

2014

Early Childhood Music Initiative

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real-world teaching experiences

Duquesne's Early Childhood Music Initiative

Provides Musical Instruction for Young, Underserved Students

The Early Childhood Music Initiative (ECMI) was created in 2010 to provide developmentally appropriate musical experiences to children in underserved Pittsburgh preschools, inform preschool teachers about ways to include music in daily instruction and allow undergraduate music education students to gain real-world teaching experiences. Dr. Rachel Whitcomb, assistant professor of Music Education and ECMI project director, designed the program to address the challenges of inconsistent preschool music offerings in early childhood centers.

During the 2012-2013 academic year, ECMI provided music instruction to more than 125 children in five preschools. Seven

undergraduate students served as ECMI teachers and three undergraduate students served as project coordinators. Teachers included Katie Barr, Molly Cavanaugh, Leslie Chabala, Lauren Finney, Jayla Griggs, Josh Leon and Lea Tsoubanos. The student coordinators included Elizabeth Baldassarre, Cassidy Deutsch and Kayla Searles. Participating preschools were Angels' Place, Beulah Christian

Preschool and Child Care, Hilltop Community Children's Center, JLC Daycare and Righteous Beginnings Learning Center.

More than 20 preschool teachers participated in weekly music lessons, and 160 preschool teachers participated in professional development workshops. A Lending Library of musical instruments and lesson materials was developed and utilized by preschool teachers throughout the region. These activities were made possible through funding from The Pittsburgh Foundation.

On Saturday, June 22, 2013, the second ECMI Professional Development Conference, *Sing and Play: Musical Possibilities for Preschoolers*, was presented at the Mary Pappert School of Music. More than 100 preschool educators attended the event that featured experts in the field of early childhood music education. Clinicians included Whitcomb, Dr. Peggy Bennett (Oberlin College), Dr. Kerry Filsinger (SUNY Buffalo) and Rachel Pollard (Fox Chapel Area School District). Ten undergraduate music education majors assisted with conference preparations and served as workshop presiders. The Helen Ruth Gordon Trust of PNC Charitable Trusts provided funding for the conference.

Whitcomb is currently working with Christine Pollock, director of foundation relations in the Office of Research at Duquesne University, to secure additional funding for future ECMI events.



Incore

ARIANNA POWELL

Arianna Powell (B.S. Music Education, 2012) is a performer, educator and composer who has set herself squarely on the path to success.

Currently, Powell is a teacher at Pittsburgh Guitars with more than 50 students. In addition to her teaching, Powell is a freelance musician currently playing with several different bands, including Velvet Heat. The band, which started off as an all-female jazz trio, features Powell alongside current Duquesne student Ava Lintz (bass) and alumna Abby Gross (B.S. Music Education, 2010, M.M. Performance, 2012) playing saxophone/flute.

In addition to her performances, Powell is stretching her composition muscles and has begun to write her own original music. She is currently working on an album with a vocalist. Powell has also begun to write a method book for her guitar students, focusing on how music is a language that is understandable and practical for people to use.

Her future plans including building her musical career in the Pittsburgh area and beyond. Powell also looks forward to continuing her education by earning her master's degree.

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