

2025 Buttermilk Jamboree Report

The Buttermilk Jamboree is highly beneficial for Circle Pines Center as it strengthens membership engagement, generates vital income, and fosters meaningful community collaborations. By hosting this beloved festival, the center attracts new members and deepens the connection of existing ones through shared experiences rooted in music, culture, and cooperative values. The event serves as a significant source of revenue, helping sustain the center's year-round educational programs and cooperative initiatives. Additionally, the Jamboree creates partnerships with local artists, vendors, and organizations, expanding Circle Pines' network and reinforcing its role as a hub for progressive community-building.

The Buttermilk Jamboree actively promotes diversity by creating an inclusive space that celebrates a wide range of voices, cultures, and perspectives. Through its diverse lineup of musicians, artists, and speakers, the festival highlights talent from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, ensuring representation that resonates with a broad audience. The event also provides a platform for social justice organizations, activists, and educators who advocate for equity, inclusion, and cooperative values. By fostering an environment where people from all walks of life can come together, share experiences, and learn from one another, the Jamboree strengthens Circle Pines Center's mission of building a more just and interconnected community.

August 24, 2025 Update

Attendance

This year we were able to track better than ever before the number of attendees at the Buttermilk Jamboree utilizing a new system at the gate for cash sales documentation. I'm proud to say that this was our highest attendance to date with 1,742 festival goers!! Our housing was completely booked with every cabin and room occupied throughout the grounds. A large number of our attendees are children under the age of 16, and it is the family programming and welcoming nature that keeps these families coming back. Many of them have now made Buttermilk their yearly Father's Day tradition.

Financials

Our net income from this year's festival as it stands was \$44,256.00

This is largely due to not only our grant funding, but also savings found in operating expenses due to the utilization of skilled volunteers and pricing negotiations. I will

continue to emphasize the importance of the enormous amount of volunteer work done by local members and volunteers that make it possible for such a large undertaking.

Music

We had 52 musical performing acts this year from all over the midwest region, celebrating Michigan artists, and some international performers as well. The music submission form is currently live and will be offered to members to submit their favorite bands for consideration for next year. This form can be completed by any CPC member in good standing or a performer representative. The deadline for submissions is December 1st at which time all of the coordinators have an opportunity to explore those submissions and vote for their picks. Each one is divided into genre groups and then using the total number of rankings along with average placement, the submissions are put into an order that can be used for talent purchasing. I have been approached by several other festival coordinators to share this system for their own organizations and I truly believe it to be an example of a truly cooperative process.

Workshops

Workshops were better than ever this year!! We hosted 66 different workshops as a part of the Folk School programming held each year paying homage to CPC history. There were workshops in areas of sustainability, health, dance, music, kids crafts, and more.

Vendors

Our food vendors were all very well received and we were happy to welcome some new vendors who will be back with us again next year after loving the experience!! Our vending area was expanded to include the Jambor-FREE Store and several non-profit organization tables.

Volunteers

It takes about 200 volunteers to make the Buttermilk Jamboree happen and prepare the grounds of Circle Pines for Summer Camp and other programming. All of our coordinators who are a part of our planning team and managing different areas of the festival are members of Circle Pines Center, and many of the volunteers both during the event, and in the weeks leading up to the festival are as well. Through our Member Tent outreach and communications throughout the weekend from stages, tours, announcements, etc. we have gained new membership from local folks each year. Volunteering is an essential part of not only how an event of this size is possible and sustainable, but also in building involvement with members both new and old and promoting the values of Circle Pines Center.

Sponsorships

Some individual and small business sponsorships also help with this, but more fundraising is needed if anyone is willing to help with this. I would like to extend the invitation for anyone who would like to become more involved with Buttermilk to fill this need. I have all of the information and a workbook set up in order to track better for future years and communication as well.

Grounds

We had a large team of set-up volunteers working on the grounds for several weeks leading up to Buttermilk. Things like tree removal after storm damage, general maintenance and landscaping, repairs of water lines and bathroom fixtures, deck and platform repairs on cabins and many many other tasks. This work, and these people who are donating their skilled work and expertise, as well as hard physical labor are what help to keep Circle Pines Center a beautiful, functional, and presentable facility for the whole year. Tom VanHammen and Sean Ricksgers lead these jobs each year, coordinating volunteers and skilled work, and address many additional long-term issues and maintenance needs along the way.

Call to Action!!

Board members, or indeed any members, who wish to be more involved with Buttermilk are encouraged to sign up as volunteers for any of the many areas needed both during the festival and leading up to the event. This is the best way to not only increase involvement, but also develop a better understanding of the inner workings and contribute in a meaningful way towards new ideas and continuation of the festival. Currently, we are in need of fundraising leadership throughout the year as well for anyone wishing to take on a planning role.