

## Family fun

# Moms kick out the jams for tiny hip hoppers

### ART JAM WITH THE CANDY

#### BAND

**What** This event for kids 3-8 is a rock concert performed by four stay-at-home moms who make punk rock nursery rhymes Music crafts and light refreshments

**When** 11 a.m., Saturday March 19

**Where** Erhard BMW of Farmington Hills 38700 Grand River Ave., Farmington Hills

**Admission** Free at the door, tickets also available in advance

**Phone** (248) 306-6800

**For more information** Visit [www.candyband.com](http://www.candyband.com)

BY LANA MINI  
STAFF WRITER

There aren't any teenagers angrily pumping their fists to the beat at this punk rock show. Instead, children barely 8 years old are raising little fists happily to imitate the shape of rocks.

Hands in the air, they lay their hands flat to make the form of paper. Then scissors. The kids are rocking to the beat of the hard rock song *Rock, Paper, Scissors* sung by four rocking Oakland County moms who formed the Candy Band.

It's an aggressive, energetic band that plays hard punk rock for kids.

And for parents, too. Nursery rhymes rock 'n' roll style. Some songs, like *Rock, Paper, Scissors*, are written by the Candy Band. They also do hard versions of cover songs like *Itsy Bitsy Spider*. The Candy Band say the harder they rock the more children ages 3 to 8, and their parents, like it.

The Candy Band is making

headlines nationwide and are performing at Art Jam, a free concert at 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 19, at Erhard BMW in Farmington Hills. The show is a partnership event between the dealership and the city of Farmington Hills Special Services Department.

"It's an exciting band that kids can relate to," said Nancy Coumoundouros of the special services department. "There is no one like them. The kids can also make their own percussion instruments there to play along with the band." Refreshments will be served, too.

Pleasing parents musically, and also kids, was important for the Candy Band. The songs often have more of a feel of The Clash, Iggy Pop or the Ramones instead of sleepy nursery rhymes.

Band founder Paula Messner, formerly of the popular 1980s Detroit band Vertical Pillows, has played guitar for 30 years. She's always listened to heavy metal and punk rock. When she became a mom, she quickly tired



The Candy Band is composed of four stay-at-home moms who create music for young kids. No syrupy sound here, this band is aggressive hard rock with happy lyrics.

of sugary children's music.

"Most of it is so boring," Messner said. "And I found other moms agreed. So I decided to change that. I like energetic, really aggressive music and kids do, too."

Messner, who taught aerobics at the Detroit YWCA, told her idea to moms Tammy Ristau, Daniela Burekhardt and Anita Griglio Kelly. Messner was the only mom with extensive musical experience, but the determined women all had some basic knowledge and began to study hard.

In just two short years, the Candy Band has recorded three

CDs that sell strongly at their shows and from their Web site. It's also sold at local candy stores.

Band members took on child-friendly stage names like Starburst, Kit Kat, Almond Joy and Skittles. They wear tiaras and fun clothing.

"The kids really like the song *Ken Lost His Head*," Messner said. "It's about Ken's life with Barbie after he lost his head. He can't eat, he can't have fun, his life isn't the same."

The band's popularity has

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