

PEOPLE

Americana music puts guests in a giving groove

BY MARY SCHENKEL
Staff Writer

An intimate crowd gathered at the Laura Riding Jackson Foundation's Writing Center on 14th Avenue last Monday evening for a special House Concert with Grammy nominee Andrew Duhon, hosted by the Indian River Community Foundation.

Jeff Pickering, IRCF president/CEO, put the event together after learning that his friends Duhon and Myles Weeks would be passing through town after opening in shows for Leanne Womack in south Florida.

He had learned about the new LRJF Teen Writers Camp for middle school students this summer and decided it would be an ideal beneficiary of a concert by the gifted New Orleans songwriter and storyteller.

Duhon received a Grammy nomination for his album "The Moorings," and Rolling Stone recently named the song "Coming Around" from his newest album, "False River," as one of the 10 best country and Americana songs of the week.

"American Roots rock and Americana music has truly made a resurgence, and that's due in large part to people like the artists you're going to hear this evening," said Pickering, who first met Duhon in Bakersfield, Calif. "Backed by my other good friend, Myles



Jeff Pickering, Louise Kennedy, Marie Stiefel and Andrew Duhon.

PHOTOS: LEIGH GREEN

Weeks on bass and vocals and all-around groove, these are two of the most special people I know in the entire world; they make incredibly amazing music."

Before guests were treated to their hauntingly beautiful music, Pickering provided a little information about the IRCF, which he said is "building a better community through donor-driven philanthro-

py." He added that the foundation helps individuals and families organize and carry out their charitable giving.

"If we do our jobs well, many of those folks will leave an estate gift and create a legacy with our foundation," said Pickering. "We use that capital that they leave to us, from a charitable perspective, to go out and find, fund and follow

organizations, programs and projects that really make our Indian River County community better."

The LRJF, which Pickering noted has an "incredibly spirited and special mission," was recently one of nine local charitable organizations in the rollout of a Jumpstart Fundraising Program, which awarded a total of roughly \$50,000 from the IRCF Better Giving Fund.

Louise Kennedy, chair of the English department at Saint Edward's School and a LRJF board member, gave a brief synopsis of the highly regarded poet Laura Riding Jackson, calling her "an incredible writer and a woman ahead of her time in many ways."

The historic cracker house she and husband Schuyler Jackson lived in is currently maintained by the LRJF on the campus of the Environmental Learning Center, but plans are in the works to relocate it to the Indian River State College campus.

The LRJF also sponsors teen and adult writing workshops at the Writing Center, Poetry Open Mic Nights at the Kilted Mermaid and an annual Poetry & Barbeque event at the LRJ home site. Money raised at Monday's concert will help fund the successful new Teen Writers Camp for middle school students started this past summer.

For more information, visit ircommunityfoundation.org, lauraridingjackson.com ■



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Ryan and Melissa Weaver with Monica and Charlie Jennings.



Jessica Schmitt with Ryan and Kristen Heaney.



Joe Biedenbarn, Charles Croom and Jeff Minton.



Roman Ortega-Cowan and Sasha Fradin with Sarah and Adam Logemann.



Heidi and Andrew Hartline with Karen and Greg Schlitt.



Donna and Steve Clark.



Stephanie Pickering and Tom Tierney.

To learn more about how you can support the Laura Riding Jackson Foundation's writing programs or the relocation of the poet's historic Florida "cracker" house to a permanent home on Indian River State College's Vero Beach campus, visit www.lauraridingjackson.com or contact a member of the Community Foundation's donor services team at donorservices@ircommunityfoundation.org or 772.492.1407.