



## **The Revolujahs and The Medicine Show Revival; How One Family is Creating a Traveling Community of Entertainment**

By: Emma Wright-Cloutier, Eugene Weekly

A traveling family music troupe recently stopped in Eugene to see old friends and pick up an extra passenger in their caravan before hitting the road and embarking on their next journey.

Among the Youngblood family members are Banjo, Kamo, 10 year-old Jethro, and baby Jazzlyn. The Youngbloods are the core of what is called The Revolujahs and The Medicine Show Revival. A community of travelers and entertainers.

Medicine shows began in the early 1900s around the time of the Prohibition era. People would travel around and put on free shows to bring out the locals in order to try and sell health elixirs and other goods to them.

“We’re a modern medicine show, but the medicine that we’re spreading is community – the importance of being able to work together and help each other out. And it’s really all in pursuit of building a foundation in which we can pursue our passions as if that was our responsibility more so than attending to the mundane things that don’t really feed anything except for your wallet, maybe,” Banjo said. “So it’s

definitely kind of an effort to give people an option to move away from something that's not serving them and hasn't been serving them."

Banjo and Kamo created an idea for a community that involved their Revolujahs, modern day medicine show. The word "Revolujah" is a combination of the words "revolution" and "hallelujah" which together mean rejoicing in radical change, and that is just what they do as the Revolujahs are rooted in entertainment and activism.

"It is a community-forward circus. It is the start of what we are calling the ideal retirement plan. And it's really a way to bring the community together, in a jovial nature and in a lasting way," said Banjo.

The Revolujahs are a network of properties around the country that travelers, like them, could stop at for a period of time either as a place to rest, learn, teach, work, or entertain. Sometimes festivals take place at these properties with the purpose to entertain, teach others with educational workshops, and showcase nonprofits.

"We would like to see a network of properties around the country that is the foundation for people to be able to do what they love to do," said Banjo. "The Medicine Show Revival puts on a week-long festival here, which is educational workshops during the day and entertainment in the evening. This winds up putting them on the map for the Revolujahs as another place that can be traveled to, for the people in that community as a resource that they can start resourcing from, and the people that are coming to this event wind up being people that can be resourced from for this piece of property."

So far, Banjo and Kamo have established 30 properties in around 10 different states. They hope to go nationwide one day.

"The vision is that ideal retirement plan, right? Go where you want, when you want, don't worry about money, do what you want, and be surrounded by community everywhere you go. So, how we implement this is, first and foremost, the Medicine Show Revival," said Banjo.

The Revolujahs are made up of four different moving parts: the Consultation Clerical Crew (CCC), the Levalujahs, the Revolujahs, and The Medicine Show Revival. The CCC are the brains of the operation. They are the individuals that take care of all logistics and moving parts, such as permits and paperwork. The Levalujahs are a nomadic construction tribe. They work with the CCC and property owners as they bring the tools, labor, skills, and materials needed, and do a "barn raise" to build anything needed. The Revolujahs are the network of properties and the individuals that would be traveling amongst them. Lastly, The Medicine Show Revival is the entertainment that travels among the properties.

The Medicine Show is a variety show that covers a lot of different talents, such as comedy, different styles of music, vaudeville variety, and possibly acrobatics in the future.

"I was a gymnast, a diver and a wrestler, so I love the bodily aspect of everything and one of my goals is to be able to shoot an arrow with a bow from my feet while in a handstand," said Kamo.

Usually during these shows, Banjo plays the banjo, Kamo sings, Jethro plays ukulele and together, they do comedy skits that are also tools to help develop a resilient individual and community. Jethro claims to have been the one to teach Banjo how to do comedy.

"He [Banjo] was bland before me. The only joke he knew before me was one about a scarecrow. Why did the scarecrow win an award? Because he was outstanding in his field," said Jethro.

One of the requirements to be a part of The Revolujahs is a mission statement. The mission statements would come from travelers or properties and would tell others who they are, how they want to serve their community, how they want their community to serve them, their boundaries, their wish lists to pursue their passions, and their goals.

“My mission is to spread as much love and joy as humanly possible and to learn about cultures and to share stories,” Kamo Youngblood said.. I also want to help my family pursue their passions, and help my friends find their own medicines that will help them pursue their passions in their lives, all the while putting my needs first and taking care of myself..

“My mission is to become a beyblade champion, or at least be well-known in the beyblade world, also to find a monster. I don't really care what it is, it could be the Loch Ness monster, a chupacabra or anything. And I just want to find it and record it, I don't have to trap it or anything. My goal is to go into a zero-gravity container, that is something I have always wanted to do,” said Jethro.

The other requirement is a due of \$100 to \$200 a month to help cover costs. However, aside from these requirements, their only rule is tolerance.

One of the inspirations of The Revolujahs was Banjo's mother who worked three jobs throughout her adulthood to provide for him and his brother, but in turn left her unwell with no one to support her later in life. Banjo convinced her to pursue her passions, so she moved from Houston, Texas to Eugene where she found her passion and a community that supported her and took care of her until she passed away.

“She came from making \$80 a week walking dogs to this place where she had nobody and she was merely just following her passions, doing what she loved to do, and uniting others. She was the inspiration for a community to be built in Cottage Grove. And now on that property, they're serving up to 20 people, and those 20 people are making their own individual impacts on the community around them,” said Banjo.

Banjo wanted to make a community that would provide others with the support they needed to quit their jobs, pursue their passions, and still have their basic needs met.

“When you're old and your hands don't work anymore and you don't have something that's going to ensure you can live a comfortable life - those are the people that we should be working hand in hand with to make sure that we all have something that we can call on,” said Banjo.

After his mother pursued her passions and got the community she needed, Banjo became involved in the Occupy movement, which became the other inspiration for The Revolujahs. He started with just a three-piece band that would perform free shows for the occupiers. Then, he wound up leaving Eugene with a caravan of others from Occupy. At their peak, they were a caravan of around 14 vehicles, 60 people, and three rolling stages who would travel from Occupy to Occupy to put on free shows in driveways, parks, and wherever else they could.

Banjo now had the idea for The Revolujahs, then Jethro was born. Banjo put a hold on implementing his idea, and instead lived in a house in Eugene with Jethro, and ran the Eugene's Instrument Library, a Lending Library of Musical Instruments for a few years before meeting Kamo. With Kamo's help, Banjo finally began making his dream a reality and is still working at it today.

“As we see what we want and make our vision clear, things fall into place. We're a very lucky family because we feel so loved and we manifest that it will just work out,” said Kamo.

Now, the Youngbloods are back on the road and heading to their next destination, Texas, where Banjo will be participating in The Houston Art Car Parade again after winning first prize last year for his performance of the 1988 Thunderbolt Transmission commercial's song while sitting on a swivel chair named "Grandma's Chair" that is secured to the roof of the Youngblood's vehicle.

Don't worry, the chair has a seatbelt.