their confidence during a YEAH! program



Music opens doors. At YEAH!, young people experiment, speak up, and are truly heard. Our collaborative programs build the confidence, advocacy, and teamwork that last long after the final chord. We turn rehearsal rooms into platforms, songs into opportunities, and experiences into leadership pathways. - Mariela Moscoso, Executive Director of YEAH!

48 % of students did not know how to play an instrument before participating in a YEAH! program

97 % of all program participants received need-based scholarships or free programs, compared to 54% in FY25

69 % of students have participated previously in a YEAH! program, compared to 28% in FY25

45 paid teaching artists and performers
(33 adults and 12 youth)

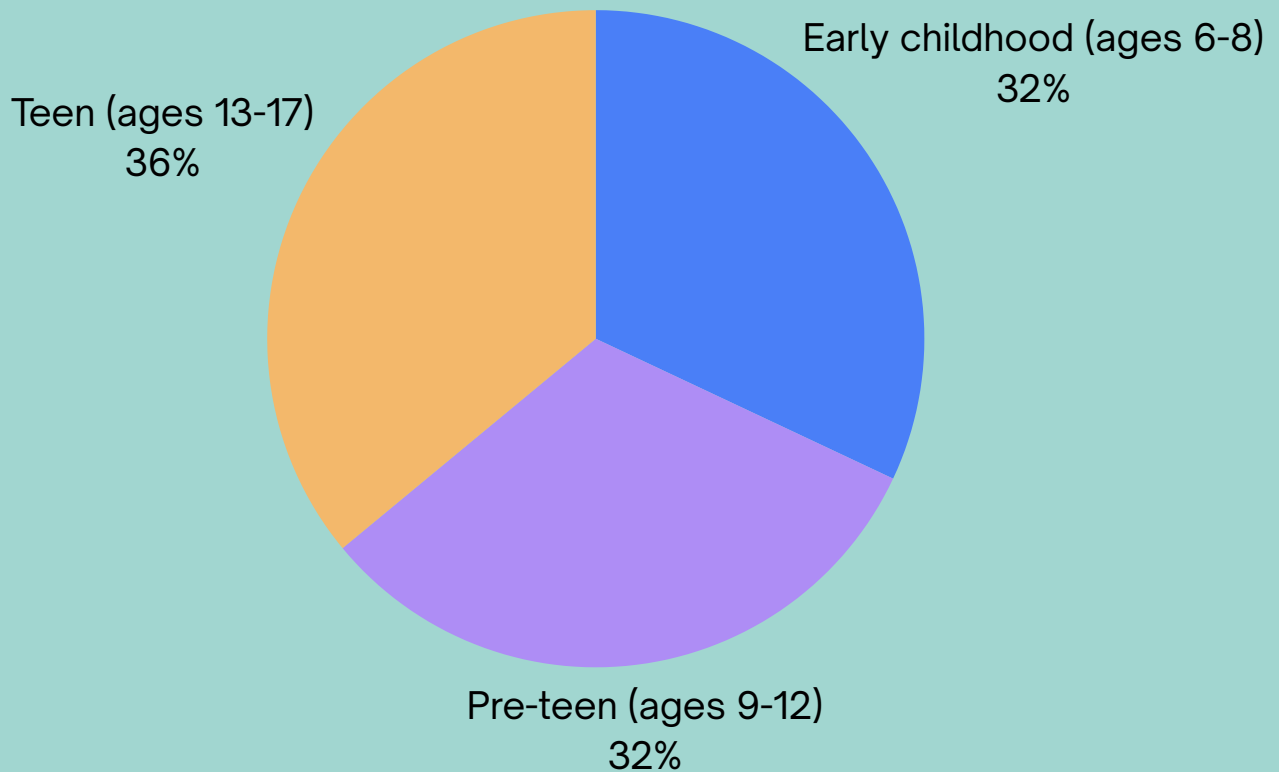
87 % students reported feeling more confident making music after the program, up from 41% at the start



Program quality: YEAH!'s teacher surveys show consistent gains in student confidence, teamwork, and leadership. 95% of participants rated four or higher on a five-point scale when asked whether they felt supported by their instructors and peers.

Career pathways: YEAH! Starstruck Sessions 2025 (streaming on Amazon Music, Apple iTunes, Pandora, Spotify, Tidal and YouTube Music) and YEAH! Rocks Music Camp give students studio credits and portfolio-ready recordings (yeahrocks.bandcamp.com). Paired with paid internships and the Local Legends Tour post program performances, these experiences build production, booking, and professional skills.

YEAH!'S DEMOGRAPHICS



50 % of students identified as BIPOC

52 % of students identified as female

49 % of YEAH!'s teaching artists identified as BIPOC

58 % of YEAH!'s teaching artists identified as female

24 % of YEAH!'s teaching artists identified as LGBTQIA+

COMMUNITY & REACH



- 6** Youth Advisory Council members
- 5** YEAH! Rocks Music Camp “Roadies” (Jr. counselors)
- 2** Interns
- 5** Counties served
- 13** Council districts served
- 43** Partners
- 67** Volunteers



Rocky, YEAH’S mascot, is a rocking amplifier with a Flying V guitar and a heart full of amplitude.

They’re here to shred doubts, crank up confidence, and deliver riffs of inspiration and encouragement to our young musicians.

PROGRAMS & PATHWAYS

All YEAH! programs combine historical context, tiered skill instruction, and social-emotional learning, prioritizing collaboration over competition. Our pathways draw on artists and cultural practices to build belonging, advocacy, wellness, and creative confidence; we hire over 30 teaching artists each year and partner with community organizations to mentor and co-deliver programming across camps, schools, and community sites.



YEAH! Rocks Music Camp

Weeklong immersive summer day camp where bands write, rehearse, record, and perform. Serves ages 6-17 and teaches songwriting, instrument skills, band collaboration, stagecraft, stage tech, and civic involvement. Each band completes an original song and performs at a public showcase at a historic venue, like Eastside Bowl or The Blue Room.

Rock Block

A 10-week weekend band program for experienced 6th-12th graders. Each 2.5 hour session pairs sustained rehearsal with mentorship and ensemble coaching so students build technical, original songwriting, and stagecraft skills while growing confidence, teamwork, and musical leadership along the way. Each band performs their work at a historic Nashville venue.

Rock Block MNPS

A 10-week program that meets one hour each week, offered as in or after-school residencies at **Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)**, community centers, and libraries. Serving 4th-12th graders, especially students in Title I schools and vulnerable neighborhoods, Rock Block provides ensemble rehearsal, peer mentorship, and classroom-to-stage pathways, with instruction in vocals/choir, ukulele, acoustic and electric guitar, and percussion. Each cohort culminates in a public performance that builds confidence, teamwork, and live-music skills.

Rock Block NPL

In FY26, YEAH! expanded access to music education through a partnership with the **Nashville Public Library and its Library of Things**. Together we delivered free 10-week songwriting and ukulele or guitar courses for middle and high school students at four branch locations across the city: **Bordeaux, Thompson Lane, Edgehill, and Southeast**. These classes combined hands-on instruction, instrument access, and creative projects so students could write, perform, and build confidence in a community setting.

PROGRAMS & PATHWAYS



Workshops

Short series in music production, podcasting, songwriting, stagecraft, and music tech. Open to local youth; workshops build technical skills, media literacy, and creative practice.

Alumni Album & Production

In partnership with Starstruck Studios, this program guides alumni through recording, mixing, mastering, and release strategy while teaching production skills. Serves alumni and advanced participants and provides hands-on studio experience and portfolio tracks; outcome is a professionally produced release cycle each year.

Internships and Leadership

Structured leadership opportunities, including Youth Advisory Council, camp "Roadies", and seasonal roles, provide alumni, high school, and university students with hands-on experience in communications, programs, outreach, and administration. We also welcome community partners and university interns (such as Metro Arts Community Arts Leaders and Develop for Good placements) to cultivate a dedicated cohort of year-round youth leaders.

The Local Legends Tour

Performance opportunities that connect advanced students and alumni with Nashville community stages and festivals (**Nashville Fair, The Ryman Auditorium, Songwriters Round at Music Makers Stage**). Participants develop live-performance skills, audience engagement, familiarity with venue operations and community resources. The outcome is increased public experience and community visibility.



YEAH! YOUTH
ADVISORY
COUNCIL

YEAH! PARTNERS



(Full partner list and collaborator map available on request.)

FY26 FINANCIALS



FY26 Revenue: \$263,057.09

FY26 Expenditures: \$215,641.82

(Full financials and a budget breakdown available for prospective funders and board review.)

SCHOLARSHIPS

Claire & Vic's Chrysalis Cohort Scholarship

This scholarship supports trans and nonbinary youth, providing tuition and materials to ensure an affirming, creative learning environment. Created by Claire and Victor to celebrate YEAH!'s inclusive community, recipients are selected through the standard scholarship application with attention to identity-affirming fit. Awards are made annually during the camp scholarship cycle. (funded one camper in FY26)



The Jeff (Ow!) Andrews Memorial Scholarship

Named for Jeff Andrews, this scholarship supports a young musician ready to explore, create, and develop their voice at YEAH! Rocks Music Camp. It honors Jeff's passion for discovery by funding a camper who shows curiosity, energy, and commitment to musical growth. The award is selected through YEAH!'s scholarship review process and may also be applied to Rock Block when applicable. (funded two campers in FY26)



The Crisi Manley Inclusivity Scholarship

Awarded in memory of Christina "Crisi" Elizabeth Manley, this scholarship serves a student from LaVergne Middle or LaVergne High School or another Rutherford County resident. It honors Crisi's commitment to inclusivity and mentorship by supporting a young person who demonstrates interest in music and community building. The award is made annually through YEAH!'s scholarship process and may also support Rock Block participation when funds allow. (funded four campers + gas expenses in FY26)

Next Up Venue Fund Scholarship

Seeded by contributions from Nashville music venues, this fund provides scholarships for youth ages 6-17 to attend YEAH! Rocks Music Camp and Rock Block year-round programming. Venue partners underwrite tuition, rehearsal access, and mentorship opportunities; YEAH! manages awards and coordinates partner recognition. Scholarships are distributed each season and as funds are received, and venues may sponsor specific sessions or cohorts. **(The Basement East is its founding donor, funding one camper in FY26)**



General Scholarship Fund

Open to campers ages 6-17, this fund provides need-based awards each season to cover full or partial tuition, lesson materials, and instrument or gear loans. Supported by gifts designated on our Donate page so students stay enrolled and engaged.

IMPACT

YEAH! equips Nashville youth with a culture of belonging, creative, technical, and career-adjacent music skills through camps, community residencies, public performances, studio releases, and youth-led mentorship removing barriers so every young person can make, share, and sustain music.



117 YOUNG PEOPLE SERVED IN FY26 🎵 69% RETURNING 🎵 3,065 SERVED SINCE 2003

INCLUSIVITY AT OUR CORE

TEACHING ARTISTS: 49% BIPOC · 58% FEMALE · 24% LGBTQ+

YEAH! welcomes youth of all backgrounds, skill levels, and identities into a space built for belonging, led by a teaching artist team that reflects the communities it teaches. Shared norms protect every student's name, pronouns, and voice, and roughly 80% of campers attend on need-based financial assistance, so inclusion isn't just cultural, it's financial.

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH MUSIC

69% RETURNING PARTICIPANTS

YEAH!'s programs are built on collaboration over competition. Bands make decisions together, give each other feedback, and rehearse in mixed-level pairs, building the kind of mutual respect that outlasts any single summer, and keeps alumni connected through the Local Legends Tour long after they age out of camp.

WORKFORCE AND LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

72% OF EMPLOYERS CALL CREATIVITY A TOP HIRING PRIORITY

Structured, mentorship-driven arts programming, the model YEAH! is built on, has been shown to improve conflict resolution and career readiness by up to 29% and future orientation by 36% among participating youth (Urban Institute). Every YEAH! lesson plan is built around a named social-emotional focus alongside the musical skill focus, so teamwork, leadership, and confidence are taught deliberately, not incidentally.

PERFORMANCE BEYOND THE PROGRAM

SHOWCASES AT WORKING NASHVILLE VENUES, NOT A GYM STAGE

Every YEAH! Rocks and Rock Block ends with a showcase at a real Nashville venue, Eastside Bowl in 2026, Third Man Records' Blue Room in prior years, giving campers a real-world performance experience most youth programs can't offer.

ROOTED IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

FREE PROGRAMMING INSIDE TITLE I SCHOOLS & PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Through Rock Block MNPS and Rock Block NPL, YEAH! brought free music programming directly into Title I Metro Nashville Public Schools and to six Nashville Public Library branches, backed by the support of the Tennessee Arts Commission and the Nashville Public Library. Partnerships with Nashville Afterzone Alliance, Metro Parks, and other community organizations keep YEAH! woven into the communities it serves, not separate from them.

WHAT MAKES YEAH! DIFFERENT



Diverse Musical Opportunities

Most Nashville programs ask families to pick a single path; YEAH! doesn't. Across year-round pathways, after-school lessons, ensembles, workshops, and camps, students are encouraged to explore instruments, songwriting, and production while receiving one-on-one coaching from working professionals. Our curriculum centers social and emotional learning, teaching collaboration, communication, creative risk-taking, and resilience alongside musical skills. With sliding-scale tuition, scholarships, culturally responsive teaching, and flexible formats, YEAH! turns musical exploration into lasting opportunity and leadership for diverse learners.

Program	Format	Gaps	How YEAH! Fills Them
School-based band/orchestra /choir	Ensemble technique, one instrument family	Little original songwriting; limited industry exposure; no social-justice framing	Integrated songwriting units; industry panels; SEL + social-justice prompts embedded in rehearsals
For profit music programs	Ensemble performance of existing songs	Focus on covers; limited student-centered songwriting; few career pathways	Student-led curriculum; mentorship from touring teaching artists; entrepreneurship sessions
Single-skill specialty programs	Deep in one discipline (e.g., guitar or songwriting)	Narrow age band; often require prior experience; lack full-band ensemble practice	Year-round ensemble pathways that welcome beginners; mixed-age mentorship; instrument loan program

Comparison researched from public program listings, July 2026.

LOOKING AHEAD



Strategic Priorities

YEAH! is at a growth inflection point. Demand is rising; now we must close concrete gaps so year-round access is reliable and program quality scales.

- **Stabilize delivery and retain staff:** Hire a part-time Program Manager and fund cost-of-living raises so teaching artists stay in place and programs run consistently. Outcome: fewer cancellations, clearer student progression, stronger program quality.
- **Remove access barriers:** Sustain and grow the Scholarship Fund and lending library; expand transportation and site capacity so cost and logistics never block participation. Outcome: equitable access across Metro Nashville and neighboring counties.
- **Anchor programs and career pathways:** Secure consistent rehearsal/classroom space and formalize alumni supports (production, release strategy, performance opportunities). Outcome: reliable program homes, more performance slots, and clear post-program pathways for alumni.
- **FY27 illustrative budget (mix of one-time and recurring):** \$235,000 investment to stabilize staffing, expand year-round pathways, secure space, and remove access barriers.

Success metrics by FY27

- 150 youth enrolled in year-round pathways
- ~80% of campers supported by financial assistance maintained or increased
- Weekly rehearsal capacity expanded at 2 Rock Block sites
- At least 1 alumni album and expanded Local Legends showcases annually

HOW PARTNERS CAN ENGAGE

Strategic, Non-transactional



We need partners to provide space, mentorship, and programmatic collaboration. These elements are essential to scale our impact.

- **Host Rock Block sites:** provide rehearsal and classroom space so more youth can participate. *access*
- **Offer in-kind rehearsal space:** reduce overhead and expand program hours. *capacity*
- **Provide industry mentorship:** connect students to real-world guidance and career pathways. *pathways*
- **Collaborate on curriculum and evaluation:** help us strengthen outcomes and scale what works. *quality*
- **Underwrite transportation and logistics:** remove access barriers for the students who need us most. *equity*

Partner with YEAH!

Contact Mariela Moscoso,
Executive Director
at mariela@yeahrocks.org
or visit yeahrocks.org

SUPPORT

Your donation fuels creative futures

**Stabilize staffing: \$140,000/year**

Hire a part-time Program Manager and fund modest raises to retain teaching artists and ensure program continuity.

Scholarship Funds: \$10,000

Guarantee camp and weekend lessons for vulnerable youth, keeping ~80% of campers enrolled.

Expand summer capacity: \$32,000

Add a second week of YEAH! Rocks (+40 camper seats and an extra showcase).

Rock Block (community + MNPS): \$10,000/year

Fund one semester each of community and Rock Block MNPS: space, mentor living wages, supplies, and operations.

Transportation: \$15,000/year

Contracted van service for YEAH! Rocks and Rock Block MNPS to remove primary access barrier.

Legends Tour & Album Program: \$5,000/year

Underwrite rehearsal, studio time, mixing, distribution, and alumni release support (strategy, performance prep, and career workshops).

Workshop Series: \$10,000

Four-workshop series: gear tech, recording/production, songwriting, and design.

Internship stipends: \$3,000/year

Provide stipends to professionalize internships and increase access.

Capacity & evaluation: \$12,500 (one-time)

Strategic planning, curriculum review, and evaluation.

Infrastructure & reserve: \$10,000

CRM, secure tools, signage, storage, and a small operating reserve.

The Barrier	YEAH!'s Response
72% of high-poverty schools lack standalone music classes	Provide free/low-cost programs and instrument loans to restore access .
Access concentrated away from low-income students	Offer sliding scale aid; ~80% of campers receive financial support to ensure equity .
Low MNPS proficiency (32% ELA/Math)	SEL-centered, pathway model builds engagement linked to improved school and social outcomes.

Help us close these gaps, support YEAH! today. yeahrocks.org/donate

STORIES



FY26 marked the launch of the **Local Legends Tour**, giving YEAH! alumni real stages after camp ends. Highlights include **Teens Take the Frist** at the Frist Art Museum, opening for Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit at **The Ryman Auditorium**, and a triple-show day at **The Nashville Fair**. The tour's biggest studio milestone: alumni spent time at **Starstruck Studios**, the legendary Music Row studio, cutting tracks for YEAH! Starstruck Sessions, Vol. 1, its first-ever alumni album. Beyond the stage and studio time, Local Legends creates real mentorship, as visiting artists and industry professionals join alumni for workshops, Q&As, and backstage conversations.



Cooper Ramsey, accompanied by a representative from **Creative Artists Agency**, and the **Wright Middle School Mariachi Band** visited YEAH! Rocks to perform, lead a mental-wellness panel, and host a post-performance Q&A session. Their peer-led sessions gave campers a cross-cultural mentorship experience that sparked new interest and inspired some to see leadership as something within reach.



This year, six YEAH! alumni spent an afternoon at The Record Shop recording background vocals for "**Sing for the Common Man**," under the musical direction of Erskine "EJ" Ford, Jr. Written by Freida Parton and Mark Andersen, the song first appeared as the B-side to Dolly Parton's 1980 "9 to 5" single. This revival, led by Dolly's niece Jada Star, brings the song forward with renewed purpose, honoring working people while uplifting the next generation of Nashville musicians. And Dolly herself sings on the track. Our students are on a song with **Dolly Parton**!

STORIES

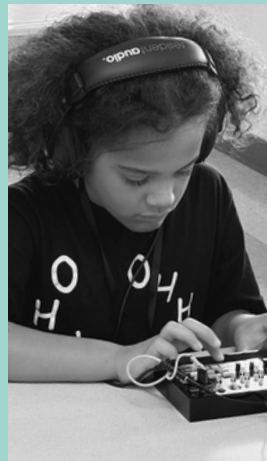


A **Nashville Prep acoustic guitar student** began in our Rock Block MNPS lunchtime program and then joined YEAH! Rocks Music Camp, where he explored electric guitar before discovering bass. At camp, he attended a recording and production workshop, experienced new genres through guest performers, and developed communication skills through songwriting with his band. Over the summer he attended **Josh Groban's Bridgestone Arena concert** thanks to the **Find Your Light Foundation** and borrowed an instrument from our lending library thanks to **Gibson Gives**. Through a connection with iHeartMedia and the Find Your Light Foundation, **The Bobby Bones Show** filmed at Nashville Prep and featured YEAH!, interviewing several Nashville Prep Ambassadors from our guitar class, a public moment that highlights how music and leadership go hand in hand. YEAH! helped transform idle hours into musical growth, confidence, and new aspirations.

THE BOBBY BONES SHOW



When Nashville design studio **Music Valley Archive** made fan art celebrating **Hayley Williams's** new album, *Ego Death* at a Bachelorette Party, they didn't expect the Grammy-winning artist to notice, let alone love it enough to release it as official merchandise. Hayley asked that her share of the proceeds go directly to YEAH!. It's a fitting full-circle moment: Music Valley Archive was co-founded by Tom Gilbert, whose own child came up through YEAH! Rocks Music Camp, a Nashville parent paying it forward through his own creative work, connecting YEAH! to a global artist investing in the next generation of the city's musicians.



Not every story from this year was a headline, some were just the moments that add up to a culture. In **stage tech class**, one student lit up discovering a feature on their guitar she never knew existed. A **junior camper** who'd received a free backpack noticed another camper eyeing the color he preferred, and just handed it over. And **one of our roadies** spent the whole session living out YEAH!'s own slogan, reminding everyone around him: "I'm not sorry, I rock!" By the end of camp, he wasn't just repeating the words, he'd realized he believed them: that he matters, and that he makes a difference to the people around him.

TESTIMONIALS



When I first performed with my fellow YEAH! Campers, I knew that I was in the right place with the love and care from the campers and staff. - Ana

My favorite YEAH! showcase memory was the Ryman because it was a great opportunity to prove ourselves. - Henry

My first concert ever at YEAH! gave me the confidence that I have now. I remember all of the other bands cheering for me when I was scared. They gave me courage to get on that stage. - Luna

What YEAH! Rocks Music Campers said they learned this year:

I learned that you can make music lots of different ways and that you need to try lots of different things before you are able to find something that you really like. - Nora

I learned that I actually like to play the keyboard. - Charlie

I learned that music stems from more than just pain or emotional turmoil; music also comes from randomization and improvisation. - Marina

What YEAH! Rocks Music Campers said they enjoyed the most:

Unplugged time when we are able to talk to our band and get to know them better or any of the bands that played and when we danced. - Anonymous

The first day of camp, my bandmates and I were improvising and ended up laying the foundation for the rest of our song. - Vero

From our donors:

... thank you for continuing to stoke the fire in these kids' hearts and minds. We need them to continue to express themselves and make this world a better place! - John

We believe in what y'all are doing and want to support you. - Traci

ALUMNI ORIGINAL LYRICS



*"If these bad things keep happening
I don't wanna do
Anything
AI is overpowering
Stopping all of us from
Creating"*

**The Living Sound's song
"Bad Things"
YEAH! Rocks**



*"I know I believe in trust. I know I believe in
Love. But for there to be love there needs to
be trust.*

*I would travel miles and miles for the ones I
trust. No greater love than the one I trust.*

*Love never fails, it always prevail.
Trust never fails, it always does well."*

**Not A Bad Idea's song
"Common Confusion"
YEAH! Rocks**

*"Let the light in
Don't stay alone
Come with me
And I'll take you home
Somewhere we're safe to be ourselves
At times we could all use a little help"*

**Valor Voices spring choir class' song
"Kind-Olation & ISO-ness"
(an intertwining of kindness and isolation)**



*"Everyday I pick myself up off the
ground... I think 'how hard could it be' to
start again?"*

**ForgetMeNots' song
"Start Again"
YEAH! Rocks**