



West Virginia Folklife Program Announces 2020-2021 Master Artists & Apprentices

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Charleston—The West Virginia Folklife Program, a project of the West Virginia Humanities Council, announces its 2020-2021 class of master artist and apprentice pairs in the West Virginia Folklife Apprenticeship Program. In the second year of the Program, seven apprentice pairs from across the Mountain State will study traditions including old-time banjo of central West Virginia, seedsaving, and midwifery. The Apprenticeship Program offers up to a \$3,000 stipend to West Virginia master traditional artists or tradition bearers working with qualified apprentices on a year-long in-depth apprenticeship in their cultural expression or traditional art form. These apprenticeships aim to facilitate the transmission of techniques and artistry of the forms, as well as their histories and traditions.

The 2020-2021 West Virginia Folklife master artists and apprentices:

Ed Daniels of Mill Creek will lead an apprenticeship in **agroforestry/forest farming** with **Clara Haizlett of Wellsburg**. A ginseng digger and cultivator since he was young, Daniels and his wife Carole own and operate Shady Grove Farm in Randolph County where they grow ginseng, goldenseal, ramps, cohosh, and industrial hemp, among other plants. Haizlett, who was an intern in The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage’s “American Ginseng: Local Knowledge, Global Roots” project, plans to start a forest farm on her family’s land in Brooke County.

Kathy Evans of Bruceton Mills will lead an apprenticeship titled **“Sheep to Shawl: The Art of Raising Sheep and Creating Fiber Arts,”** with apprentice **Margaret Bruning of Elkins**. Evans is a fifth-generation farmer and owner of Evans Knob Farm in Preston County where she cultivates Certified Naturally Grown vegetables and raises sheep and poultry. She teaches and exhibits her fiber arts both in West Virginia and across the country and has been featured in *Modern Farmer* and *Morgantown Magazine*. Bruning grew up on a goat farm in upstate New York and has been a lifelong fiber artist. She and her husband David raise sheep at their homestead in Randolph County.

Joe Herrman of Paw Paw in Hampshire County will lead an apprenticeship in **old-time fiddle** with **Dakota Karper of Capon Bridge**. Herrmann is a founding member of the Critton Hollow String Band and has taught old-time fiddle to many private students and at the Augusta Heritage Center. Dakota Karper, a Hampshire County native, has been playing old-time fiddle for 20 years and runs The Cat and the Fiddle Music School. Herrmann and Karper apprenticed together previously in 2004 (when Karper was 11) through Augusta Heritage Center’s former Apprenticeship Program.

Leenie Hobbie of Rio will lead an apprenticeship in **traditional Appalachian herbalism** with **Jon Falcone of Lost River** in Hardy County. Hobbie has been a family herbalist for over 30 years, originally learning the tradition from her grandmother, who used both garden-grown and wild harvested plants at her home in the mountains of Southwestern Virginia. She has studied with acclaimed herbalists across the country and has taught the tradition within her community in Hampshire County. Falcone is a novice herbalist who hopes to apply his skills to his future homestead in West Virginia.

Kim Johnson of Dunbar in Kanawha County will lead an apprenticeship in **old-time banjo of Central West Virginia** with apprentice **Cody Jordan of Charleston**. Johnson began playing with fiddler Wilson Douglas in 1979 and has played with and learned from many acclaimed West Virginia old-time musicians including Frank George and Lester McCumbers. She has taught both locally and nationally, at Augusta Heritage Center, Allegheny Echoes, The Festival of American Fiddle Tunes, and the Berkeley Old-time Music Convention. Jordan plays guitar in the Modock Rounders with Johnson, touring across the state and region, and is looking forward to expanding his knowledge of central West Virginia old-time banjo traditions.

Angelita Nixon of Scott Depot in Putnam County will lead an apprenticeship in **home birth midwifery** with **Christine Weirick of Fayetteville**. Nixon has been a Certified Nurse-Midwife since 2003 and has been a part of over 400 deliveries and taught multiple students the trade. Weirick is a doula and an apprentice student midwife working towards her certification. Through their apprenticeship, Nixon and Weirick are excited to explore the creative expression and storytelling aspects of community-based midwifery.

Mehmet Oztan of Reedsville will lead an apprenticeship in **seed saving and related storytelling** with **Lafayette Dexter of Fayetteville**. Oztan is the founder of the Morgantown Seed Preservation Library and owner of the Preston County-based heirloom seed company Two Seeds in a Pod, which focuses on preserving Turkish, West Virginia, and Appalachian heirloom seeds. He has been invited to speak about his work at local and national seed swaps. Lafayette Dexter facilitates a community garden project at New Roots Community Farm in Fayette County and plans to eventually include seed saving in his market garden educational programming.

The apprenticeship program grants are administered by the West Virginia Folklife Program at the West Virginia Humanities Council in Charleston and are supported in part by an Art Works grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. West Virginia Folklife is dedicated to the documentation, preservation, presentation, and support of West Virginia's vibrant cultural heritage and living traditions. For more information on the West Virginia Folklife Program, visit wvfolklife.org and <http://wvhumanities.org/programs/west-virginia-folklife-program/> or contact Emily Hilliard at hilliard@wvhumanities.org or (304)346-8500.

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The West Virginia Humanities Council, an independent nonpartisan nonprofit institution, is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. With the support of the NEH, the State of West Virginia, and contributions from the private sector, the Council's mission is to support a vigorous program in the humanities statewide in West Virginia.