

Music to Your Kid's Ears

The Fender Center and Museum helps aspiring young musicians tune into a cool vibe with its Kids Rock Free® program

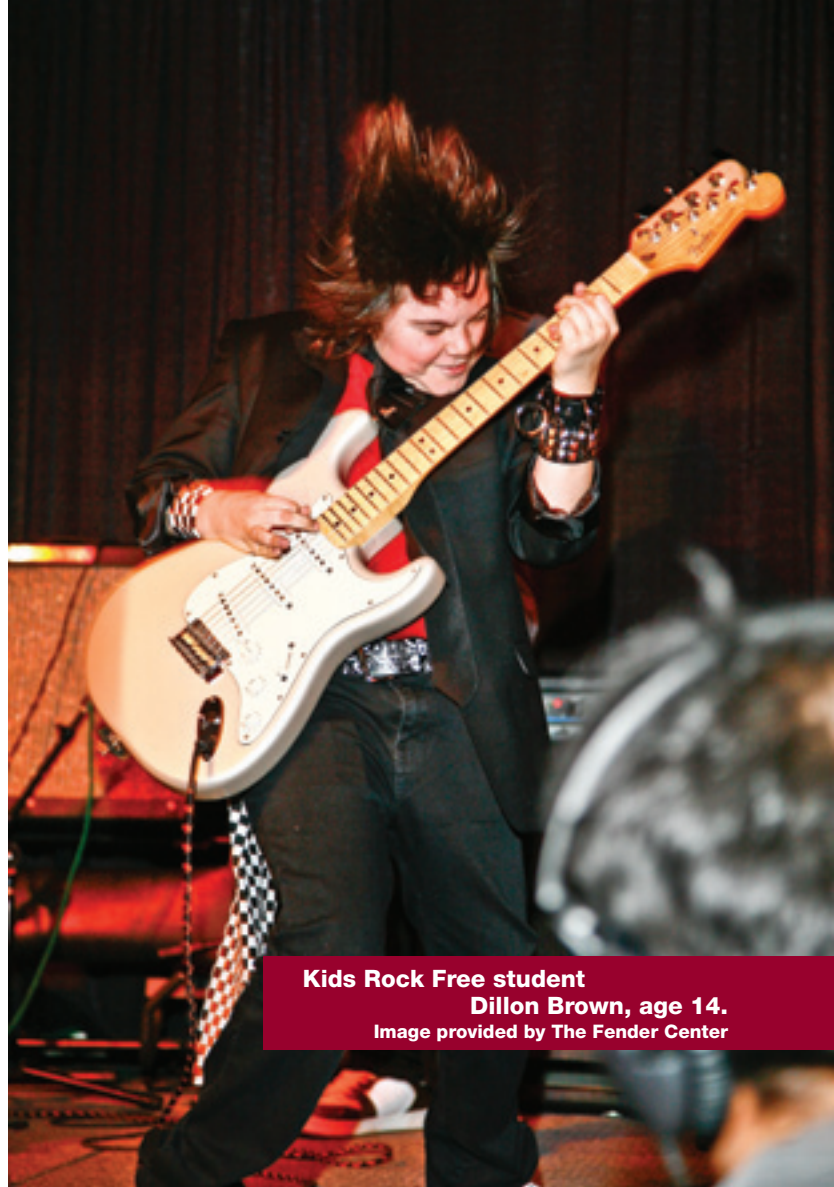
By *Sandra Shrader*

Do you have a potential guitar star who dreams about rocking the house, but your family budget is already too crowded for music lessons?

Don't despair. With its Kids Rock Free® Musical Education Program, the Fender Center and Museum of Music and the Arts may be just the ticket for your child to make the musical scene.

Located in Corona, the non-profit organization, sponsored by Fender Musical Instruments Corporation, provides free and low cost musical instruction in classroom settings to children ages seven to 17 years. The classes not only focus on learning the guitar (the instrument which was so revolutionized in the 1940s and '50s by Leo Fender's electric visions), but also the piano, bass guitar, combo band, vocal performance and drums.

**Kids
Rock
Free®** *fender*
CENTER



Kids Rock Free student

Dillon Brown, age 14.

Image provided by The Fender Center

"The Kids Rock Free program's use of classroom settings really does make it fun to learn music," says Debbie Shuck, executive director with The Fender Center, describing rooms lined with mint-green guitars and lit-up keyboards. "I can't really explain it, other than to say that it's just magical how it happens. It's synergy between the kids and their teacher; it's one-to-one teaching. The teachers learn about what the kids have to say, and the kids learn from each other, too!"

Enrolling in Kids Rock Free can be done either by signing up for 16 weeks (two sessions) of free lessons—there's currently a one-year wait list and parents must volunteer their time—or, to bypass the waiting period, by the paying low-cost fee of \$150 per 8-week session. "With each class time ranging from an hour to hour-and-a-half, the low cost fees are still very affordable," says Shuck.

The program began in 1998 after Corona city and school officials approached the Fender Corporation, whose manufacturing facility in Corona produces high quality electric guitars. Since Fender began sponsoring a musical education program for students, more than 10,000 kids have participated in the classes.


A portion of the funding for Kids Rock Free comes from admission fees to The Fender Center Museum, located in the same building as the classrooms.

A unique day-trip destination in its own right, the museum is a guitar nut's paradise of exhibits of instruments used by Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, Muddy Waters, Dick Dale, Paul Rogers, Kurt Cobain and other legendary axe men. Also on display is a huge exhibit of Johnny Cash memorabilia, the only one of its kind in the country to feature items from the life of the iconic Man in Black.

"So popular is the Kids Rock Free program that there are currently 500 students enrolled and a waiting list of approximately 800 kids," says Shuck, and the center has embarked on a new fundraiser backed by a rock star force to raise money for more beginner, intermediate and beginner classes.

"We're launching a new fundraiser called Campaign 800 to raise enough money to provide classes for the kids still on the waiting list," says Shuck. "Steve Miller [of the Steve Miller Band] supports the Kids Rock Free program, and, on his upcoming 13-city concert 2010 tour will be urging audiences to donate \$10 to the program via texting 'ROCK to 50555'."

With summer sessions starting June 21, 2010, Shuck is excited about the Campaign 800 fundraiser making it possible for more kids to follow their musical paths.

"Most people don't know that The Fender Center and Museum is a non-profit organization. They think we're part of the Fender company," she says. "Once they find out that we're a non-profit that provides free music lessons to kids, they think that's really cool!" 

**For more information about Fender Center
or to sign up for classes:**

www.FenderCenter.org

365 North Main Street, Corona, CA 92880

Phone: 951-735-2440 Fax: 951-735-2576

Business Office Hours: Monday – Friday (8:30am – 5:00pm)
Museum/Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Saturday (11am – 4pm)
Closed: Major Holidays and Sunday-Tuesday

Admission: Adults: \$10

Students and Senior: \$8

Children 12 and under: Free with Each Paid Adult



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