

## Camp of Rock Teaches Girls More Than Music

By DEBORAH APTON  
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### Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls Is a 'Self-Esteem Development Program'

In an old, industrial sewing machine factory in Portland, Ore., you don't ever hear any mechanical noises. Instead, you might drive by and hear a Jimmy Hendrix tune roaring from the warehouse.

Welcome to the Rock 'n' Roll Camp for Girls, where the motto is "We put the 'amp' in camp." Over the course of three weeks, girls ranging in age from 8 to 18 spend one week singing, head banging, playing music and writing their very own songs. Yes, that's right, it's for girls only.

The camp's mission is to build girls' self-esteem through music creation and performance.

"We are a self-esteem development program," explains the camp's program director. "We use music education, mentorship and community building. ... Taking away the boy aspect makes girls more relaxed because they don't have to constantly compare themselves to what the boys are doing."

When "Nightline" visited, we learned that there's no such thing as "too loud" or "too uninhibited" at this camp. From one room we heard some drums, some bass guitar jamming, and a lot of rockin':

I am a rock star  
I have a limo It's very nice, I forgot the price  
My hair is blue  
My hairspray is like glue  
You can hear my music far and near  
Because I am a rock star and I'm going far.

The budding rock stars are part of the self-named group the Orange Bananas, and they were rehearsing a song written by band member Honor Levy, who played bass guitar. Honor, only 9 years old, is back at camp for the second summer. On the first day of camp, she found her band mates and began writing and composing their song.

### 'There Isn't Anything She Can't Do'

Honor lives in Los Angeles, but for the past two summers has come to Portland to stay with her grandmother, Friedee Lunt, just so she can attend camp. And, like many of the girls, Honor isn't at camp just for the music.

"Every time Honor comes home she feels as though there isn't anything she can't do. She can make music, she can be heard," said Lunt. "There isn't anything that she misses talking about. It's great."

And that's what this camp strives for; music is just the tool to help girls build a more confident view of themselves.

In addition to instrument and band practices, the girls participate in self-defense classes and hold group discussions that focus on the pressures of being a girl.

At one session, the camp's executive director, Winner Bell, gathered the girls in a large circle and asked, "How many of you have been told that you can't play a game or can't do something because you're a girl?"

All the hands in the room shot up.

"That's a stereotype," Bell explained, "It makes you feel icky in your stomach, and you feel really bad."

### Growing Confidence

Another camper, 11-year-old Corey Linver, is small for her age -- something that isn't easy -- and she said she is shy.

As the lead singer for her band the Silver Souls, Corey struggled when singing her melody in front of the other girls; she seemed nervous.

When asked if the emphasis on girl power at camp helps her to overcome her nerves and be herself, she said, "Yes it has. It's helped me express myself even when there's other people around. I think it's cool."

Later, while practicing with her band, Corey was far from shy as she clapped her hands, jumped and sang her song with the ease of a professional rocker.

Honor Levy said that when she comes to camp, the stress of always trying to fit in just fades away.

Her grandmother said she couldn't be happier with her punk-rock grandchild who is already dealing with a surprising amount of pressure for a third grader. What types of pressures?

"Body, clothing, friends, the proper friends ... everything," said Lunt. "And [at camp] there's no such thing as the proper instrument or the proper song. They get to do what they get to do."

When the one week is over, the camp goes out with a bang, at a real rock concert where each camper's band -- from Honor and her Orange Bananas to Corey and the Silver Souls -- performs before an audience of hundreds.

Every last one is a rock star. And if the organizers of the camp get their wish, the girls leave full of confidence that girls really do rock -- a lesson that these girls are learning to the rhythm of a camp they'll never forget.