

**Steel Valley School District
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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Steel Valley School District Kindergarten Students Learn Music through Unique Immersive Teaching Techniques

Munhall, PA – Steel Valley kindergartners are enjoying a fully immersive music program led by District Long-Term Substitute Music Teacher Kerry Kleinhans, who’s also been an elementary substitute music teacher for the past five years.

“I use the Orff-Schulwerk Method (*meaning schoolwork in German*) which is a music teaching method enabling the children to experience music by ‘doing’ it through songs, dance, movement, speech, drama and their imagination...similar to a child’s world of play.”

Certified in the Orff Method, Kleinhans said she was taught in the same manner 40 years ago.

“Orff was a composer and he said that since the beginning of time, children have not liked to study; they would much rather play. and if you have their interests at heart, you will let them learn while they play,” said Kleinhans. “So. I teach them in a way that makes them feel like they’re playing; but the whole time, I’m guiding them through their own imaginations.”

She uses folk songs, folk dances, multicultural music, as well as singing, chanting, dancing, and moving in her classes. She also teaches children how to play percussion instruments, African drums, tambourines, xylophones and metallophones (*metal bells*) and glockenspiels (*little small bells – very high pitched*).

“I can lecture on what a beat is, or they can get up and feel it,” said Kleinhans.

She explained that in her teaching method, regular sized instruments are made ‘child size’ so that her students can experience and learn the correct way to play them.

“I teach them like someone would in college,” said Kleinhans. “They learn how to play the instruments at a young age, and they also learn how to create music as well as how to improvise and compose. And, they love it because it’s very interactive!”

Kleinhans teaches both Barrett and Park students in grades K-4 and also teaches fourth grade beginning band.

“They pay attention and engage. They now sing in tune better and learned how to feel the beat through their bodies“ she said. “I want my students to love and experience music and know it’s much more than singing.”

Parents also seem to enjoy this method of teaching.

“The parents have given me 100% positive feedback telling me how much they enjoy what their children are doing in music class,” said Kleinhans. “The children sing songs they’ve learned for their parents and show them their dances too! These songs and dances help them expand culturally so they can relate to the world.”



