

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Special-needs children share a unique experience at Arts Express *Participants will take a comical look at popular fairy tales in performance this Friday*

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WATERLOO – Princesses, ogres, pixies, dragons, elves and big bad wolves will romp around the Maureen Forrester Recital Hall at Wilfrid Laurier University during a public performance to close the 12th annual Arts Express children’s camp.

Thirty-six children with and without special needs will perform original dance, music and dramatic works – all involving a theme of comical adaptations of fairy tales – during the concert that begins at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, July 22. The children will create their own humorous version of a fairy tale within one of six groups of mythical characters.

Arts Express is an integrated arts and music camp designed for children with a variety of disabilities. It provides the participants, who range in age from six to 15, with a unique opportunity to create and perform with their non-disabled siblings and friends.

“This integrated camp is designed to provide children with the rare, hands-on opportunity to experience the arts,” says camp administrator Debra Martz-Melanson. “Camp counsellors work with their groups to create innovative dance moves and songs for the concert. This year, the children will use their imaginations to construct a show using a collage of fairy-tale characters and environments that looks at the humorous side of fairy tales.”

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From July 18 to 22, children participate in drama, music, dance, and arts and crafts at KidsAbility, located at 500 Hallmark Drive in Waterloo. Each child chooses his or her favourite form of expression for the closing recital, which includes performances of original camp songs, dancing and drama.

To ensure close interaction between instructors and campers, there is a ratio of two counsellors to six children. Counsellors are music or 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, the counsellors help camp participants enhance their personal creative vision.

Arts Express is co-sponsored by KidsAbility, 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 admission is free of charge.