

Drum Circle

“I’ve always believed that the best way to communicate with a group of people is through music. There is nothing like the connection that is built between people who sing together, play instruments together, or even just listen to music together.” This is a quote from Drum Circle Event Coordinator and senior International Baccalaureate Diploma Candidate, Marley Amico.

In October 2014, Amico led a drum circle for two separate classes of elementary aged students. In the spring of 2014, Amico’s junior year, she started communicating with staff in the elementary school regarding her idea to bring music to life for all, whether they had experience playing an instrument or not. A couple of teachers jumped on the opportunity to have an outlet for their students. With no experience teaching students, Amico went in as prepared as she could. Looking in on her leading a drum circle where she taught rhythm, beats, and pitch an observer could only see smiles from both students and their teachers. They were excited to be learning about the drums and to express their thoughts. What could have been just a music class turned into a social skills lesson as students learned how to communicate their thoughts and feelings regarding more than music. Amico also read the book, Everyone Can Drum written by Vinnie Amico and Corey Kertzie and illustrated by Fred Whitehead. The book specifically addressed everything she taught the students and she was able to leave a copy for them to add to their classroom library and take out as a free read opportunity. After the presentation, Amico was sent thank you letters from some of the students that included comments like:

“The drums made me happy. I learned a lot from your book. I like you coming here.”

“Thank you for bringing the drums to play. I liked when you talked about the instruments. I like when we all played. You made me happy.”

“I like to play the drums with you. The storybook was fun. I was really happy to see you.”

Amico commented that, “The student’s responses were the best part of the activity. When I first came into the classroom, they were somewhat shy. When I asked questions in the beginning of the drum circle, none of the students wanted to respond. By the end of the drum circle, they were completely engaged. They were asking questions, creating their own rhythms, and telling me the stories they were thinking of as they were drumming. They were smiling from ear to ear, and communicating with each other. The drum circle gave them a safe place to communicate ideas with one another, as well as with myself and their teacher.” I have told my peers that this drum circle was one of the most rewarding things I have ever been a part of. I think it is so important to get in touch with those in your community.”

Amico has made a unique and everlasting contribution to these students and their teacher. She hopes her experience will lead others to share their passion and be a positive influence in their own communities.

