



Kid-created music, art rule the day

By Melissa Fili
MethuenLife Writer

Petite Sam Jamison looked cute in her short silver jacket, gold stud earrings and a streak of maroon in her pulled-back hair. But when the 10-year-old took the microphone, she also took charge.

While rehearsing "Punishment," a song she wrote, Sam closed her eyes and let her big voice fill the air in preparation for last month's 3rd annual Music and Arts Festival held at the Methuen YMCA. Kids from around the Merrimack Valley showed off their tal-

ents, which they've been honing at area Ys, in front of an audience and a panel of judges while competing for prizes. Thirteen acts competed.

"I love the music and the creativity," Sam said of her daily visits to the Methuen YMCA's Music Clubhouse, where kids age 10 to 18 take lessons, record and collaborate. Singing empowers her to "feel sassy and mean," she said.

"I love to practice and get better," said 12-year-old Baran Ustaoglu, who has been part of the Methuen Music Clubhouse for three years. In that time, he's

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Tenney student Baran Ustaoglu says the Methuen Y's Music Clubhouse has helped improve his bass playing.



Sam Jamison, 10, belts out "Punishment," a song she wrote as a member of the Methuen YMCA's Music Clubhouse.

MethuenLife photos by Melissa Fili

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gone from playing drums to really embracing his role as a guitarist. At rehearsal, he teamed up with Patrick Karl on a rockin' rendition of Green Day's "Holiday."

Patrick, 17, a drummer and vocalist, says the Music Clubhouse provides an important outlet for him.

"It's been a tough year. I can just come here and vent and practice," he said.

Shyanne Shipley, 12 - who admits she's pretty confident on stage -- was excited to sing in front of a crowd. She said the Clubhouse "is really fun. I get to work on vocals and get better as a singer."

"The YMCA Music Clubhouse helps kids use the power of music," said Methuen

YMCA Music Clubhouse Director Joe Prieto, who organized the event. "Music gives them a way to express themselves and find their voices, which is so important for this age group. It's another way we foster youth development at the Y."

The Methuen YMCA Music Clubhouse has been offering free singing and music lessons to teens in the community since 2014. Kids can learn to play a variety of instruments including guitar, piano, drums and more. The clubhouse also offers voice lessons and songwriting, as well as open mic nights, workshops and a live podcast every month. To find out more, visit mvymca.org.



Kids from the Y's morning program had artwork on display.



Shyanne Shipley sings "Perfect Two," a song written by her step-cousin.



Drummer Patrick Karl says making music at the Y can be the best part of your day.

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