



INSight

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Music Therapy Strikes a Positive Note

"You don't have to be musical to love and benefit from music," explains Hanna Tal-Or, the musical therapist at the Institute. "Music can reach into any child's psyche, and the potential for development is great." Most children will respond favorably to music, and all pupils at the Institute have participated in music and movement classes or music therapy sessions either individually or in a small group.

With a variety of instruments, and a relaxing comfortable room with throw pillows and carpeting, the music room is a favorite retreat for almost everyone. Regardless of talent, a person deprived of one sense (in this case - vision) may enjoy a bit of heightened perception in another. In a student like 11-year-old Reuven, however, his entire psychological and social interactions have been enhanced by music therapy. An extremely introverted and insecure child, he has now learned to read notes, and despite his shyness and difficulty in expressing himself, he can write music and he plays with lots of expression. In addition to music therapy, the Institute will provide Reuven with private music lessons, and chances are that he will be encouraged to perform in the Institute's musical ensemble.

Music can be a healing balm, according to Tal-Or, and it is very important to any child to develop listening skills. A

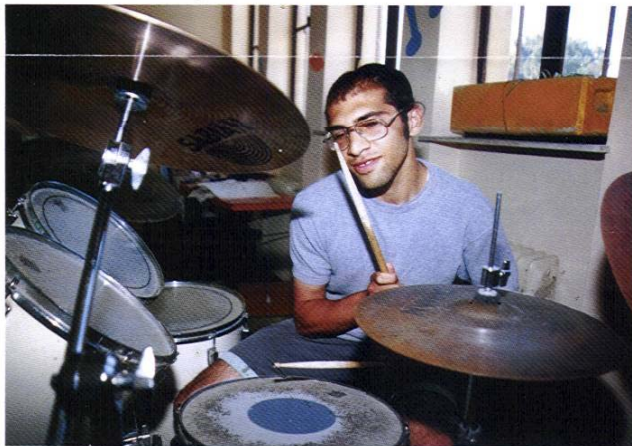


Girls enjoy the keyboard in Music Therapy

blind person is very sensitive to sudden or loud noises without eyes to compensate him or her, and the development of listening skills through music therapy is a big assistance.

In addition to helping to develop listening skills, music therapy can help to refocus one's attention and can even help with conflict resolution between two people. Percussion instruments seem to be the most popular with the children, and 15 year-old Yossi loves to take his frustrations out on the drums or play something a little quieter on the xylophone or organ.

"Music has been a part of my life since my youth explains educator Tal-Or. After earning her degree in psychology, she knew she wanted music in her life as a means and not an end, and she decided to earn a second degree in music therapy. "Regardless of a person's talent, I feel that music can help someone's emotional as well as physical well being," she explains. "The Institute realizes the place of music and uses it wisely and creatively."



Percussion instruments are a favorite at the Institute