

International Pied Piper to Pay Visit

By Chris Post, The Democrat News, Marshall, MO April 10, 2004

The halls of Marshall's schools will be filled with music Thursday when an "international pied piper" comes to town. Jim Valley, songwriter and educator, will be in town to present his Rainbow Planet workshop, which is designed to foster creativity, friendship and self-esteem in young children.

"The one thing I want the students to get out of this is that they are special people, and if they use their imagination and friendship with one another, they can make a difference in the world," Valley said.

Jim's work operates on the understanding that children learn in many different ways and one way to help students learn to read is through musical/ rhythmic intelligence. This is a language related intelligence, which begins with a degree of sensitivity an individual has to the pattern of sound and the ability to respond emotionally to these sound patterns.

For example, teachers have discovered that some students are able to learn to read with songbooks. First the students learn the song, being able to recite it from memory. Then by following along the lines of print with their finger, the students begin to read the words they've already learned.

During the day of the workshop, each class at Benton Elementary School will compose a poem and, with Valley's help, set it to music. The workshop also provides the students with the opportunity to express themselves through movement.

"I am a platform for children's ideas and concepts," Valley said. "With kids, I'm collaborating with some of the freshest minds in the world."

The day's activities will culminate with a performance by Valley from 6 to 7pm in the Marshall High School Little Theater. The event, sponsored by Parents As Teachers, Missouri Preschool Project, and Project REACH, is open to the public and children of all ages are invited.