

# Marching Mountains

## 2009 Annual Report



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## Letter From the Director

Dear Stakeholders,

While the problems in many areas within Appalachia are severe, our goal with Marching Mountains is not to focus on the problems but on how to leverage what we do have in order to make band programs in these areas more connected and better positioned to take advantage of the resources that are available.

The focus of Marching Mountains is to create a network among the band directors in the region to enable them to help solve mutual problems. Exchanges can take place between seasoned band directors and the new generation of band directors starting out in the area. Contacts, resources, tools and concepts that others may not be aware of can be shared freely. Together, a positive feedback loop can emerge that produces results.

In addition, Marching Mountains hopes to help provide instruments and resources directly to band programs in distressed areas in Appalachia. Our primary goal will be to aid students who may want to participate in band but will possibly be excluded due to financial and/or resource constraints. Reducing financial and resource barriers for students will be critical.

This annual report summarizes our founding year. The foundation has been laid and we are looking forward to another major year of growth with all of our stakeholders through 2010 and into 2011.

Sincerely,

Ian Felton  
Executive Director

“The name Appalachian comes from the Apalachee Indians. A stream of pioneers first moved to the mountains where woodsmen found valleys and large gaps which made it difficult to travel. Later roads and trains ran through the valleys and gaps and tied the nation together.”

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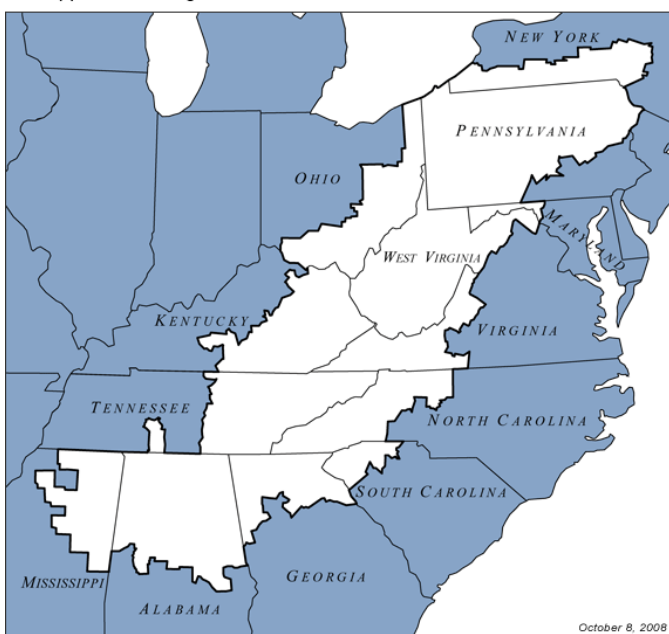


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## Who We Are

### About Us

*The Appalachian Region*



Source: Appalachian Regional Commission

Marching Mountains started with one man's vision to combine his passion for music and interest in giving back to the community in a special region in America. As a child growing up in Appalachia, school band meant an escape from isolation and poverty. Now Marching Mountains is focused on helping children in Appalachia have access to resources and opportunities to express themselves, explore possibilities, and

grow through music. We aim to accomplish this through creating online networks for band directors to share ideas and resources. In addition, Marching Mountains collects and distributes instrument donations through our network.

### Our Mission

Marching Mountains organizes at the grassroots level while creating and leveraging Internet technology to empower our networks of involved people. Marching Mountains seeks grants and corporate sponsorship in addition to fundraising to provide resources, grants and scholarships to aid music programs at public middle schools and high schools in ARC-designated distressed counties in Appalachia. Marching Mountains promotes and organizes used-instrument drives to put instruments in the hands of children in Appalachia who have a desire to participate in music.

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## Our Achievements

In the past year Marching Mountains has focused on first developing our internal capabilities so we can begin to serve the needs of band programs across Appalachia. In our first year, we have obtained 501(c) status as a non-profit organization and formed a Board of Directors. The Board has worked hard to define the vision and strategy of the Marching Mountains project and made significant progress on getting to know our communities, identifying the needs of local band programs and creating online tools. We are proud to share with you our accomplishments as related to our mission with a focus on networking, communities, and specific band programs.

### Online Network

- Created the website [www.marchingmountains.org](http://www.marchingmountains.org) where people can learn about our project, sign up for updates, donate instruments, make financial contributions, and volunteer their skills and time
- Created profiles on Facebook and Twitter so interested parties can follow us and receive updates of our progress
- Created a short documentary on the background and purpose of Marching Mountains

### Community Involvement

- Received our first instrument donation from the Twin Cities in Minnesota
- Reached out to other non-profits to share/learn best practices

### Band Programs

- Creating a Needs Assessments for band programs with the help of teachers and band directors. The information collected will help us identify key areas of focus for the project and be used in grant applications to obtain funding.

### 2009 Web site stats:

4679 visits from:

71 countries

Every state in the United States including the District of Columbia.

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## Our Board

### **Ian D Felton, Executive Director**

Ian Felton enrolled in band in Preston County, West Virginia in 5th grade. Playing Saxophone, Trombone, Percussion and bass guitar throughout school, the experiences gained made an impact on him personally. Currently a software consultant for companies such as ThomsonReuters, Trane and USBank in the Twin Cities, Ian started the Marching Mountains project to help the area he calls home.

### **Sarah Graham, Board of Directors**

Sarah Graham, an AmeriCorps alum, is Executive Director of Scott's Run Settlement House, a social service agency located in Osage, WV dedicated to being a place to turn to for the local community. She has spent 5 years building expertise in management, grant-writing, launching special events, and collaborations with other agencies. She holds a Bachelor's in History from West Virginia University.

### **Jason Johannesen, PhD, Board of Directors**

Dr. Johannesen is a research psychologist at VA Connecticut Healthcare System and Assistant Clinical Professor in Psychiatry at Yale University. He will lend expertise in program implementation and service evaluation research to the Marching Mountains project. As a former mental health clinician for Preston County, WV and guitarist of a Morgantown-based band, he is personally committed to the community support and vitality of music programs in Appalachia.

### **Viola Reyna, Board of Directors**

For the past 17 years, Viola "Polly" Reyna has served on the board of Light The Way Foundation, Inc. ("LTW"), founded by Polly in 1993, to assist caregivers of physically and sexually abused girls rescued from the streets of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. The Sisters of El Hogar Luis Amigo provide a safe and nurturing environment for the rescued girls. LTW raises funds for the well being of the girls, in the areas of education, social adaptation, physical & mental health care and job placement. Polly lived in Quetzaltenango and volunteered at El Hogar Luis Amigo, f/k/a La Divina Providencia, from 1993 to 2002. Polly taught English and cooking classes to the girls and helped the Sisters who run the home set up a profitable small business baking muffins and selling them door-to-door in Quetzaltenango.

### **Shana Song**

Shana Song works in the field of human resources and has been an active volunteer in child literacy programs. Her focus in Marching Mountains is on organizational development and building internal capabilities by identifying and fulfilling human capital needs.

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## Our Next Steps Forward

Marching Mountains is currently working hard on building the online network. We are in the process of creating forums and tools to allow band directors, parents, and students to share ideas, resources and hold events with the intention of creating stronger, more successful, and more community-centered school band programs.

Marching Mountains is in the process of collecting and analyzing assessment surveys from band directors in the Appalachia region. These assessments will help us identify areas of focus for Marching Mountains. The feedback we receive will be used to guide Marching Mountains toward the goal of improving band programs at public schools in Appalachia.

### How YOU can become a part of Marching Mountains!

Band Directors: join our network by visiting <http://marchingmountains.org> - register your band's program to get started

Community: Donate an instrument - we just received our first trumpet donation. If you live in the areas [listed on the site](#), we can send someone to pick up your donation

Donate funds - we are in the process of creating a page where you can choose how your donation is used. Currently, you can [donate here](#).

Spread the word! (through FB, word of mouth) - [send someone an angel from the web site](#), sign up for future newsletters/updates, follow us on facebook / twitter

Marching Mountains is also in search of talented individuals with expertise in Graphic Design, Web application development, Law and [many other areas to volunteer to be part of our project](#).

“Since its recognition as a distinctive region in the late 19th century, Appalachia has been a source of enduring myths and distortions regarding the isolation, temperament, and behavior of its inhabitants.”

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