Summer Program Report 2011
Academic Secondary Enrichment
Rock Band!!!

Student:
Dates: June 12-17, 2011
Teacher: Shannon Darst, M.Ed., Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments, Certified Music Teacher
Teaching Assistant: Mark Rodgers, After-School Music/Residential Instructor

PROGRAM OVERVIEW
The Academic Secondary Enrichment (ASE) classes are designed for middle and high school academic students. These students work hard in school to learn regular core curriculum subjects such as language arts and math in classrooms with their sighted peers. In TSBVI summer programs, they have the opportunity to practice these academic skills within meaningful, high-interest activities. At the same time, they learn and practice skills in the Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind and Visually Impaired Students (ECC). The ECC includes skills that are unique to the needs of students with visual impairments. ECC skills enhance an individual’s ability to access the regular core curriculum, live independently, and enjoy social and recreational activities. Skills in the ECC include compensatory academic skills (e.g., braille and tactile graphics), orientation and mobility, social interaction skills, independent living skills, recreation and leisure skills, career education, assistive technology skills, sensory efficiency skills, and self determination skills.

Each ASE class has a unique theme, and students participate in a wide variety of activities related to the theme of their class. During these activities, students learn and practice specific ECC skills such as applying math and literacy skills within meaningful activities (e.g., creating and following a budget), food shopping and preparation, managing and organizing one’s living area, planning and evaluating a project, using public transportation, getting places on time, keeping up with belongings, and using technology for various purposes including research and communication with family and friends.

An additional benefit of the program is the opportunity to interact with other students with visual impairments. For many, talking with other students about the challenges they face at home and school may both alleviate feelings of isolation and increase self-confidence.

The ASE classes taught during the summer of 2011 were: Austin Adventure, Camp Fine Arts, Rock Band, Chorus: Voices in Song, Writers’ Workshop, Wildcat Catering, Radio Station Management, Problem Busters: Design Skills for Engineers and Scientists, Community Independence, Middle School Enrichment, and Recreational Sports.
DESCRIPTION OF CLASS: ROCK BAND!!!!
During this week, students were introduced to the world of making music as part of a band, as well as other aspects of the amateur and professional music industries. Students participated in various activities related to being in a band, including choosing instruments, choosing songs to play, songwriting, practicing alone and with others, delegating tasks among the band members, collaborating on a live performance, and creating a recorded final product. Along with these activities, students visited a local music instrument store and had an in-depth face-to-face question-and-answer session with a world-famous, professional rock/heavy metal drummer.

Building the Band
Students arrived at the Rock Band program with eager attitudes, ready to share musical ideas and to play music with peers. Students were first given time to brainstorm ideas for the final project. This included communicating their expectations, preferences, and dislikes in regard to instruments, styles of music, and other music-related concepts. After working as a team to determine who would play which instruments and what songs would be played for the performance, the students and teachers set out to learn the basic parts of the songs. Two “cover songs” (songs we chose to learn and perform that were written and had been performed by another band) were chosen, and the students also decided to write an original song as a band. Basic music theory and basic instrument instruction were given to each student for the cover songs, and the students were also given some guidance as to how to write and document their own original song. Throughout the remainder of the week, students practiced to perfect their songs, and they also created and practiced a rousing performance for the end-of-program live presentation.

Exploring the Music Industry
Students enjoyed two important opportunities to explore the music industry. First, students traveled by city bus to Guitar Center, a large music instrument and recording store, where both amateur and professional musicians shop for instruments and other music-related and performance-related equipment. Students were able to explore various high-quality instruments (acoustic and electric guitars and basses, acoustic and electric drum kits and percussion instruments, keyboards, effects processors, recording equipment, and music instrument accessories). They also practiced advocating for their needs while shopping for band-related instruments and equipment. Students were given a “band budget” and asked to equip their band with items that might be needed for playing live shows. Students interacted with Guitar Center employees, and asked expert staff members for information regarding specific instruments and accessories.

The second opportunity for exploration of the music industry was a face-to-face question-and-answer session with Trivett Wingo, the world-renowned former drummer of the rock/heavy metal band, The Sword. Trivett was a founding member of The Sword, and he has extensive experience in building a band from the ground up. He was also the band’s manager and tour manager for years, giving him unique insight into both the music side and the business management side of being in a rock band. Students heard Trivett’s accounts of his time as a professional musician, and they asked him many questions pertaining to being in a band, being on tour with a band, working as a team member, and more.

Final Performance and Final Product
Students practiced all week long and performed their songs for a live audience at the end of the week. The students proved to themselves and to the audience that practice and teamwork can create great entertainment for the audience and great satisfaction for the performers. The students’ musical endeavors were filmed from the beginning of the program to the end of the live final performance, and the students were able to note both their own personal progress and the band’s collective progress made during the week. This performance required not only practicing the songs, but also proactive
planning for the live performance, trouble-shooting and improving issues with the live performance plan, and problem-solving for issues that arose directly before and during the live performance.

**SPECIFIC EXPANDED CORE CURRICULUM AREAS ADDRESSED**

Students in Rock Band had opportunities to use and improve skills in many areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum: assistive technology, career education, compensatory academic skills, independent living, orientation and mobility, recreation & leisure, self-determination, sensory efficiency, and social interaction. Of all of these areas covered in the Rock Band experience, self-determination skills, social interaction skills, daily independent living skills, and career education skills were supported most by our activities.

**Self-Determination Skills**

Students used self-determination skills in many activities during our week. Some of these specific skills included self-knowledge skills (knowing his or her personal likes, dislikes, strengths, and needs), choice-making, decision-making, self-management, and problem-solving. Students used self-knowledge skills when choosing the songs to play, when choosing what instruments he or she would play for each song, and when discussing song arrangements with the other students in the band. Students used choice-making and decision-making skills when choosing the songs to play, when writing the band’s original song, when exploring Guitar Center, when riding the city bus, when making simple breakfasts and lunches each day, when interacting with peers and teachers, and when discussing issues and problems with the performance during our preparation for the show. Students used self-managements in every single aspect of the day, including practicing the songs, writing the original song, participating in the field trip to Guitar Center, planning and working on the final performance, gathering materials at the beginning of each class day, and when planning for the next day’s activities. All of the students had opportunities to explore the problems they face in regard to their visual impairments, which seemed to be the skill area in which all five students need further instruction and support.

**Social Interaction Skills**

Social interaction was the skill area we focused on most during our week in Rock Band. The dynamics between the five band members were very interesting, as the students had very different backgrounds, opinions, preferences, and communication skills. Some of the students were more inclined to voice every opinion to all members of the group, while others kept their ideas and opinions to themselves. The students found common ground in their interest in listening to music and making music. Differences of opinions led to opportunities to learn how to appropriately communicate with others in situations where individuals do not agree. Other opportunities arose where students were able to think about the other person’s point of view and then communicate about the situation until a compromise was reached. Students had to learn to work together in a group, even when all of the members of the group were not in agreement about the task at hand. Each student remained respectful and civil in these situations, and all students learned to appropriately give and listen to constructive criticism from their peers.

**Daily Independent Living Skills**

Each day, students were required to prepare both simple breakfasts and sack lunches in order to enhance the experience of functioning in the realistic, day-to-day life of a musician. Students were required to prepare themselves for the day’s activities, including remembering to bring necessary personal items needed for city bus travel, for note-taking and schedule reminders, and for personal hygiene and health situations (sunscreen, hats, water bottles, personal grooming items, etc.).
Students were also expected to organize and manage their time and evening/dorm-related activities in order to find time to practice and work on rock band songwriting and musical performance issues after the daytime practice sessions were completed.

**Career Education**
Students were also expected to be punctual and ready to work and practice for long periods of time as part of the expectations of being a part of a team and at being a productive member of a rock band.

**INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS**

(Deleted)