

Holmes School Kids Try African Music, Drums, Dance

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A local organization recently brought a little African culture and fun to students at Holmes Elementary School.

The group Infinite Roots, which is dedicated to promoting African instrumentation, art, and music, performed a unique concert on the Holmes playground.

Infinite Roots member Henry Jones led the school in learning traditional songs and dance, and brought Grade 5 students up to play a variety of drums — large and small — as part of the festivities. Jones also shared masks from the Congo of animals, like zebras, and people.

To teach the rhythms to Grade 5 students, Jones would play and the students would echo the sounds. Once they got it, the young musicians would then play the background music for the songs the other students would sing.

"This is such a unique program that allows us to bring the whole school together all at once, " said Holmes Principal Paula Bleakley, who noted that the staff joined in the singing and dancing. Part of the presentation also is about "creating a sense of community and modeling good behavior and good citizenship."

Bleakley added that the mix of music, art, and culture was a great opportunity for students. The Holmes PTO sponsored the Infinite Roots group as part of an enrichment opportunity.

— *Marc Marin is district director of instructional technology. This article is republished from the Darien Public Schools News of the Week newsletter.*