

CitySongs Notes

Fall Newsletter 2004, Vol. 11

A Season of Growth and Change as we build a strong CitySongs Community

by Sarah Overly Johansen

I was recently forwarded a newsletter from two singer/ songwriters in Chicago who quoted Plato:

"I would teach children music, physics and philosophy, but most importantly music, for in the patterns of music and all the arts are the keys of learning."

What an affirmation for the work that we do! As CitySongs embarks on another year—full of change and excitement—we are thinking a lot about how our program promotes learning for our youth—and also for our community. In a current world of budget cuts, disparate priorities, and community divides—we need to embrace both the healing and the learning that comes with music. We must stay focused on growing healthy kids and healthy communities. Now more than ever, the CitySongs goals seem applicable and necessary. Together we must all work for:

Healthy Youth Development: Encouraging long-term healthy social, emotional, and educational development through music participation;

Artistic Achievement: Helping all youth develop high-level skills at singing, dancing, recitation, public performing and creative self-expression;

Positive Community Impact: Enabling the CitySongs kids to inspire community vitality, solidarity, and cultural inclusiveness through public performances in mainstream and grassroots venues.

This fall CitySongs begins our thirteenth season and with it has come some big changes. Helen Kivnick, our Founder and Executive Director, is on Sabbatical until August 2005. Helen will still be very connected to the program but she will be taking the time to pull together all that we have learned from 12 years of programming. It is very exciting to think of the growth and teaching opportunities that will develop from Helen's time away.

I am excited about the opportunity that my new title holds. For 2004-05, I will be the Acting Executive Director as well as the Social Work/Education Director. I have great supports to get the job done and look forward to continuing the tradition of excellence that Helen has set.

Margaret LaFleur is returning for her third season as our Music Director. Margaret's musical leadership and commitment to students are a key part of our program and we are very fortunate to have her as part of our group!



Left to Right: Margaret LaFleur, Allison Adrian, Cathy Bouggy, Sarah Overly Johansen, Heather Johnson

We also have some new staff who are wonderful additions to our program.

Catherine Bouggy is our new Operations Manager: Cathy recently relocated to the Twin Cities from Raleigh, North Carolina. With extensive experience in youth programming and business management, Cathy has jumped in to keep our office running. We value her effort and enthusiasm and the kids adore her accent!

Allison Adrian is our new Rehearsal and Performance Support Staff. Currently pursuing a PhD in ethnomusicology at the University of Minnesota, Alli brings not only a strong educational background but also a clear passion for music and social justice. Alli's adventuresome spirit and commitment to youth are golden stars in the CitySongs program—it is great to have her on board!

We also have an MSW Intern this Year—**Heather Johnson**. A native of Minnesota, Heather has been away in California and Michigan working in a variety of adolescent programs. She returned to the Cities to obtain a Masters of Social Work at the University of Minnesota School of Social Work and will be spending the year at CitySongs as part of her Field Placement. Heather is a fantastic addition to our group!

Over the summer, **Robert Samuelson** began working at CitySongs through an internship at MusicTech College. Robert brings a great knowledge and appreciation for sound and has been working with the CitySongs staff to improve the use of technology within our program. This fall, he will continue to work with staff but also teach students about technology and sound and even train some of the kids to be our tech support!

We are very excited that **Aja Pridgen**, a former CitySongs Student and current music major at the University of Minnesota has returned to help out as an Assistant Music Director for the 04-05 season. Aja is admired by the CitySongs students. She is a beam of energy and light for our program. Her fun games and songs keep everyone on their toes!

Continued...

Continued from cover...

As in years past, we will also benefit from the help of many volunteers and interns. Although we have a solid group to start the year, we always welcome more!

And with exciting staff, comes an exciting season! 2004-05 is going to be full of fun opportunities and big events. We have a great group of students that are eager to sing out and share their voices. Already this fall we have been a part of the Jewish Community Action Ha Kriah event—featuring the music of African American and Jewish performers and the Wellstone Call to Justice Awards; the College of Human Ecology's Annual Scholarship and Donor reception, and the Landmark Center's Great Pumpkin Festival. This year, we are also looking forward to our Winter Concert, A Community of Peace, and a February Event, Finding Our Voice, in collaboration with the Twin Cities Women's Choir and the Fair School.

We look forward to the many other opportunities that will fill our performance calendar, and to meeting all of the students and community members that will join our audience.

In conclusion, as we begin the year and look forward to all that we will learn, it is also important to look back on the messages from last season. We must continue to learn and grow- but we must also take the time to appreciate the impact that we have made. Thank you to everyone who joined with us to keep the Children's Fire burning—together we DO make a difference!

Dear CitySongs Members and Supporters,

As many of you may already know, my role at CitySongs is different for the 2004/2005 season. Since starting CitySongs in 1992 I've attended about half of all rehearsals and performances, worked closely with all staff, and most kids, and many parents. I've also worked closely with CitySongs Board members, funders, and other community supporters. I've been involved with (and to some extent in charge of) every aspect of the CitySongs program. That's what my being Executive Director has meant. For the 2004-05 year, my role will be as more of a CitySongs observer than a participant. Sarah Overly Johansen will be serving as CitySongs Acting Executive Director, along with continuing to direct Social Work/Education activities.

I will be spending the year reviewing 12 years of CitySongs experiences, looking at all that we have learned and accomplished together, putting those lessons into words, and then helping us all work together to become the best we can be for the future. As part of writing about CitySongs for arts, youth development, and community vitality audiences, I will work with CitySongs Board, staff, Kids, and other stakeholders to develop ideas for CitySongs' own next developmental stages. I plan to attend some CitySongs rehearsals and performances and promise to stay in touch through email.

Most importantly, I'll be watching from the sidelines and cheering everyone on, every step of the way.

All together, we WILL keep the Children's Fire burning!!!! *Warmly, Helen*



"With our brains, we welcome you! With our words, we welcome you! With our hearts, we welcome you! See we have nothing up our sleeves."

CitySongs Kids speak...

"I like that we sing for people who need comfort. Our songs have a message and people like to hear it. I don't think about how you look or your style; it's just be the best you can."

"It's not about your skin color. All that matters is respect, love, and comfort."

"I learned how to appreciate others for who they are."



"I used to be a meanie, but when I joined City Songs, I learned not to do that – by singing."

"Be myself and do the best I can do."

"Excellent—it's fun to see what all kids can do if given the opportunity."

Upcoming Performances:

November 13, 2004, 11:00 a.m.

Seward Arts Festival

Triangle Park on Franklin and 26th Ave., Minneapolis

December 11, 2004, 5:00 p.m.

Camphor United Methodist Church's Ujima Event

Martin Luther King Center, 271 Mackubin St., St. Paul

December 12, 2004, 4:00 p.m.

13th Annual CitySongs Winter Concert

"A Community of Peace"

University of St. Thomas, O'Shaughnessy Educational Auditorium, Cleveland Ave., St. Paul

February 5, 2005, 7:00 p.m.

"Finding Your Voice" Concert

Twin Cities Women's Choir, CitySongs, & The Fair School

Central Presbyterian Church, 500 Cedar St., St. Paul

March 7, 2005

The Freedom Concert in collaboration with the Talmud Torah Choir

Jewish Community Center, 1375 St. Paul Ave., St. Paul

May 14, 2005, Save the date!!

13th Annual CitySongs Spring Concert

College of St. Catherine, Jean D'Arc Auditorium

Please note: This is not a complete listing of our performances. Please visit our new website

<http://citysongs.umn.edu>

From our Music Director

Ah, the beginning of a new CitySongs year! There is lots of excitement in the air as we register new and returning CitySongs members. We have a great year planned and we look forward to developing "A Community of Peace" among our singers. The returning students will welcome the new members and offer a musical foundation for them to build on while continuing to develop their own musicality, self confidence, and their performing abilities.

Our students represent diverse communities of the Twin Cities. Their singing experiences range from those who are very shy, who have sung very little and are "finding their voices", to those who love to sing, who have had lots of singing experiences, who have found their voices and are very eager to share their talents. It is most rewarding to see the new and shy students start to develop their potential after only one rehearsal.

Special Thanks



CitySongs would like to offer a very special thank you to **Elliot and Eloise Kaplan** for their very generous contribution this Fall. It is with such generosity that we can do **BIG THINGS** with the CitySongs program. We are very grateful to the Kaplan's for having such a positive impact on the program. All together, we **WILL** keep the Children's Fire burning!!!!



Warming up at rehearsal in September



Aja Pridgen, a CitySongs graduate and volunteer, energizes the group



Singing out at rehearsal this Fall



CitySongs Kids in the recording studio, August 2004

by **Margaret LaFleur**

CitySongs offers a unique opportunity for students to experience the process of growth and to know that we are not trying to develop a final product, but we are a "work in progress" that will allow continued development in their social, academic, cultural and musical lives.

My tenure with CitySongs, which began in January of 2003 as a six-month commitment, has now reached twenty-one months. As a director, I continue to grow in the same areas as our students and I marvel at the importance of CitySongs in the lives of our young people. We now have a CitySongs graduate who is a third year music major at the University of Minnesota. She holds such fond memories of her time at CitySongs and she is an excellent role model for our performers. The dedicated staff of CitySongs is very excited about this New Year. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your lives.

CitySongs

c/o University of Minnesota
School of Social Work
105 Peters Hall
1404 Gortner Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Minneapolis, MN
Permit #155



*"Each of us may be little. But each one of us is big enough to help someone else.
And working together we can make big progress toward making things right for all of us."*

New Website!!

If you have been to www.citysongs.org lately, you will notice that it is under construction. We are thrilled that our new website will be up and running by the middle of November. It will be interactive and up to date. Check it out! Website address: <http://citysongs.umn.edu> Email address: citysongs@che.umn.edu

Booking Information

The CitySongs Kids can enhance any conference, celebration, meeting, and gathering with their powerful performances. If you are interested in booking CitySongs for an event, please contact Cathy Bouggy at 612-626-1241 or cbougy@che.umn.edu. Thank you for helping promote CitySongs. We look forward to working with you!

Calling all volunteers!

Every year CitySongs enlists an amazing group of volunteers from a variety of backgrounds to help us in a variety of areas. We are always looking for great volunteers in the following areas: Group Mentors/Arts Coaches – help at rehearsals and concerts, Office Assistants – help with mailings and other ongoing administrative projects in the office, & Special Project Assistants – help with special fundraising, public relations or marketing projects. If you would like to volunteer, contact Cathy Bouggy 612-626-1241 or cbougy@che.umn.edu



Top: CitySongs Kids perform "Revolution" at the MN State Fair in August
Left: Kids at Power Hour this Fall
Right: Our technology project in action this summer.

Winter Open Enrollment – January 6th-February 17th