



GRAND TETON MUSIC FESTIVAL

CONTACT:

Jennifer Wolfrom Holladay
Executive Director, Coombs Outdoors
jenny@coombsoutdoors.org

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Coombs Outdoors and the Grand Teton Music Festival Partner to Provide Music Lessons to Jackson's Youth

Local nonprofits collaborate to increase access to community resources

(JACKSON, WY, August 3, 2023) - Coombs Outdoors and the Grand Teton Music Festival (GTMF) are excited to announce a collaborative partnership that creates access to music lessons and opportunities for Coombs Outdoors participants. The two local nonprofits have worked together to launch a summer-long program, the Coombs Ukulele Club, that offers Ukulele lessons to Coombs participants once a week for the duration of the summer.

“A main goal of Coombs Outdoors is to build community and create a sense of belonging for our participants by connecting them with as many resources and experiences as possible,” said Jenny Wolfrom Holladay, Executive Director of Coombs Outdoors. “Music and the arts are such a huge part of our culture here in Jackson Hole, yet people living and working in our community face significant barriers to access to things like lessons, concerts, and supplies or instruments. We are grateful for our partnership with the Grand Teton Music Festival which is providing Coombs kids with the opportunity to learn an instrument and connect with a new and robust part of our community.”

Throughout the summer on Wednesday evenings after a full day of summer camp, 15 Coombs Activate participants in third to fifth grade join Meaghan Heinrich, Education Curator for GTMF, at the Coombs Outdoors program space for an hour of Ukulele lessons. During these lessons, Meaghan teaches the kids how to handle and care for their instruments, proper strumming technique, and beginner chords. Coombs Ukulele Club members now know three songs that they practice together during their lessons.

“Two summers ago, I had my first opportunity to work with the students of Coombs Outdoors through the Grand Teton Music Festival. I was immediately struck by their eagerness and engagement for all things musical, and when I learned more about the mission of Coombs, I was determined to develop a meaningful and lasting

partnership, said Meaghan. “The joy that comes from outdoor exploration is so similar to that of music-making: discovery, beauty, and a sense of risk-taking and adventure. Bringing high-quality music education to young people who might not otherwise have access is a new frontier for the music festival, and one that I am extremely passionate about.”

Like many of Coombs' programs, interest in the Ukulele Club from participants surpassed the original capacity limit determined by the partners. Thanks to two generous anonymous partners, Coombs and GTMF were able to provide ukuleles for every student who signed up for the class. Since the program started in early July, several Coombs Ukulele Club members have acquired their own personal Ukuleles that they bring to lessons and can practice at home with.

“Coombs Ukulele Club is a part of a larger initiative of the Grand Teton Music Festival to prioritize and create access to music for everyone in our community,” said Emma Kail, Executive Director of GTMF. “We are excited to be actively working towards equity in the arts through our partnership with Coombs Outdoors by providing free access to music education and experiences. We have been inspired by the passion and excitement that the Coombs Ukulele Club participants have shown for music and learning. This is a partnership we are committed to continue and expand through additional programs in the future.”

The Coombs Ukulele Club has been practicing for their first concert which will be held outside of Walk Festival Hall in Teton Village on Friday, August 11th at 6:30 PM prior to the Festival Orchestra performance. Community members are encouraged to attend the Coombs Ukulele Club performance. Tickets are not required.

The Coombs Ukulele Club and their families have been provided with complementary tickets to experience the orchestra performance in Walk Festival Hall.

About Coombs Outdoors

Jackson Hole is known for its natural beauty and world-class outdoor recreation. However, there is a large population of children and families who do not have access to the same outdoor opportunities as their peers. To create a healthy community where all our children thrive, Coombs Outdoors provides year-round outdoor programming for youth from kindergarten through high school graduation.

Coombs Outdoors begins with introductory programs encouraging kids to try new things and feel comfortable outdoors, then adds a cohort-based mentoring component to help middle schoolers build outdoor skills alongside deep relationships with peers and trusted adults, and finally, gives high school youth

opportunities to become leaders, explore career and college opportunities, and become life-long outdoor enthusiasts. For more information, visit coombsoutdoors.org.

About the Grand Teton Music Festival

Over eight weeks each summer, [Grand Teton Music Festival](#) unites over 220 celebrated orchestral musicians led by Music Director Sir Donald Runnicles. These musicians represent over 75 orchestras and nearly 55 institutions of higher learning in North America and Europe. In addition to orchestral concerts on Friday and Saturday nights, the summer season also features visiting guest artists and chamber music on weekdays.

Grand Teton Music Festival is one of America's leading summer classical music festivals. Recognized by *The New York Times* as one of the top 10 music festivals in the U.S. and chosen by *BBC Music Magazine* as their 2020 "Festival Choice," it is the most prominent arts organization in the state of Wyoming and a national treasure. As the single largest performing arts presenter in Jackson Hole, Wyoming with nearly 100 annual events, GTMF presents year-long programming that includes community concerts and education programs for Teton County students.

GTMF is a 4-star charity as rated by Charity Navigator and has a Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar. For more information, visit gtmf.org.