(AP) For a musical duo that have known each other since they were 3 years old, there's something extra special about landing a Grammy nomination for Best Children's Album.

Joe Mailander and Justin Lansing are the Okee Dokee Brothers, a Minneapolis, Minn.-based bluegrass band who have been making their kid-oriented music since 2005. But their roots together go to their earliest days and their folky songs commemorate shared memories of their Colorado childhoods.

"It was a typical boyhood friendship," said Mailander, 28, who now splits his time between Minneapolis and New York City. "Doing things outside, fishing, going down to the creek, playing catch. It was just being kids at the time, but we found when we started making music together that those were the memories we returned to."

The Grammy nomination was unexpected recognition for musicians who have operated outside the Disney-Nickelodeon axis that largely dominates popular music for kids. The Okee Dokee Brothers identify themselves with a group of "kindie" musicians, who have turned for inspiration to independent (or "indie") musicians that eschew big record companies in favor of small, independent labels. Both men, bearded and decked out in flannel, look the part.

To that end, the Okee Dokee Brothers say they try to resist music that glorifies materialism or frivolity, instead favoring nature, exercise and spending time outdoors. Their nominated album, "Can You Canoe?" is a set of acoustic songs inspired by a month-long canoe trip the pair took down the Mississippi River, from Minnesota to Missouri. They dubbed it a "Mississippi River Adventure Album."

"It's not like we're preaching against video games or TV. We're not telling kids, 'don't do this, don't do that," said Lansing, 27, in an interview at his modest house in south Minneapolis, the group's default base of operations. "We want to inspire kids, to help them realize there's more to life than that."

After a boyhood marked by outdoor adventures, Mailander and Lansing began to turn to music in their teenage years. Lansing has fond memories of singing with his mother as a child, but

said his interest in music really perked up when Mailander acquired a new guitar and bequeathed an older one to his friend. They played in a series of teenage rock bands, but took a turn toward rootsier music a few years later when Lansing acquired a banjo.

The pair cited musical inspiration from adult artists such as Bob Dylan, Paul Simon and Gillian Welch. Both seek motivation from good deeds; they once did a tour of Midwestern homeless shelters, and Lansing's time in New York is spent at a part-time job with a nonprofit that puts on music and improvisational classes in under-served schools.

While their principal performance venues are schools and libraries, encouraging audience movement and participation, the Okee Dokee Brothers also want to make music parents like.

"It's not a very respected medium," Lansing said of kids' music. "But you know, years ago Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger were playing music for kids. Then there was a long movement toward music that parents didn't enjoy. That's what we're trying to go against."

Next up is another "adventure album," with plans to hike the Appalachian Trail next fall for material. Mailander said they want to make four such records in all, and are eyeing future outings in the Rocky Mountains and along the Pacific coast. Both men said they appreciate the recognition that comes with a Grammy nomination, but said it probably won't change their career path much.

"If you want to do something, if you have a dream—go for it and try to make it happen," Mailander said. "Hopefully that's the message of this album—go for your dreams."

Editor's note: Joe Mailander is the grandson of Marie Mailander of Holyoke and the son of Bob and Rita Mailander of Denver.

Holyoke Enterprise December 27, 2012