

# NEWS RELEASE

## Wilfrid Laurier University



### **Children with special needs create and perform recital at Arts Express Camp**

**For Immediate Release**

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WATERLOO – Children with special needs, their siblings and their friends will create and perform original dance, dramatic and musical numbers for the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Arts Express Camp recital.

This year's concert, "The Great Canadian Excursion from Coast to Coast," will begin at 1:30 p.m. on Friday July 20 at Wilfrid Laurier University's Maureen Forrester Recital Hall.

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 the KidsAbility Centre for Child Development. The week culminates in Friday's recital at Laurier, where children participate in all aspects of a stage production.

"The children have the opportunity to grow individually and with each other throughout the week," says camp administrator Debra Martz Melanson, who works in Laurier's music therapy program. "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."

Students from Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo serve as camp counsellors. They draw on their expertise to provide 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.

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“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 Wilfrid Laurier University, 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 free of charge.