

Volume 5, Number 2

# ON THE UPBEAT

Hillsborough County Elementary Music Educators' Council

<http://music.mysdhc.org/elem-music>

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Good News  
from the HCEMEC

Hillsborough County Public Schools

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## Young Songwriters' Symposium



This year 5<sup>th</sup> grade students from around the School District of Hillsborough County were offered the chance to write an original song and record it at Morrisound Studios on November 21, 2013. The songs were then performed at Orange Grove Middle Magnet School of the Arts on November 22, 2013, with a live band! The students met once a week with their music teachers and others to practice and rehearse at Egypt Lake Elementary School. After students completed their song, they could choose which instruments to play in their song, varying from a piano and guitar to a French horn and ukulele.

At Morrisound Studios students got to experience what it's like to be in a real recording studio and record with a live band. At the concert the students performed their original songs in front of their family, friends, and school members with the band.

This musical project will help students with their performing arts and possibly their career. They had an experience they'll never forget!

**It all started with a bullseye and a few words, and I went from there to writing a song. It didn't matter how long it was, it just had to have MY ideas!**

*-Lissette Rocha Permenter, Young Songwriter, Cannella Elementary*

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# MUSIC IN ACTION!

This past summer for the sixth consecutive year, 3rd through 5th grade students attended a summer music camp held at Bryant Elementary. The camp was led by Hammond Music Teacher Jeff Henson and Cannella Music Teacher Juan Rios. The week-long day camp was held from June 17th - 20th and had 22 students and 100% attendance. Camp participants had the opportunity to experience a variety of musical activities that included world drumming, recorder playing, folk dancing and Orff Instruments.



## JOIN HCEMEC!

Our mission is to provide greater opportunities for quality music education to the children of Hillsborough County through high professional standards, continuing teacher education and supporting a strong music community as advocates for lifelong music education.

Annual dues are \$15 per member. Checks should be made out to "Music Council" and mailed via school mail to: Jennifer Leblanc, Chiles Elementary, Route #3



## Young Songwriters' Symposium

The Young Songwriters' Symposium, an FMEA Innovative Project Award winner, will be celebrating it's 10th Anniversary next year! Know of a former Young Songwriter from the first nine years? Contact YSS co-chairs Joey Willoughby and Sean Moats on IDEAS to help make year 10 a big celebration of songwriting!

⌘ Continued from page 1 ⌘

During the day in the recording studio, the students had the opportunity to bond and get to know each other better. During the recording session we got to put on the headphones to help us hear ourselves better and we got to see the band as we sang. To us it was scary walking in, but when we started singing, all the nerves went away. We also felt more confident with our music teacher there because she kept us going and didn't let us give up. It was also cool watching Mr. Morris work on his sound board while recording the children.

So, if you want my opinion on the Young Songwriters' Symposium, I give it two thumbs up! I think it is one of the best experiences I've ever had!

-Lissette Rocha Permenter, Young Songwriter, Cannella Elementary

The coolest part of the whole Young Songwriters Symposium was definitely the performance on Friday night. Everyone cheered each other on and made everyone feel comfortable. It was amazing singing on the stage while hearing the band play your song and everyone cheer for you! Overall it was an amazing experience and we won't forget it.

♪ Adell Davis and Lexie Giron, Young Songwriters, Seminole Elementary

## ADVOCACY ALERT

Music, as a valued part of culture, is a birthright of every child. Learning music in school contributes to student achievement in four important categories:

- ◆ Success in society
- ◆ Success in school and learning
- ◆ Success in developing intelligence
- ◆ Success in life

- From: *Advocacy Benefits of Music Study*, NAFMA formerly MENC

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

So many opportunities for Professional Development were offered in the summer that we ran out of room to include them all in Issue no. 1, so here in Issue no. 2 we present more of the amazing opportunities to grow your teaching practice from the summer. Presented by Hillsborough County music educator Kim Roberts, Mitchell Elementary, for Hillsborough County music educators!

## USING RECORDERS TO ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING

Why the recorder? Just a few of the reasons Kim Roberts shared with us: They can be used to play folk songs and rounds, and they promote reading notation and melodic composition. Furthermore, recorders are affordable and mobile. Students who might not feel comfortable with their singing voice often do very well when playing the recorder.

During this workshop, Kim gave the layout of how to get started with the recorder and how to use the recorder for assessments, musical concepts, and concert pieces, along with motivation ideas. She also gave plenty of different resources that can be used. She lays out her beginning procedures: expectations first, how to hold the instrument, etc. For recorder warm-ups, she suggests "saying and showing": say the pattern on the letter, play it, then allow the students to play, echoing the pattern. As the students continue, review what they know, then expand their learning in each lesson, by adding a new note, new rhythms, etc.

In assessment, Kim suggests assessing the playing first. Are they holding the instrument correctly? Are they using their tongue to separate the notes? After learning how to play first, then teach them to read it on the staff. Assess the reading after this step. Then, performance assessments: playing songs, while reading the staff.

For different concepts, Kim showed examples of creating patterns and melodies by playing, writing the letters names of composition, then notating correctly on the staff. Also, she used "Hot Cross Buns" for students to create their own variations.

For performances, Kim uses a wide range of choices, from easy to challenging. She also picked repertoire that can also be used for choral performances, as well as recorder pieces. Some of the resources she suggested are *Recorder Express*, *Recorder Karate*, different rounds and canons, and our music series.

♪ Lani Winslow, Pinecrest Elementary



**As the landscape of education rapidly changes and adapts, from NGSSS to Common Core and beyond, it is important to adapt our teaching to include these new requirements while maintaining a true music education where the students learn through performance: Singing, Playing, and Dancing!**

## USING ORFF TO ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING

This summer I had the pleasure to go to Mitchell Elementary and spend the morning playing Orff with Kim Roberts. Having had trainings with Kim before, I was expecting activities and high energy from the moment I walked in the door, and Kim did deliver. From the moment the training started until the moment we walked out the door, we were engaged in singing, moving, and Orff activities that could be adapted into the way we all teach.

The training started out with all the Orff instruments on the floor before us. When the training started, we were ready to get over to the instruments, but then Kim had us start singing. Turns out she was “pre-loading” us just like she does with her students so that when we get to the Orff instruments it gives quicker results. The warm-up activities were great with the movement parts to the songs and getting our singing voices warmed up.

Now, most trainings I have gone to usually give you a broad overview of how the teacher does it, but in this training Kim went into detail for each grade level from first through fifth and really took her time on everything. If it was on the sheet she gave us then you could rest assured we went over it in detail and maybe even had a chance for some people to take the solo. Many connections were made as well on how we can link this to singing, risk taking, and even how we could use conversational solfege rhythm and melody units to help the students. There were also varying levels of differentiation on some of the songs, which was very nice for those classes where you need a little bit of everything to meet everyone's needs.

It was a fun morning of using Orff techniques to really help us dig deeper into our music curriculum for all who attended. I am extremely excited as I plan for this upcoming school year to be integrating some of these techniques to my teaching toolkit. Thank you Kim for a great training.

*Justin Daniels, Riverhills Elementary*

## CONVERSATIONAL SOLFEGE II

Have you ever been awakened by a rousing verse of, “Coffee” or been excited while folk dancing at 8:30 AM, during the summer? Well, that is what happened to 13 elementary music teachers on Thursday, August 1, at Mitchell Elementary School.

These teachers were completely engrossed in the Conversational Solfege II workshop with instructor Kim Roberts. One may ask what is Conversational Solfege? The short answer is: An “ear-before-eye” philosophy of teaching music. This philosophy correlates to the National Standards and teaches in a way that stresses music literacy begins with great literature. Great songs are broken down into their component parts and then reassembled so that students can bring greater musical understanding to everything they do.<sup>1</sup>

Conversational Solfege is a dynamic and captivating first through eighth grade general music program that enables students to become independent musical thinkers with the help of a rich variety of folk and classical music.

Conversational Solfege II focuses on units 5,6, and 7 of Dr. John M. Feierabend's approach to teaching general music and combines units 6 and 7. Units 5, 6 and 7 incorporates rests and notes and according to Ms. Roberts, “When dealing with melody, give kids time to get used to it. Melody is more time consuming than rhythm.” Ms. Roberts goes on to say, “Conversational Solfege has taught her better what children know, can do and holds you accountable as their teacher.”

The ultimate goal of Conversational Solfege is to create fully engaged, independent, musicians who can hear, understand, read, write, compose and improvise.

There are 12 levels of Conversational Solfege and the focuses include: Readiness, Conversational Solfege Rote, Decode/Familiar, Decode/Unfamiliar, Create, Reading Rote, Writing Rote, Reading. It is emphasized that a class does not move on until they (the class) understand the concept being taught. Hillsborough County is very lucky to have teachers such as Kim Roberts. Ms. Roberts is one reason the School District of Hillsborough County is “One of the Best Music Communities for Music Education” in the United States.

1. Conversational Solfege by John M. Feierabend, GIA Publications.

*Carolyn Baker Turner, B.C. Graham Elementary*

# HCEMEC : PROFESSIONAL MINI-GRANTS : DEVELOPMENT

Each year the HCEMEC awards Mini-Grants to council members for professional development, instruments, books, or other music materials. In the last issue we highlighted members who obtained instruments for their music rooms. On the following pages we feature members Ernesta Suarez-Chicklowski and Nathaniel Strawbridge, who used their grant for professional development.

## LEVEL 3 WORLD DRUMMING

This past June, as a result of being awarded the HCEMEC Professional Development Grant, I had the fortunate opportunity to take Level 3 World Drumming Training. All I can say is...WOW, what an experience! The training took place in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, which is home base, in a sense, of the whole World Drumming community. The benefit of taking the trainings in Wisconsin is that most of the participants and instructors stay onsite for the entire week. As a result, each of the participants constantly interact and communicate...sharing meals together, learning with and from each other, and inevitably bonding with one another throughout the entire week. This creates a strong sense of community and an experience that is exclusively unique to the Wisconsin site.

Throughout the training community, Wisconsin's level 3 training is notorious for being difficult. "You're in Level 3?!", the folks asked as I rode on the shuttle from the airport to the workshop site. "The people in level 3 are crazy...they call 2am rehearsal sessions, practice all day and all night...and their final performances are nuts!! They play like professionals." After hearing all that, I started thinking, "Whoa, what am I getting myself into?" Nevertheless, going into the experience, I was excited and felt the strong urge to give the training my absolute best. My goal was to soak in every ounce of information and go "ALL OUT" throughout the week. I wanted my head to explode before it was all over...and it just about did! Our days consisted of four hour-and-a-half long instructional sessions starting at 8:30am and ending at 5:15pm. We were served breakfast, lunch, and dinner in between sessions, and each night, everyone on site participated in a nightly activity session from 7:00pm-9:30pm. These night time sessions included presentations on "The Music of Cuba," "The Music of Ghana," and "Gahu dancing." Each of the sessions were highly interactive and a lot of fun!

Our instructional sessions were extremely comprehensive. Each class was an hour and a half of pure focus and covered enormous amounts of material. Since most of the people in my group had taken Level 3 multiple times, making much of the session material a review for them, our instructors consistently pushed the pace of the class. At such a fast pace, I was responsible for learning much of the material the first time it was presented. Consequently, a great deal of my learning had to come through assimilation of the material over time and through personal practice. I liked that challenge. Entering such a fast paced environment made me push myself to the extreme and once again, reminded me why I love learning and teaching!

Level 3 was exclusively taught by Josh Ryan and Sowah Mensah. Josh is a percussionist, and Associate Professor at Baldwin-Wallace College and he is a beast! He specializes in Latin and Caribbean percussion and teaches several styles of West African drumming. His teaching style and approach is systematic, and progressive. Josh takes the time to develop playing techniques and allows time for the learner to become proficient in the style at an advanced, but still differentiated pace. During Josh's session we learned and performed Makuta 1 & 2, Bembe for Elegua, Rumba Guaguanco, Batarumba for Chango, Batarumba for Obatala, and the Gahu-like style called Kinka.

Sowah Mensah is a Master Drummer in the truest sense of the word, and was the lead level 3 clinician. He is a life-long musician from Ghana who has learned and taught traditional Ghanaian singing and drumming for several decades. He has truly earned the title of "Master Drummer." He is also the most intense instructor that I have ever studied under. The Wisconsin Level 3 world drumming classes are known for their high standard of excellence and, quite frankly, it's difficult because of the high musical expectations and standards set by Sowah and Josh. After experiencing the training first hand, I can attest to that high standard and degree of difficulty. During the week, I could not remember the last time that I had to stay so focused for so many hours in a day. It was mentally and physically exhausting!...but I loved it! Sowah's classes were the most intense. He demanded perfection! We played Sowah's "Short Sequence" on Kpanlogo drums, a traditional West African hand drum, and played "Bawa" on Gyils, which are xylophone style pentatonic instruments. Sowah's biggest message was to always watch the leader, use your ear, and play together. Surprisingly, the most difficult aspect of the week was learning to sing the traditional Ghanaian songs. We paid great attention to detail as we sang, *Si Si Si, Adenkum, Afi A Ya, and Salabi Ye*. Sowah strongly emphasized singing with proper word pronunciation and vocal inflections, pitch accuracy, and timing. We were expected to learn and perform the music traditionally, like the people in Ghana. Both Sowah and Josh's expectations were high. But with laser focus, continuous practice, and a shared care for the integrity of the music, a high level of proficiency and musicality was achieved by everyone in the class.

### LEVEL 3 WORLD DRUMMING

In addition to the class periods, night time sessions, and personal practice sessions, level 3 participants were given additional access to resources during the week. Most nights, I attended an additional 10pm rehearsal and practice session. I spent most of my time in these after hours sessions just watching and listening. This is where I really got my money's worth! Mostly, I watched Sowah and the other instructors practice the drum sequence, *Sigi*. *Sigi* is an intricate drum sequence created by Sowah Mensah. The sequence is played on the Kpanlogo, and coupled with it's seemingly simple - but deceptively complex 3-note timeline, *Sigi* takes an incredible amount of focus and technique to play (especially when performing with Sowah). Sowah and six of the other workshop clinicians practiced *Sigi* nightly in preparation for our final day's sharing session.

The week ended with a final sharing session, in which each of the drumming levels performed the pieces that we learned over the course of the week. The sharing session was amazing! We danced, sang, laughed, listened, and of course, drummed! At the end of the week, everyone seemed to feel a sense of satisfaction and joy. This shared learning experience had brought us all together and it was apparent in our words and actions! I know I felt blessed to have been able to study and learn from Josh, Sowah and so many others, meet all the wonderful people that week, and be a part of such a fulfilling learning experience. I am hooked! I hope to return year after year to Wisconsin and continue to study and grow as a musician and teacher!

*Nate Strawbridge, Crestwood Elementary*



LEFT: Nate Strawbridge (center) and members of the Level 3 World Drumming training.



RIGHT: Ernesta Chicklowski plays recorder at Artie & Denise's Summer Symposium.

## ARTIE & DENISE'S SUMMER SYMPOSIUM 2013

What a power packed few days at the University of Central Florida with two of the most enthusiastic and knowledgeable music educators I've ever met! Artie Almeida's teaching style is fast paced, playful yet purposeful, and packed with current content based on our Next Generation Standards and Common Core principles.

All event attendees were privileged to get a "sneak peek" into some of her latest and greatest educational tools that make Smart Board lessons and Interactive Lessons come to life for the music educator and our students.

"Ars Antiqua" her Renaissance Ensemble (in full regalia) performed for our group of teachers and we were invited to play along with our own recorders with a piece from this highly skilled group. Wow, what a treat!

Denise's approach to introducing musical concepts to the primary students is amazing. Many of her steady beat songs, activities, and enrichment will become a staple in my teaching curriculum.

Networking with fellow educators while at the symposium was one of my favorite parts of the day. I was able to enjoy planning and brainstorming with fellow Hillsborough County music teachers each day. It was quite a treat to meet and greet with music educators from as far away at Canada!

After this professional development opportunity ended, I could definitely say that I was "recharged, renewed, and ready" to meet my students at the door with many fresh new ideas and lessons for the new year.

Thank you again HCEMEC for the wonderful opportunity to attend this great training, I look forward to sharing my knowledge with others in our district.

*Ernesta S. Chicklowski, Roosevelt Elementary*

# BRAVO!

Congratulations to the following teachers who have been recognized by their colleagues and selected as Teacher of the Year and Ida S. Baker award nominees. We are proud of you!

## Teacher of the Year

Shari Collins, Kenly  
Lori Valdez, Clair-Mel  
Rob Constable, Crestwood  
Paul Quintero, Alexander  
Sophavy Vann, Ruskin

## Ida S. Baker Award

Mary Baldwin, FishHawk Creek  
Kathryn Jurado, Limona  
Juan Rios, Cannella  
Altemese Simard, Heritage  
Sarah Guarrine, Shore  
Virginia Vera, Town and Country  
Diego Villa, Valrico

Congratulations to the teachers who had students selected to the 2014 Elementary All-State Chorus! We are proud of Hillsborough's 25 students!

Mindy Mabry, Bay Crest Elementary  
Jennifer LeBlanc, Chiles Elementary  
Eleana Moffre, Lake Magdalene Elementary  
Merritt Tilson, Lake Magdalene Elementary  
Kyla Bailey, Lanier Elementary  
Lorri Naylor, Lowry Elementary  
Kim Wolfe Rodger, McKitrick Elementary  
Alicia Hunter, McKitrick Elementary  
Jennifer DeMarco, Muller Elementary  
Courtney Driggers, Nelson Elementary  
Ernesta Chicklowski, Roosevelt Elementary  
Stephanie Powers, Ruskin Elementary  
Sophavy Vann, Ruskin Elementary  
Laura Mathews, Schwarzkopf Elementary  
Victoria Walsh, Tampa Palms Elementary  
Rebecca Traenkner, Turner Elementary

## ADVOCACY ALERT

"The life of the arts, far from being an interruption, a distraction, in the life of the nation, is close to the center of a nation's purpose - and is a test to the quality of a nation's civilization."

— President John F. Kennedy



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PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Excellence in Education*

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