

Kindermusik Comes to Town

by “Miss Katie” Taylor

Kindermusik is an international child-centered program (there are over 4,000 trained teachers) that offers a complete music and movement experience for parents and their children to enjoy together.

Why Ellenville? I came to Ellenville four years ago to marry an area resident (musician David Winograd); talking with people in the area, I discovered a lack of activities in Ellenville for young children. Mothers were driving their children to Kingston, Middletown, and New Paltz, so I thought, “Why not Ellenville?” Ellenville is centrally-located to Wurtsboro, Kerhonkson, Pine Bush, Fallsburg, Woodbourne, Grahamsville, and, well, I live here.

Kindermusik believes all children are musical. Think of Derek Jeter... catching the ball, jumping up, twirling 180-degrees in mid-air, then throwing to first base in time to get the man out. You wouldn't immediately think that what he does requires musical ability, but it does. What Derek Jeter has, in addition to incredible athletic ability, is an incredibly developed sense of inner rhythm. I call that music. *Kindermusik* isn't about creating the next Mozart; it's about enhancing – through music – a child's physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and language development.

When a baby is born, all the organs – heart, lungs, kidneys – are fully developed, except one – the brain. Of the 100-billion-or-so cells in a newborn's brain, only some of them are connected. The rest are connected through sensory stimulation during the first 5 years of his life. *Kindermusik* lessons are structured to offer many different forms of stimuli: songs, rhymes, movements, and books are repeated from class to class so that brain connections become stronger.

Though each class has the same structure, it is not just repetition of the same thing. Every class has a greeting song (where each child is recognized by name with a specific movement), a rest song, a book, and a free dance. For example, in the opening song, when I'm singing hello, if I notice a particular child wiggling on his mother's lap, I'll sing a “wobble hello” to him.

Parents participate right along with their child. The *Kindermusik* philosophy believes that parents are their child's primary teachers. As a *Kindermusik* teacher, I'm there to facilitate their child's learning process and give the parents tools necessary to continue the process at home. As part of their tuition, every child is given take-home materials which vary from class to class, but all include a CD of class songs, a copy of the class book, and a book of home activities, so the children can play their CD and read their books at home.

Kindermusik Village is for children from birth to 18 months. The lessons last eight weeks, with different curricula for each eight-week session. When the child is ready (18 months or sooner), the child moves



up to *Our Time*, geared for children 18 months to three years. In *Our Time*, the session is 15 weeks. Once again, the parents participate for the entire class and they see their children become more independent. At that age they still want mommy and daddy around, but they also can play rhythm instruments, sing, dance, and mimic familiar sounds (hammers, saws, etc.) independently. The oldest class I am teaching right now is *Imagine That!* for three-to-five-year-olds. Here the parents are not with the child the entire class but attend the final 15 minutes. In *Imagine That!* we introduce pretend play, refinement of small motor skills through drawing, and interpretation of music.

I love teaching *Kindermusik*, and I love the fact that the music offered in the curriculum is not the typical “children's music.” Through *Kindermusik*, the children are exposed to classical orchestrations, choral oratorios, jazz, gospel, and folk songs from Appalachia, Africa, China, and the Philippines. They hear songs in Spanish or Chinese, and also learn how to interpret them in American Sign Language.

I teach fall and spring classes at the **Christ Lutheran Church at 105 Center Street**. However, I am looking for an air-conditioned space to hold summer classes. (So, if there is anyone in Ellenville with a space to rent, please let me know!) Winter/spring classes will begin February 3rd and run through early June. I'll take a week or so break, then start my summer classes in either late June or early July. The summer classes are more like “camp”; there are only five sessions and include a craft project.

The cost is \$120 for an eight-week *Village* session, \$209 for 15-week *Our Time*, and \$221 for 15-week *Imagine That!* There is a \$50 non-refundable deposit for materials due at the time of enrollment (tuition cost includes materials). I also offer a \$15 discount for payment in full, a 15% reduction for families with 2 or more children in different classes, and payment plans on a per-student basis.

Anyone interested in observing a class is welcome to come. Just call to let me know you'll be there. I'll be giving a free demonstration Tuesday, January 28th as well.

(For more information, you can contact Miss Katie at 647-7291, or email ktyville@ulster.net or go to www.kindermusik.com for details and a history of the program.)

