



Dear Sir/Madam

Blues in the Schools programs work as a tool to extinguish violence from our schools and neighborhoods. Blues in the Schools (BITS) programs are music education programs including "Trading Handguns for Harmonicas, which is an after/during school program (community center, etc.). Students learn to sing the blues and play a harmonica, guitar, and songwriting workshops. These programs are presented by Fruteland Jackson.

Electro-Fi recording artist, author and storyteller, Fruteland Jackson, is a three time blues music award nominee (solo acoustic), grew up on Chicago's Westside. He has been presenting Blues in the Schools programs for nearly nineteen years and has reached over one-million students. Fruteland is the recipient of the Blues Foundation's *Keeping the Blues Alive* Award in Education.

BITS programs first emerged in Chicago, Illinois in the 1970's with Chicago blues legend Willie Dixon, considered by many to be the spiritual godfather of BITS programs. Today BITS programs are growing in popularity nationwide and Canada.

Because of the powerful impact that popular music has on young people, and in light of the trend of violence that has gripped our nations schools (Columbine, Chicago), we have found BITS programs to be a counter balance, providing a fun way to channel deep emotions and venting stress. In this type of group setting the possibility of student alienation, and absenteeism is diminished.

BITS programs create a deeper appreciation and greater awareness of this distinctive American roots music. Chicago holds a deep tradition of Blues history. BITS program's greatest achievements have been the building of self-esteem, the promotion of diversity, intense work study and team building. The remedial effects of Blues in the Schools Programs are as follows:

- Breaks down social barriers (teaches tolerance)
- Brings about cross-cultural understanding (through knowledge of other cultures - past and present)
- Creates Blues culture
- Develops self-esteem (removes self-doubt)
- Enhances literacy both academically and socially as well as students creativity
- Helps develop aesthetic judgment
- Improves school attendance (decreases drop out rate)
- Increases thinking and problem solving ability

- Measures music potential and self-accomplishment and instills a sense of pride.
- Can close the literacy gap by using music as a second language
- Provides education, entertainment and career opportunities (commercial and entertainment industries)
- Valuable teaching tool for students with special needs and (physically, emotionally and mentally challenged) Works well with students from all walks of life.

BITS programs are endorsed by the Blues Foundation and hundreds of educational institutions across the US and Canada. Bits programs teach tolerance while providing a vehicle for music education. The impact of these unique programs in combating violence in our nation's educational system is remarkable. BITS programs are structured with educational components and teaching standards for all grade levels K-12 and adult.

Please visit The Fruteland Jackson Homepage website (www.fruteland.com) for additional information. Please call or email to discuss BITS programs. .

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IT Talent

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