



NORWALK-LA MIRADA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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'Beat the Odds' program designed to improve focus, team-building and more

Special Education Students Drum Up Support from UCLA

Special education students at the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District will receive increased support thanks to UCLArts and Healing, which plans to use new funding to deliver a drumming program designed to teach students social-emotional skill development.

UCLArts and Healing, a collaboration between nonprofit Arts and Healing Initiative and the UCLA Collaborative Centers for Integrative Medicine, will train upper elementary special education teachers beginning in January to deliver a program called "Beat the Odds: Social and Emotional Skill Building Delivered in a Framework of Drumming."

With major ongoing sponsorship from drum manufacturer Remo, Inc. and a \$40,000 Karl T. Bruhn Research Award from the National Association of Music Merchants, UCLArts and Healing will use a variety of indicators to measure positive and problem social-emotional behavior, as well as academic performance.

"The District is well known for its Visual and Performing Arts program, which has proven to enrich the student experience and bolster academics," said NLMUSD Superintendent Dr. Ruth Pérez. "We are so pleased that we can now add another component to the program while partnering with UCLArts and Healing to study how music can help our special education students."

Beat the Odds integrates activities from contemporary drum circles and group counseling to teach skills that include focus and listening, team building, leadership, expressing feelings,

managing anger and stress, empathy and gratitude. Organizers say Beat the Odds is inclusive, culturally relevant and does not bear the stigma of therapy.

UCLA researchers have shown that Beat the Odds can significantly reduce a spectrum of behavior problems, such as inattention, withdrawal, depression, post-traumatic stress, anxiety, attention deficit/hyperactivity, oppositional defiance and sluggish cognitive tempo.

“Music has proven to be one of the best therapies for school-aged children, which is why we work so hard to build one of the best performing arts programs in the state,” said NLMUSD Board of Education President Margarita Rios. “If we can extend that opportunity to our special education students in a manner in which the therapeutic contributions are intentional and studied, there’s no telling what they can achieve.”

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