

*'A Musical Rainbow'*

# Montreal trip led to choir's founding

By GEORGE EVASHUK  
Herald Special

A choir of teenage girls is soon to make its collective voice heard for the first time in Georgetown.

The Cantante Singers, formed last October, has 26 girls so far, who are in rehearsal for their first concert, *A Musical Rainbow*, May 4 at St. John's United Church.

"Joining a choir as a hobby is different than taking music at school," choir conductor Dale Wood told *The Herald* in a recent interview. "It's the same, but completely different."

Mr. Wood traced the formation of the choir to a visit by St. John's Teen choir to Montreal last year to sing before an audience of about 8,000 at St. Joseph's Oratory.

On the way back, choir members talked of the uniqueness of the experience of being in a church choir, he said.

The choir also performed at the Halton Hills Arts Council Summerfest in Acton last year, Mr. Wood said, and a number of people called up to inquire about joining.

"We felt perhaps there was a need for it in Halton Hills," he said. "Another reason we started one is because there isn't one in this area outside of

**PRESENTING**  
**The Cantante Singers**  
**IN CONCERT**  
**May 4, 3 p.m.**  
**ST. JOHN'S CHURCH**

school."

Mr. Wood also credited the efforts of music teachers Howard Widmark of Centennial school and Dave Shrubsole of Harrison school in the formation of The Cantante Singers.

After gaining support from St. John's United church, the choir formed. All but one or two from the church's teen choir joined, as well as about nine girls from outside the church. Mr. Wood hopes the choir will grow to about 40 voices and become a "mini-version of the Georgetown Choral Society".

Mr. Wood is both enthusiastic and proud of the girls in the choir.

"The girls' attitude is tremendous," he said.

"They're willing to try anything."

Some of the girls have a voice "almost like a boy soprano," he added. "They have that capability."

"The girls' voices are also free of vibrato and tremolo which makes them perhaps vocally able to sing different types of music in the proper inflection. They can attempt music others can't."

For its first concert, the choir is attempting a range of music encompassing pop, rock, jazz, ballads and folk.

"They do a lot of pop music which an adult group could do and do it justice," he said.

From the sound of it, music lovers in town are in for a treat.



Choir master Dale Wood leads members of The Cantante Singers in rehearsal. The choir members are Cathy Arbuckle, Kim French, Diana Collett, Becky Halonen, Jane Timlock, Cindy Gardiner, Cathy McGowan, Maureen McGowan, Margaret Zebede, Renate Zmlja, Sheila Prouse, Susan

Arbuckle, Terri Reid, Sue Kelly, Sheila Macdonald, Brenda Archer, Tina Vandentopp, Janine Prouse, Joanne Labine, Shannon Crawford, Heather Henderson, Nancy Kestick, Barb Trevisanus, Judy Mnestas, Meryll Albert and Michelle Fisher. (Photo by George Evashuk)

## Costumes, problems up to President Cindy



CINDY GARDINER

Herald Special

Cindy Gardiner is the first president of the recently-formed girl's choir called the Cantante Singers.

As president of the 26-voice choir, Cindy says she hasn't had to do much work besides singing and helping pick out the choir's costumes. The choir is organized under the committee system.

"I'm the person people come to with problems," she says. "So far there've been none." Founded last October by director Dale Wood, the choir is still in the growing stage. Besides the singing there is a lively social aspect. "It's fun," she says. "We enjoy ourselves."

She says she is looking forward to public speaking on behalf of the Cantante Singers.

She says the choir is looking for support from town merchants to sell concert tickets for the May 4 presentation of *"A Musical Rainbow"*. Like the Georgetown Choral Society, the Cantante Singers want designated ticket sellers.

Membership in the choir is open to girls 13 to 20 years old. If you are interested in joining the choir, call either Cindy at 877-1866 or choir conductor Dale Wood at 877-1638.

## Anniversary dinner Saturday

# Association is celebrating 25 years of helping others

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centre would be for severely handicapped adults who wouldn't benefit from the Adult Rehabilitation Centre (ARC), Mr. Evans said.

ARC Industries was started in 1964 by Wyn Isham in a garage on her farm in Milton. Two or three adults worked on the re-webbing of deck chairs when the workshop first started.

In 1966, Esqueing Township council sold the Hornby school to the association for \$1. When the workshop moved to its new location, there were six adults, who worked on telephone equipment and reconditioned pipes for local industry in addition to re-webbing deck chairs.

By 1968, the workshop had 14 people working there, and the activities had broadened to include hooking rugs, and making rag dolls. In 1971, the first expansion took place, and the workshop could accommodate up to 33 people. The workshop is expanding again, and will hold about 50 people.

The workshop is staffed by a director and four counsellors. The employees work mainly on contracts from local industries, Mr. Evans said.

### TRAINEES OUT

"We hope to get some of the trainees out into larger industries," Mr. Evans said. "Some of the local industries have expressed an interest in having a trainee."

The Countryside residence in Hornby was opened in 1976. It was designed to accommodate 16 adults, but the association has discovered that it's a little large for its purpose, Mr. Evans said.

"The association is considering changing Countryside's role from its present use to a home for the more severely retarded," he said. "We've found the location is a little remote for the high-functioning adults we have staying there now."

There are a large number of volunteers involved in Countryside. Mr. Evans said. Students from the high school have befriended the residents, and they have set up a floor hockey league. The association has also constructed a patio and a ball diamond.

The residents learn about budgeting, diet considerations, cooking and other domestic skills. Most of the residents sit

down with a counsellor twice a month and work out a budget for the following two weeks, Mr. Evans said.

About 18 months after Countryside opened, four women moved out into a group apartment in Milton, and three of these women are now out on their own. The fourth woman moved back to Countryside because she didn't feel secure on her own, Mr. Evans said. The three on their own are being supported by a social worker who visits regularly to make sure they are alright.

Four men have also moved out, three in one group home, and one on his own, and they "seem to be integrating very well," Mr. Evans said.

"It really has a morale-boosting effect on everybody," he said. "In terms of achievement, we have been able to move eight people out and I'd say that's a pretty good achievement for the staff and volunteers who work there."

### 200 MEMBERS

The association has about 200 members, and is run by a 16-member board of directors, which elects a seven-member executive committee. The management of the projects rests with the board of directors, which delegates it to the executive committee, Mr. Evans said. The day-to-day affairs of the various programs are supervised by the association's executive director, Dave Williams. The directors for Tinkerbell, ARC Industries and Countryside report to him.

The ministry of community and social services is the agency which keeps an eye on the association and supplies whatever funds are available from the province for the association's different programs.

"Occasionally we have some budget-related delays," Mr. Evans said. "The ministry has to carve the pie so many ways. They have to set their priorities."

"I'm pretty impressed with the level of support we get from the government."

The association's main need at present is for volunteers for the board of directors, particularly those with business experience.

"We're employing 16 people throughout the organization, and we have all the headaches of a modern business. What we need is participation from the business people in the three

towns," Mr. Evans said. "We need people familiar with personnel problems and reading a financial statement, things like that."

Mr. Evans said the association is also looking for people to help at Countryside and at the developmental centre in Milton.

"In the case of Countryside, we're looking for people who would be buddies to the residents, who would phone them and develop a friendship, so the resident would feel free to phone them with a problem," Mr. Evans said. "One of the difficulties the association is faced with is that when we provide the service, it puts us into a conflict when we are also supposed to be the watchdog for the people's interests."

### CALL A FRIEND

"If the residents feel they have a complaint, they could call their friend and let them know what's going on. It wouldn't be much, just a phone call a week and an outing once and while with the family."

Mr. Evans commended the volunteers who over the past 25 years have formed the backbone of the organization and the programs it runs.

"A lot of what has been achieved over the past 25 years has been the result of the dedicated effort of the volunteers and the staff," Mr. Evans said. "The burn-out rate among people dealing with the retarded is rather high, but it's also very rewarding work. It broadens the volunteer's horizons. They're receiving a lot more than they're giving, a lot of the time."

Mr. Evans said the association has become more "forward-looking" over the past couple of years.

"The association was formed to meet an immediate need, for facilities to assist school-aged children," he said. "We've been more or less flying by the seat of our pants, reacting as a need becomes known. Now we have a policy statement, entitled 'The Association in the '80s', and I think for the first time we're looking forward."

"The thrust of the association in the future is to get the same level of service in the community for the retarded as for the rest of the community. In essence, our purpose is to provide an environment in which a mentally handicapped person can reach his or her full potential."

**North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded**

*25 years of service*

ARC Industries      Sunshine School  
Countryside residence      Tinkerbell Nursery  
Halton Developmental Centre



Members of the Cantante Singers show the intense concentration needed in rehearsals to perfect choral singing. The group's first concert is scheduled for May 4.



Mike Evans  
NHAMR President