



LA MESA-SPRING VALLEY SCHOOLS

News Release

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Spring Valley Academy Teacher Leaders Share About Music and Inclusion at San Diego County Equity Symposium

Just before the fall break at the beautiful Shelter Island Sheraton, thousands of educators gathered for the San Diego County Equity Symposium. The SDCOE team described, “At the symposium, participants will deepen their understanding and ability to lead universal design for learning, engage in difficult equity conversations, and apply practices around school culture and morale when working in challenging situations and with diverse stakeholders.”

Presenting before a national audience of educators from San Diego County and across the United States, were two incredible teacher leaders from Spring Valley Academy. Music teacher and band director, Jim Villegas, and special educator, Dr. Carolyn Lindstrom, co-facilitated a presentation at the Equity Symposium. Mr. Villegas and Dr. Lindstrom led the session, “Teaching Music in a Full Inclusion Classroom: Does it Work?”

Mr. Villegas and Dr. Lindstrom have designed and taught a Sonic Expressions music class at Spring Valley Academy over the course of the last few years. The Sonic Expressions class is one that teaches music to all children and also works to build social skills. In the program, students with severe to moderate disabilities, who are often medically fragile, are paired with peer buddies. Peer buddies help their friends with what may be difficult physical tasks to producing music. Together, the children and staff alike learn how to read, play and make music. The result is something very special. The students then perform at various events to showcase their learning and musical abilities.

The Sonic Expressions program was funded thanks in part to the La Mesa-Spring Valley Education teacher grant program. Mr. Villegas and Dr. Lindstrom have researched the topic of music and inclusion and have implemented a program and kept data. The results have been wonderful with increased academic achievement, musical performance and a sense of community.

During their session, Mr. Villegas and Dr. Lindstrom put adult learners to the test and had them making music with bells and boomwhackers. The result was adults learning and having fun together, just as the students do.

To learn more about Sonic Expressions, our schools and other programs and people in La Mesa-Spring Valley Schools, visit our website at www.lmsvschools.org or visit us online on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and YouTube.

