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KIDS ROCK SCHOOLHOUSE

National music curriculum program brings its first big-name musician to Tampa

By JOHN W. ALLMAN |
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TAMPA - Sabrina Kaik's tiny fingers glide over the guitar strings as she rips into the opening riff of AC/DC's "Back in Black."

Her music teacher, David Hendricks, can't help but smile.

"Sabrina, how old are you?" he asks. She answers softly, 9 years old.

"I wish I had rocked that hard at 9."

Kaik is one of about 100 students at Oak Grove Elementary School currently enrolled in Little Kids Rock, a national music curriculum that teaches children and young adults to play music by using contemporary hard rock, pop, punk and other genres.

The local chapter was created last year with donations raised through an auction sponsored by Tampa-based Dean Guitars and spearheaded by local musician Christopher "Curse" Mackey.

More than 4,000 students countywide now participate, making Hillsborough County the second-largest Little Kids Rock chapter nationally. Little Kids Rock has donated about 800 new instruments, plus free



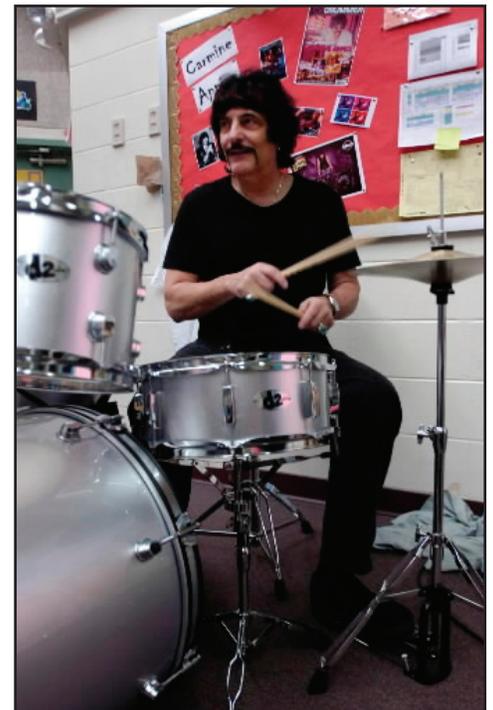
Carmine Appice, a renowned rock 'n' roll drummer, visits students at Oak Grove Elementary School for Little Kids Rock, a national music curriculum that teaches youths to play music by using contemporary hard rock, pop, punk and other genres.

training, to the 34 music teachers in Hillsborough who are working with the program.

On Wednesday, Hendrick's class got another gift: A free drum set for the students to practice on.

And it was personally delivered by one of rock and roll's classic drummers – Carmine Appice, who has played with rock royalty such as Rod Stewart, Pink Floyd and Ozzy Osbourne.

Appice, who has played with rock icons such as Pink Floyd, jams with the students.



Little Kids Rock regularly works with musical icons, asking them to visit classrooms across the country to speak to students and jam with them.

Hendricks, who teaches the Oak Grove classes with Paul Quintero, could barely hide his excitement.

“It’s amazing,” Hendricks said of Appice. “He knew Keith Moon of The Who. He’s met The Beatles. Led Zeppelin opened for his band Vanilla Fudge.”

Appice answered questions and spent more than an hour playing songs with the students and helping them write their own original song.

“I love the way they just light up,” Appice said. “It’s a great thing to see, these kids being inspired.”

Kaik has been playing guitar for about two years. She’s no stranger to rock, according to her mother, Ann Marie, who is engaged to former Morbid Angel guitarist Gino Marino.



Carmine Appice worked with the Oak Grove Elementary students on writing an original song with lyrics and music.

But her daughter hadn’t had this kind of training until Little Kids Rock. Now she’s learning songs as varied as “Blitzkrieg Bop” by The Ramones and “Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da” by The Beatles.

Could she be a future rock star?

“There’s no famous guitar

women,” her mom said. “If that’s something she enjoys, and she makes a living, let her rip.”

Reporter John W. Allman can be reached at (813) 259-7915.

Tribune photos by SCOTT ISKOWITZ

TO DONATE

Each chapter of Little Kids Rock depends on donations to cover its operating costs, and typically expands each year to include more teachers and students.

Donations can be made online at www.littlekidsrock.org.

For information, call (973) 746-8248

CHAPTER LOCATIONS

Here’s where Little Kids Rock is located:

San Francisco

Los Angeles

Oakland

West Contra Costa County Calif

Pasadena

Washington

Tampa

Atlanta

Chicago

Shreveport, La

Newark, NJ

Trenton, NJ.

Jersey City, NJ

New York City

Philadelphia

Memphis, Tenn.

Nashville

Dallas

Houston