

The Drum Circle

Use music and rhythm to build and comm-UNIFY our local and global community.

di Melissa Packowski - Oltre a noi...

The College of Staten Island High School for International Studies is a small public high



school located just outside of New York City. The total population is approximately 525 students from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. With over 1000 applicants each year for just over 100 spots as incoming 9th graders, this school draws from a lottery to gain admission.

The school opened its doors in 2004 on the campus of The College of Staten Island; a community college located centrally in Staten Island. In 2008 the high school outgrew its building on the college campus and was relocated to a brand new building close by. The new building houses four different schools.

The music program, like all other programs in the school, is internationally focused. The curriculum design is unique to the school and works to not only provide a comprehensive and innovative music course, but it also works to enhance the learning opportunities of its students through service learning projects and community building events which are student facilitated. These events are designed to unite all people through one universal groove. We engage in global collaborations through video and live Skype interactions. Since the music departments founding year in 2008 by Ms. Melissa Morris, students who study music in the school have

lobbied for special program opportunities which has helped to expand the program and facilitated the growth of our "Circle of Influence" throughout our community with over 3000 participants. These musicians perform for several charity events and work to establish a culture of giving back to the community with their contribution to "The Gift Of Music" concert series, which is produced by the music director annually and has raised over \$6000 throughout the past 3 years; benefitting our Staten Island community members in need.



Every incoming 9th grader is scheduled for Music and Art in their first year upon entering our school. This helps our 9th graders begin to identify any special talents they have early in their high school experience in the Arts while satisfying their state wide mandate of one Art and one Music credit required for graduation.

The Music program explores and exposes students to instruments from around the world. This immersion into different cultures, indigenous rhythms and melodies, and musical traditions from around the globe helps to instill empathy with its students and works to foster an appreciation for people of all cultures, social-economic backgrounds as well as varying abilities and gifts. The curriculum design takes its biggest influences from Suzuki, Orff Schulwerk, Gordon and Mastery

Learning philosophies as well as from the historical tradition of Drum Circling.

The curriculum is designed to teach music the way we learn language as youngsters while complimenting every lesson with Character Education philosophies and imbedding leadership skill building and accountability into every lesson and classroom climate. Through the cultivation of Character Education lessons, the classroom climate is strongly rooted in peer-to-peer accountability, peer-to-teacher accountability and teacher-to-student accountability.

In the last 8 years, we have seen students awarded with college scholarships for their leadership achievements, students move onto major in Education in college and I have watched as seniors in the program accept interviews in prestigious and Ivy league schools based largely on their vast international experience, accomplishments academically and comprehensive leadership training, community service and service learning accomplishments. **Our department's mission is to use music and rhythm to build and comm-UNIFY our local and global community.**

"The Drum Circle has been used historically by civilizations around the world to communicate and to build community.

We strive to build and even larger community by providing the occasion to drum together no matter where we are; uniting people through rhythm. We strive to bring people together by providing opportunities and occasions to explore our innate ability to come together in commonality and unite as a globe without barrier or prejudice but with respect and appreciation for each contribution to the whole rhythmic experience. It is our belief that people work much more effectively and harmoniously when there is appreciation for each and every contribution to the common outcome." <http://csihsisdrumcircle.weebly.com/about-us.html>

We welcome opportunities to connect locally and globally in a rhythmic and musical exploration of sights and sounds. It is our mission to unite the world in one unified groove, one Drum Circle at a time. Contact the Director Melissa Morris csihsisdrumcircle@gmail.com if you want to join us in our mission.

--



Melissa Packowski CSI High School For International Studies Music Director