

Feel-Good Friday: The Piano Is Food for the Soul; Piano Teachers Supply the Ingredients

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By [Jennifer Oliver O'Connell](#) | 8:49 PM on August 25, 2023

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Credit: EastIdahoNews.com

Pianos in general, and piano teachers in particular, are the subject of this week's Feel-Good Friday.

I have always loved the piano. My mother bought one for my eldest sister to learn on when she planned to study music in college. My sister got married instead, but she happened to marry a music minister, so it ultimately got some good use. I used to bang on it, pretending I knew what I was doing. My mother couldn't afford lessons for me, so when I became a working adult, I bought my own little piano and took lessons for about five years, give or take. I still have my Spinet—much to my husband's chagrin.

We packed and hauled it all the way to Alabama, and it is awaiting a much-needed tuning. When life slows down a bit, I'll start taking lessons again. In the meantime, I still practice a bit of what I have learned, and use it to understand the chord structures for the songs we sing in church. My voice is another instrument that I get to play around with as part of my church's worship team.

I had three piano teachers over time, and each one added a layer that was critical to my understanding of theory and how to play. So, someone who doesn't just know how to play an instrument, but can translate their knowledge to different students so that they gain proficiency and skill, are truly gifted people.

As usual, when I scoured the Internet for stories this week, it was East Idaho for the win!

We recently received an email about a woman who has been teaching piano lessons for a long time in Jefferson County. It said:

Mary Young has been teaching piano to the kids around the Ririe area for generations. She is such a kind, caring, patient teacher and cares a lot about her students. She opens her home to the kids to learn piano and have a peaceful environment to learn.

Young told East Idaho News' Nate Eaton that she had been teaching in Ririe County for 22 years, but that she started teaching her nieces when *she was 15!* That is indicative of someone who not only loves to share her passion, but is truly gifted at doing so.

Young also talked about why she loves playing and teaching piano.

I love how piano makes me feel. I use piano when I'm sad, happy, it just expresses my feeling. I especially love to play in church because I'm able to share the spirit I feel through the notes that I play. As far as the kids go, I love having kids in my home and love to teach them the love of music.

Notice the wording. Young is not teaching the mechanics of piano; anyone can do that. YouTube videos abound that can do that, and trust me, they are very helpful. But only a quality instructor can translate their love of the craft and make it yours as well. That's in music or writing. I have been blessed with instructors on both sides who have done that for me, which is why I'm pretty much obsessed with both. Right now, I'm fully competent in one, but won't give up working on the other because, well, I love it.

Young couldn't even remember how many children she had instructed over the years, she surmised it was probably 200. The viewer's email to East Idaho News continued:

Most years, she teaches multiple kids from the same family. Mary is an excellent teacher and helps those that need extra help and encouragement do their best and those with natural talent to soar. I think she can sit down and play anything on the piano. She has a great talent.

Here's Mary Young being honored by Eaton on behalf of the East Idaho community. What a lovely gift from those she has impacted.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/QCeIAqDLK4o>

Kara Baldus is a favorite internet find, too. Kara is an accomplished concert pianist and teacher in St. Louis, who not only plays gorgeous piano and shares it with others on Instagram, but in her reels, she often has her sweet doggo sitting adorably on her lap, listening and vibing to the music as she plays.

The music she chooses, her accomplished delivery, and of course the puppy, are all mesmerizing.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

[A post shared by Kara Mehrmann \(@kara_baldus\)](#)

Who doesn't love a dog that appreciates jazz? Maybe in 15 years--with a ton of lessons (and by that point, three different dogs)--I'll get there!

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Whether it's music or another discipline, who are some teachers who not only taught you the mechanics, but transmitted their love and passion for it? Let me know in the comments.

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