

Jacquelyn said she knew a little about China because of her dad's business and shows she had seen on TV.

"It's really fun to learn about other cultures," she said. "How they dressed and what they ate."

Maddie Kerch, 10, of Highland Park liked studying Aborigines. They made instruments, like a didgeridoo--fashioned from eucalyptus trees hollowed by termites--stamping sticks and bull roarers, which are made of stick and string. When twirled, Black said, they make a whirring noise.

"The noise helps focus your thoughts," Black said.

Pat Pearson, director of the program, spent Thursday singing and playing the piano as the children rehearsed for Friday's show at a Libertyville nursing home.

"What better way to have students be creative than by teaching creation," he said.

While Pearson played, the children sang "Come Dream With Me." Some younger campers weaved in and out with a Chinese dragon they had built and decorated, to the accompaniment of several children playing instruments, some of which they made.

Maddie said she is excited about her role as a narrator.

"This is really cool," Maddie said. "Some of the little kids don't know their parts yet, but I am sure they will get it."

The summer program is housed in the Midwest Arts Building, once a stockade at Ft. Sheridan.

"We like to say--from jail bars to musical bars," said Sarah Barnes, a program spokeswoman.