

# ARTS

## Area teens invited to join new youth choir



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION  
Sonja van de Hoef (left) and Karen Caruana are excited about the new youth choir at Knox Presbyterian Church.

By Stephanie Thiessen  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

If there's anyone who understands just what an impact singing in a choir can have on a child's life, it's Karen Caruana.

Fourteen years ago, she was introduced to the world of singing via the Milton Children's Choir.

"It really got me going," she said of the experience. "It's where my love of music was fostered from."

Caruana can still be found singing, either as part of the Milton Choristers or with other groups. But more often than not, she's the one holding the conductor's wand, coaxing beautiful sounds from her students as music teacher and choir director at Bishop Reding High School.

And lately, she's been working on something new.

When Caruana realized the Milton Children's Choir was no longer running, she decided to take matters into her own hands. She wanted to make sure the opportunity she'd had as a youngster was still available in the community. From that sprung an idea to collaborate with the Adoramus Children's

Choir, and expand it to include the Cantabile Chamber Choir for older youth.

Caruana is inviting teens from 14 to 18 years old to join in on the experience. Rehearsals start in the fall. They'll be held Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church.

"It's kind of like coming full circle," Caruana said. "It (the Milton Children's Choir) got me started, and now I'm coming back to conduct something similar."

All types of music played

Students will perform a wide variety of music in the choir, Caruana said, from classical to jazz and pop.

Although an audition is necessary, Caruana's quick to point out it's not for her to weed out inferior voices, but to hear teens' ideas and familiarize herself with their voices.

Youth who enjoy singing but aren't sure if their voices are good enough shouldn't be deterred, she said.

"I always tell kids they can always become a very good singer. It's about persistence, commitment and willingness to learn."

This is the fourth season of the Adoramus choir, a community choir that's supported by Knox Presbyterian Church.

It includes the Angelus choir for children aged six to eight, and the Gloriana choir for youths nine to 13, in addition to the Cantabile choir.

The Angelus choir rehearses from 5:45 to 6:25 p.m. Mondays at Knox Presbyterian Church on Main Street, while the Gloriana choir practises from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Adoramus founder and director Sonja van de Hoef said she takes her role very seriously.

"We're building the next generation of Canadian choral singers," she said.

Singers in the Gloriana and Cantabile choirs will have a unique opportunity in the fall, van de Hoef said. They've been invited by Canadian composer Ronald Beckett to participate in the fall CD recording of his sacred opera, Ruth.

"It's an amazing thing to have your name appear on a CD," van de Hoef said.

The choirs will also be making a guest appearance at the Milton

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