

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Arts Express camp gives special-needs children an experience that's out of this world

Friday's final performance lets children create and perform dance, music and dramatic numbers to "In a Galaxy Far, Far Away" theme

For Immediate Release

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WATERLOO – Children with special needs and their siblings and friends are preparing to dance, act and sing their way into another galaxy as part of the 13th annual Arts Express camp performance in the Maureen Forrester Recital Hall at Wilfrid Laurier University. The children will create and perform original numbers during the “In a Galaxy Far, Far Away” - themed concert, which begins at 1:30 p.m. on Friday, July 21.

Arts Express is an integrated arts and music camp designed for children with a variety of special needs between the ages of six and 14. This year's camp exposes 42 children to the arts at KidsAbility-Centre for Child Development. The week culminates in the creation of Friday's recital at Laurier, where children enjoy all aspects of a stage production.

“The children have the opportunity to grow individually and with each other throughout the week,” explains camp administrator Debra Martz-Melanson. “We gradually introduce the children to dance, songs and plays, and they choose the area that interests them the most for their recital performance. It's exciting to see them shine on stage.”

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This summer, camp counsellors are made up of students from Wilfrid Laurier University, the University of Western Ontario and the University of Waterloo, who draw on their expertise to offer children music, drama, dance, art and sensory activities. The ratio of one counsellor to three campers fosters a close interaction that benefits both the children and the counsellors.

“The camp gives student counsellors the opportunity to work with children who have a range of abilities,” says Martz-Melanson. “They feel a real connection with the children.”

Arts Express is co-sponsored by KidsAbility and the music therapy program at Laurier, as well as 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.

