

# John C. Campbell Folk School Work Study Program

An Extended Term of Working, Living, and Learning



Since 1925

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# The Folk School Story

John C. Campbell had been an educator in southern schools for ten years when he received a research grant from the Russell Sage Foundation to study the mountain regions of the South. With his wife, Olive Dame Campbell, in a wagon outfitted as both home and workplace, the Campbells began their travels in the southern Appalachian mountains. While John Campbell studied population statistics, education, health and working conditions in the mountains, Olive's focus was on the rich native culture of craft, music, and dance she found in Appalachia.

The Campbells began to explore the model of the Scandinavian folk school as an alternative to missionary and independent settlement schools, but John Campbell died before they were able to put this idea into practice. Olive Campbell and her friend and fellow mountain worker, Marguerite Butler, set out to Scandinavia to study the folkehøjskole (folk high schools) which had revitalized rural Denmark, and they determined such a system might greatly benefit the mountains of Southern Appalachia.

The John C. Campbell Folk School was founded in 1925 by Olive Dame Campbell and Marguerite Butler, with the collaboration and enthusiasm of the people of Brasstown. With the belief that positive social change was rooted in cultural life, the school encouraged students to embrace their traditional crafts and music as sources of both income and pride. Young people came to live at the Folk School not only to learn practical farming, cooking, history, and math, but also to sing, dance, weave, and carve wood. Students worked hard for their tuition, and gained a sense of accomplishment and pride in work well done. The results of such an education were both inner growth as thoughtful individuals and social development as tolerant caring members of a community.

The Folk School has adapted and changed with the times, but it still provides a place for those who find beauty and simplicity in hard work done well. The Folk School's motto, "I sing behind the plow," which comes from an old Danish poem, reflects the belief that creative expression is everywhere. "Behind the plow", there is a life of the mind, the hands, and the heart, where we carve wooden animals, move to the sounds of fiddles, forge steel into graceful curves, find vessels in the mud, and flowers in the crossings of thread.

# Life at the Folk School

## Our Campus

Several special events occur throughout the year on our 300 acre campus, including concerts, dances, auctions, community activities, Fall Festival, and year-round classes in crafts, music and dance. Our beautiful campus is dotted with 16 fully equipped teaching studios and lodging facilities for students, all joined by winding mulch and gravel paths. You'll also want to visit our History Center, Craft Shop, gardens, and walking trails by Little Brasstown Creek.

## Classes



The Folk School offers over 800 week long and weekend classes annually in various subjects, with instructors coming from around the country, including many regional artists. Knowledgeable instructors, small class sizes, hands-on instruction, and a non-competitive atmosphere are what make Folk School classes unique.

The Folk School's Resident Artists, who schedule our instructors and maintain our studios, live in nearby communities and are frequent instructors and valuable resources. Classes are offered in various media including traditional crafts, fine art, music, dance, cooking, gardening, nature studies, photography, and writing. Browse through our catalog or visit [folkschool.org](http://folkschool.org) to see a complete schedule of classes.

## Music and Dance

Folk music and folk dance have been an important part of the school's program since its founding in 1925. In addition to music and dance classes throughout the year, the Folk School hosts Tuesday night beginner contra dances followed by informal jam sessions, and Friday night concerts. Other folk music performances are scattered throughout the week (including daily MorningSong) and there are two Saturday night contra and square dances each month on one of the best hardwood floors in the country.

## Activities and Special Events

Activities for Folk School students, instructors, and Work Study students are planned by the programming staff for most afternoons and evenings. Programs may include trips to neighboring craft studios, campus tours, nature walks, and slide or video presentations. Special events include craft auctions, Fall Festival, and youth weeks.



# Work Study Job Description

The Work Study Program is designed to benefit both the school and the student. For the Folk School, the program fills the need for work in various areas and departments. For the Work Study student, the program is a chance to spend nine weeks working, living, and learning in the Folk School environment.

Work Study students have the opportunity to become integrated into daily life at the Folk School, from work assignments and class time to afternoon and evening programs for students. Interaction between Work Studies and other students and staff is an important part of the experience. It's our hope that you will benefit from the experience of living, working, and studying here, and the Folk School will benefit from the richness and variety of skills you bring.

## Work

There are two Work Exchange options:

The Garden Crew work is mostly outdoors on the gardens and grounds, but there are other duties as well which may include weekends. Garden Crew participants must be in good physical condition and be able to do sometimes strenuous labor in all kinds of weather conditions.

Special Projects Work Study students will perform focused work to benefit the school or the campus. Information about these projects is updated on the website throughout the year.

Work hours and days are generally 9–5, Monday–Friday, but will vary on occasion to include weekends and early or late hours. For example, you may work with the Registration staff until 6 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon. You may also collect trash at Fall Festival on a Saturday morning, or guide “Little/Middle Folk School” children in an evening game of kickball on a Tuesday night after supper.

All work will be supervised by Folk School staff, but the Work Study student should be self-motivated and able to work independently after assignments are made.

## Study

The Folk School provides learning experiences that are joyful and enlivening, and offers over 800 classes in traditional and contemporary craft, art, music, dance, cooking, gardening, nature studies, photography and writing each year. A proposed schedule of classes chosen from the Folk School catalog or website should be submitted with your application. You will earn four classes during your Work Study stay at the Folk School. Please list the four week-long classes you'd like to take that occur during the nine week period you've chosen for Work Study. The first week of the session is for training and orientation so classes should not be scheduled. As with all students, Work Study students are responsible for their class material fees.

## Room and Board

Work Study students are required to live on campus, and housing and meals are included as a part of the Work Study program. Meals will be served in the Dining Hall during the weeks that classes are in session, but you will be responsible for your own meals on weekends when there are no other students at the school.

Work Study students live in the Bidstrup House, built in 1982 and was named for former directors, Georg and Marguerite Bidstrup. Wireless internet is available in the Bidstrup if you choose to bring your own laptop computer.

## Who are Work Study Students?

Students come to the Work Study program from a variety of circumstances and stages in life. Some are in college and on a break from school, changing jobs, or incorporating the program into their existing livelihoods.

The Work Study program might be a period of strengthening skills in specific areas, exploring a variety of interests, or an opportunity for personal growth while living and working in a community. Each student's experience in the program is a unique combination of hard work, study, and play.

## Eligibility

You must be at least 18 years old to apply.

For the Garden Crew and certain Special Projects–Work conditions include significant walking or other means of mobility; ability to work in a standing position for long periods of time (up to 8 hours); and ability to reach, bend, stoop, push and/or pull, and frequently lift up to 30 lbs. and occasionally lift/move exceeding 30 lbs. (The Work Study program is not suitable for those with back problems or heart conditions.)

You must be able to work outdoors in hot or cold temperatures. (The Work Study program is not suitable for those with severe allergies.)

You must be self-motivated and able to work independently once instructed about a task.

All students are welcome at the Folk School regardless of race, gender, religious affiliation, national or ethnic origin. All students must be at least 18 years of age.



## How to Apply to the Work Study Program

Complete the Work Study Application on [Slideroom](https://folkschool.slideroom.com/#/permalink/program/41770). (Cut & paste this link into your browser <https://folkschool.slideroom.com/#/permalink/program/41770>)

There is a \$25 *non-refundable* application fee that is payable on Slideroom for submitting a Work Study application. Please call (828) 837-2775 with questions.