



The Irish Association for
**SPINA BIFIDA and
HYDROCEPHALUS**

National Resource Centre

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To Whom It May Concern:

David Burns and Evelio Galán from Waltons New School of Music brought their Drum Workshop to the Summer Independence Training Project run by the Irish Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus in July and August 2004.

The Summer Project is a residential camp for teenagers and young adults with the disabilities Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus. Throughout the week a team of co-ordinators, nurses, volunteers and occupational therapists work with between 15 and 18 participants, helping them to gain independence and grow in confidence and self-esteem.

The degree of disability resulting from Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus varies considerably from person to person, so the groups that David and Evelio worked with had very different levels of physical and intellectual ability within them. I was very impressed with David's instinctual knack of being able to pick out an instrument for each participant, regardless of the extent of their disability.

Many participants were nervous at first, some even reluctant to take part, but David's gentle and encouraging manner quickly put them at ease. Many participants were very proud of what they had achieved at the Drum Workshop. Having done something they may not have tried before, their confidence was boosted.

People with Spina Bifida often have very poor dexterity in their fingers and hands. Using the different instruments helped to exercise their hand function in a fun way.

People with Hydrocephalus often have problems with learning their left from their right. Following the beat of the drums, they were unconsciously working on this skill.

Many people with disabilities have a great interest in music – it is a hobby that can be enjoyed despite limited mobility. For some people it was their first time to try a percussion instrument and many found that they had a talent for it. It was great to introduce these instruments and perhaps even sow the seed for a new interest or hobby. The Drum Workshop was thoroughly enjoyed by not only the participants but also by the volunteers and staff members.

The Drum Workshop had different sequences where group work was involved. Building social skills is a key part of the Summer Project programme. The group sequences created the feeling of working together and also made participants aware of the others in the group.

In short, the Drum Workshop fitted in perfectly with the ethos behind the Summer Project. It was a fantastic success, and inspiring for all involved to see the participants take part in it and get so much out of it. I would like to take this opportunity to wish David and Evelio all the best in the future and I hope that they bring their talents to plenty more people with disabilities.

For more information on any of the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah O'Farrell,
Summer Project Co-ordinator.