

Rocker girls make noise of summer

BY ELVA RAMIREZ

BY DAY, KARLA SCHICKELE is a speechwriter for a top city politician.

But by night, the 39-year-old Fort Greene resident and daughter of composer Peter Schickele plays in two rock bands — and now she is bringing her passion for rock 'n' roll to girls of all ages through a Brooklyn summer rock camp.

"Most of the girls have never played music before," said Schickele, who has taken a leave of absence this summer from her job with Controller Bill Thompson to run the camp at the Brooklyn Friends School in downtown Brooklyn.

"That's the beauty of its being pop music and not classical," added Schickele, who plays bass, sings and writes lyrics in the bands Ida and K. "You don't need any training; you just jump in and do it."

Schickele started the Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls last summer with 66 girls in one week-long session.

This year, the program more than doubled — with 170 girls in two sessions. The first session ran from July 17-21; the second goes from Aug. 7-11.

Most of the girls, ages 8 to 18, are from the city, though others come from as far away as Colorado and Nova Scotia.

On the first day, everyone is given earplugs. "We never tell the girls to turn the volume down," said program



At Willie Mae Rock Camp for Girls, band coach Amber Champion guides Caitlin Whelan (above), 9, and Victoria Schall, 9, learns drums (right).

coordinator Emily Moeller, 22.

Then the girls break into bands, where they come up with names, write lyrics and put together songs they perform at a final concert.

During the first session, teacher Caryn Havlik, who plays in three bands, rallied four girls on drums to explode in unison. "The kick crash is a very satisfying noise," Havlik, 33, said.

Ming Cook, a shy 10-year-old from the upper West Side, said she loved the energy of drumming. "You can get loud," said Ming. "You get to hit stuff.

Shayla Williams, 9, from Brownsville, formed a band called Black Rainbow with four other girls.

"The sound is loud and joyful," said Shayla. "The title might make people think that it's one of those groups where they break the guitar and everything, but it's not really like that."

Schickele said the camp is about more than just learning to play music. "We want the girls to come away from camp thinking that they can do anything they want to in their lives," she said.

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