

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## **Arts Express camp gives special-needs children a unique experience** *Friday's final performance lets campers strut their stuff on stage to "Magical Wizards" theme*

**For Immediate Release**

**July 18, 2002**

**68-02**

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WATERLOO – Children with and without special needs are preparing their dance moves and singing voices for the annual Arts Express performance in the Maureen Forrester Recital Hall at Wilfrid Laurier University. Forty-eight participants will perform original dance, music and dramatic works with a medieval theme during the concert that begins at 1:30 p.m. on Friday.

Arts Express is an integrated arts camp designed for children with a variety of disabilities. It provides the participants, who range in ages from 6 to 15, with a unique opportunity to create and perform with their non-disabled siblings and friends. This year's theme is "Magical Wizards of Medieval Times."

"This camp is designed to provide children with the rare, hands-on opportunity to experience the arts," says camp administrator Debra Martz-Melanson. "Camp counsellors stimulate the children's imaginations to create innovative and original dance moves and songs for the concert. The children are truly the stars of the recital as they are performing their personal interpretations of magical wizards from the medieval ages."

From July 22 to 25, children participate in drama, music, dance and arts and crafts at The Rotary Children's Centre at 500 Hallmark Drive in Waterloo. Each child chooses his or her favourite form of expression for the "Magical Wizards" recital, which includes performances of original camp songs, dancing and drama.

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To ensure close interaction between instructors and campers, there is a ratio of two counsellors to six children. Counsellors are music and therapeutic recreation students from Laurier and the University of Waterloo, and professionals who work in special education. Coming from this variety of artistic specialties and backgrounds, counsellors can help camp participants enhance their personal creative vision.

Arts Express is co-sponsored by The Rotary Children's Centre, the music therapy program at Laurier, the kinesiology department at the University of Waterloo and the early childhood education program at Conestoga College.

Friday's performance is open to the public and is free of charge.