

Madison County Seventh Grader Earns Full Illinois Music Scholarship

by Dan Brannan, Content Director

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ALTON/EDWARDSVILLE — Claire Delap, a Liberty Middle School in Edwardsville seventh-grader, attended the Illinois Summer Youth Music program this summer on the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus after receiving a full scholarship last spring through her participation with the Alton Youth Symphony.

Delap, the daughter of Amy and Kyle Delap, attended the weeklong band camp as part of the ISYM program.

Claire plays multiple instruments and began learning piano under the direction of Kathryn Gallagher as early as kindergarten. In fourth grade, she picked up the violin and more recently began playing the cello.

During her week at ISYM, Delap completed an extensive daily music program that included rehearsals with a full band of her peers and sectional classes with other violin players.

"My favorite part of the experience was being challenged with difficult music and making friends with fellow musicians," she said afterward.

The Alton Youth Symphony program offers students opportunities to receive scholarships for additional lessons and band camps, including the scholarship awarded to Delap. The program is free and is recruiting young musicians from incoming grades five through eight for its upcoming 2026-27 season.

AYS provides students an opportunity to gain confidence and improve their music skills by performing in an orchestra setting with their peers. Strings, winds, brass and percussion players are needed.

The AYS program offers students opportunities to receive scholarships for additional lessons and band camps like the one Claire was awarded. The program is free and currently recruiting young musicians from incoming grades fifth through eighth for its upcoming 2026-2027 season.

Participating in AYS is a unique opportunity for students to gain confidence and improve their music skills by performing in an orchestra setting consisting of their peers.

Strings, winds, brass and percussion players are all needed. To begin the application process go to altonyouthsymphony.org and follow the directions to join AYS. Deadlines to apply are August 22nd for strings and September 7th for woodwinds, brass and percussion.

If you have additional questions about the process or need more clarification, contact Carla Newton (618) 535-9922.



