

Suzuki Strings Program inspires young musicians with SIUE String Camp

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
July 21 2016 2:40 PM



EDWARDSVILLE – Famous composer Claude Debussy once said, “Works of art make rules; rules do not make works of art.”

Defying the rules to make gorgeous works of art is exactly what the 200 students who normally engage in the **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Suzuki Strings Program** do each day.

This week, the **SIUE String Camp**, led by SIUE Music faculty members **Erika Lord-Castillo** and **Vera McCoy-Sulentic**, allowed young musicians to practice their craft in a group setting with a focus on technique, repertoire, as well as music reading, orchestra or chamber music classes.



Most frequently, when one is introduced to playing a musical instrument, they are taught first to read music. From there, the young musician can translate that learned language into tones by their instrument. Suzuki instruction turns that notion upside down.

“Suzuki is different from what people might normally expect from string education because our students learn initially through listening and wait to learn to read until they’re a little bit older. It’s modeled on how we learn to speak,” Lord-Castillo said before the camp on Tuesday.

This method of instruction allows for a triangle-based learning approach, including the student, parent and teacher.

“Because our kids start younger, often as young as three years old, their parents are really involved in their lessons,” she said. “They attend all of their lessons, and at home, they work as their kids’ home teacher. You’ll see lots of parents here too with their kids.”



Lord-Castillo received her Master’s Degree from SIUE and was eventually hired on as a full time faculty member.

“It’s a very popular program. Our normal Suzuki program here has about 200 kids in it, so it’s very popular and has a very long tradition at SIUE as well. It was the first teacher training program that was established at a university.”

Students marvel their instructors and parents with their skills, sharing their talents that have been developed through careful practice and persistence. It’s truly mind-blowing to see a 10-year old memorize three-minute piece of music from beginning to end and play it with such grace, and in the case of Suzuki, at least ten other kids in one room can do just that.

For more information about the Suzuki Strings program, visit their website at <http://www.siue.edu/artsandsciences/music/suzuki/index.shtml>.