



## **Aiken Singers Announces their 2024 Aiken County School Grants**

The Aiken Singers is pleased to announce that it has given grants to two music teachers in the Aiken County School system. These grants of up to \$500 are designed to help promote music education in Aiken County schools. Winners of the 2024 grants are Amanda Durden of Gloverville Elementary School and Colby Gerard of Redcliffe Elementary School.

Amanda Durden is in her tenth year of teaching, and currently serves as the General Music Teacher for both the Gloverville and the Warrentonville Elementary Schools. Mrs. Durden graduated in 2014 with a Bachelor of Arts in music education from the University of South Carolina- Aiken. In 2023, she obtained her +18-hour class advancement. During her time at the University of South Carolina- Aiken Amanda participated in Jazz Band, Jazz Combo, University Wind Ensemble, Pacer Pulse Athletic Band, Aiken Concert Band, and Saxophone Quartet. She also taught bassoon and saxophone and gave private lessons to members of the CSRA New Horizons Band.

Amanda plans to spend her award on classroom music manipulatives such as music staff puzzlers and rhythm builders. These are items that will enhance her student's music education by providing different ways to reinforce music theory.



Music teacher Amanda Durden -- Gloverville Elementary School



Receiving the Aiken Singers music grant on behalf of Amanda Durden is School Principal Nathan Lobaugh. Pictured from left to right are Kristle Golden Assistant principal Gloverville Elementary; Nathan Lobaugh Principal Gloverville Elementary; Dr. Kimberly Fontanez District Fine Arts Coordinator; Jim Pierce Chairman of the Aiken Singers school grants committee

Colby Gerald is the music teacher at Redcliffe Elementary. Mr. Gerald is passionate about teaching music. He earned his degree from Southern Wesleyan University where he focused on teaching music from grades K-12. While in college, Colby was a 3-year member of the Clemson Tiger Band, during which he traveled across

seven different states! In his classroom, he likes to balance learning about music with hands-on practice playing instruments. He believes music is a great way for students to express themselves and learn new things. Outside of school, Mr. Gerald helps with the North Augusta High School Jacket Regiment. He also enjoys spending time with his family and friends and loves to play the French Horn during his free time. Colby is excited to teach music to the students at Redcliffe Elementary and help them grow to love music as much as he does!

Colby has used his grant to support a project to purchase ukuleles for his upper-grade students. He hopes that by bringing ukuleles to Redcliffe Elementary he can continue enforcing hands-on instrument playing for students; an area where they have previously had limited exposure. By incorporating the ukuleles into the curriculum, he aims to enhance cognitive and motor skills while fostering a deep love for music. By this initiative he hopes to inspire his elementary students to continue their musical journey by joining ensembles or music classes when they graduate to middle school.



Mr. Colby Gerald and some of his students display their newly purchased ukuleles



Mr. Colby Gerald receiving the Aiken Singers music grant. Pictured from left to right are: Kimmerie Allen principal of Redcliffe Elementary School; Dr. Kimberly Fontanez District Fine Arts Coordinator; award winner Mr. Colby Gerald; Jim Pierce Chairman of the Aiken Singers school grants committee; Nicholas Kaune Assistant Principal Redcliffe Elementary School