



Tony G. Rising Star Award: High School Criteria (9th–12th Grade)

Award Amount: \$2,000 to one individual

Purpose: In honor of the late Tony Gulizia, one high school student will be awarded up to \$2,000 to support their musical growth, education, and artistic ambitions. The award recognizes young musicians who demonstrate exceptional promise, dedication, and strong community character.

Applications are open from February 9 to April 31, 2026

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be enrolled in **9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th** at the time of application.
 - Reside in **Eagle County** or attend an Eagle County school
 - Have at least **one year of experience** studying or performing music on their primary instrument or voice.
 - Demonstrate a **strong interest in pursuing music** through lessons, practice, ensemble participation, performance, or composition.
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Award Criteria

The selection committee will evaluate applicants based on the following:

1. Musical Potential & Skill Development

- Demonstrates strong musical promise for their age level.

- Shows commitment to improving their craft, practice habits, lessons, ensemble work, or independent study.
- Exhibits curiosity, creativity, and a desire to grow as a musician.

2. Dedication to the Arts

- Actively participates in school music programs, private lessons, community ensembles, or other musical activities.
- Takes initiative to pursue musical opportunities and challenges.
- Shows a clear vision for how music fits into their future goals.

3. Character & Leadership

- Demonstrates responsibility, respect, and a positive attitude.
- Contributes to the musical or school community through collaboration, mentorship, or service.
- Exhibits maturity appropriate for a Rising Star young leader.

4. Artistic Ambition & Use of Funds

Applicants must articulate how they intend to use the \$2,000 award. Eligible uses include (but are not limited to):

- Private lessons or studio instruction
- Summer music camps or workshops
- Instrument purchase, upgrade, or repair
- Sheet music, software, or necessary equipment
- College-level music courses or enrichment programs

The proposed use should support meaningful musical growth.

The winner may receive a \$2,000 credit at Glenwood Music in Glenwood Springs, or submit a receipt to Vail Jazz for an approved music expense to be reimbursed.

Award funds will be paid directly to instructors or educational institutions or reimbursed to the award recipient upon submission of an itemized receipt.

Application Requirements

A completed application must include:

- **Personal Essay (1000 words)** describing the applicant's musical journey, goals, and intended use of the award funds
- **One Letter of Recommendation** from a music teacher, ensemble director, or private instructor
- **A Performance Sample** (video preferred; 2–4 minutes) demonstrating the student's current level
- **Parent/Guardian Consent**

Email application materials to Anneliese@vailjazz.org.

Selection Process

- Applications will be reviewed by the **Tony G. Rising Star Award Committee**.
 - Recipients will be selected based on the overall strength of their application, potential for growth, and alignment with the award's purpose, not solely on technical ability.
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Award Terms

- Students may receive the **Tony G. Rising Star Award only once**
- Funds must be used by **December 31, 2026**
- Recipients must complete a brief post-award reflection or impact update.

Applicants are selected for the Tony G Rising Star Award based on the above criteria. Selections will be made in a non-discriminatory manner with no consideration given to race, creed, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, or other protected categories, in accordance with all applicable State and Federal laws.