

CONSERVATORY NOTES

From Music Together to Preschool

By Sandra Guimond

Nothing is sweeter than listening to a young child happily singing. Thanks to my teaching job in South Shore Conservatory's arts-integrated preschool program, I am lucky to hear children singing all the time! I came to the Conservatory after teaching at traditional preschools for many years, and am still amazed at the amount of music the children are exposed to and immersed in at SSC. In our current two-day class, many students have already enjoyed musical experiences at the Conservatory through involvement in the Music Together program. Additionally, the children have music class every week with our arts specialist, Emily Arsenault, where they have the opportunity to experiment with musical instruments and learn to sing and move to a variety of songs.

In working with the class, Emily has shared that "it has been incredible to watch our young two-day preschool students not only grow and learn individually, but quickly form into a vibrant, supportive community of creative minds. It has also been a pleasure to work with so many past Music Together students who have now started in the preschool. I can see how the familiarity of experiencing Music Together at SSC has eased the transition into new artistic experiences, and that our weekly music class creates a comfortable extension of the musical family. As we sing, play,

listen, move, and imagine together, I have witnessed such curiosity, sensitivity, and richness of expression in these young students."

Back in the classroom, classical music and children's music plays in the background as the children greet their teachers each morning and as they play. From time to time, we even hear a jazz band playing downstairs! Music is integrated into everyday teaching and direction-giving, too. Books and finger plays are commonly sung, a "Hello" song is sung every morning, a song is sung before snack time and even at show-and-tell! Music simply pervades in our preschool program and as a result, I believe it makes the children feel happy, comfortable and self-confident. Even the quietest of children will come out of their shells with music. They dance, they sing, they hum, they play, all the while learning.

In one of our recent musical explorations with Emily, brightly colored scarves lined the edge of the carpet, as our students waited at the other end of the room, ready to begin their adventure. As Emily reflected on the activity, she expressed that "our imaginations transport us. We are no longer in a classroom, but a pumpkin patch, and our scarves are now magical gourds that we will soon discover. The students listen for the piano to tell them



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to move toward their 'pumpkins.' One musical cue tells them to tiptoe, and another asks them to hide from a spooky bat flying overhead. They listen attentively, moving carefully across the room until finally, celebratory chords on the piano cue them to retrieve their pumpkins, and they joyfully wave their scarves in the air."

Sandra Guimond, or "Miss Sandi," joined South Shore Conservatory (SSC) in 1997 as a preschool lead teacher. She became co-director the following year at the Conservatory's Duxbury campus preschool. She left in 2001 to continue her education, and returned to teaching at SSC in 2012.