

BUSINESS

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The Kindermusik program is now offered in Ridgefield through Hearts and Minds Music. Ridgefielders Lili Schroppe and Amy Shinohara founded Hearts and Minds Music to help young children who are ready for more than “mommy and me” music classes but not yet ready for private lessons. From left are John Briody, Lili Schroppe, Amy Shinohara and Carter Schroppe. —Jenny Cox photo

New Kindermusik program here offers more than ‘mommy and me’

by JENNY COX
Press Staff

For musically minded moms, there is a new program in town, offering Kindermusik to kids age newborn to seven years old.

“Hearts and Minds Music,” a business started by two Ridgefield moms, began classes this Tuesday, Sept. 19, in the South Hall at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church

on Main Street. The music program is intended to bridge the gap between traditional “mommy and me” music classes and private lessons.

The founders of Hearts and Minds are Amy Shinohara and Lili Schroppe, who both said they turned to the Kindermusik program for their own kids after they grew frustrated by the lack of music classes in the area that addressed their children’s musical

needs.

Kindermusik International is the world’s leading publisher of music and movement curricula for parents and children under age seven. There are more than 5,000 licensed educators who use the Kindermusik curricula in more than 35 countries.

“I fell in love with the curriculum,” Ms. Shinohara said. “It was exactly what I was looking for. It’s more than ‘mommy and

me.' My son learned to read music and try instruments, but it was appropriate for his age."

Ms. Shinohara is an accomplished musician herself, and she said she played piano "all my life."

"I have a music background and have taught in the past," she said. "There is a need in this area."

Ms. Schroppe brings her business background to Hearts and Minds along with an interest in music. "I have two children who have musical interest but weren't quite old enough for piano lessons," she said.

The classes

The Kindermusik classes "include a little bit from lots of schools of thought," said Ms. Shinohara. "Part of the core philosophy is that parents are an integral part — the at-home materials do an excellent job. Part of their philosophy is educating parents."

"It's a very interactive program," she said. "It's about participating. Every class includes some instrument exploration."

Ms. Schroppe said she was impressed with how the program allowed children to "explore" instruments.

Hearts and Minds will offer classes on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The class for babies — ranging from newborns to 18 months — is called Kindermusik Village, which will be on Wednesdays from 10:30 to 11:15. For children 18 months to three years, Kindermusik Our Time will be offered from 9:30 to 10:15 or 10:30 to 11:15 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. For three- to five-year-olds, Kindermusik Imagine That! will run on Wednesdays from 11:45 to 12:30. The program for children age five to seven is Kindermusik for the Young Child, which will be offered Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 and Wednesdays from 4:15 to 5:15.

The class sizes will be limited, and inter-

ested families are invited to try a free preview class.

Ms. Shinohara said she was drawn to the Kindermusik program partly because it was based on extensive research.

"Growing up a musician, I take for granted the importance of music, but in the last decade there has been an explosion of science that proves what most of us have felt all along — music actually stimulates all sides of the brain," she said. "Music really helps connect the dots essentially in the brain."

Ms. Schroppe said she felt she was contributing to the Ridgefield community by bringing the Kindermusik program here. "One of our goals is to create musical children, not young musicians," she said.

For more information, call 438-4939 or e-mail heartsandmindsmusic@yahoo.com.