

Holiday CD Sales to benefit Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center

You have to 'Believe': Local youth lend talents to holiday music collection

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The story of 13-year-old Laura Greenwald's efforts to record a holiday CD with her friends reads like a favorite Christmas tale itself - complete with a Grinch.

After the local girl recorded several of the tracks with Stefan Tsiplakis of Stefanopoulos Recording Studio in Amesbury, the studio was robbed, and all their work was lost.

But that didn't stop the recording team from believing in their project. They regrouped, found a new studio in Newburyport, and starting singing and performing again.

The result is "Believe - a holiday music collection," a mix of music and stories from classic to contemporary that Laura says represents the belief young people have in themselves and in others, and the hope they have for the world and the future, especially at the holidays.

The young performers, ages 9 to 14, are donating proceeds from the sale of the CD to the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center in Newburyport and Amesbury, which offers education and support around issues of domestic violence, and The Pettengill House in Salisbury, which provides food, shelter and clothing to needy families.

"It seemed like a nice thing to do," Laura said of turning the project into a benefit for local charities.

Laura, a seventh-grader at the River Valley Charter School in Newburyport, recorded a solo CD of Broadway show tunes early last year with the help of vocal teacher Alison Trick of Bella Voce Studio in Amesbury. The project was so much fun that the Amesbury girl wanted to do another CD, only this time with a musical team.

She gathered her 10-year-old brother, William; her 13-year-old cousin, flutist Julianna Matthews of Vermont; and several friends - vocalists Alex Allen of Newburyport and Allison Russo and Delaney Hulbert of Amesbury, and pianist Neil He of Newbury, all classmates at the River Valley School; and Amesbury High School freshman pianist Justin Knowlton.

The project ended up being a true community endeavor. Laura's mother, Aline Carrier, helped with the song list, picking popular and lesser-known carols and music. Her aunt, Robin Marvelli, designed the graphics for the CD.

Roger Ebacher of Rebach Recording Studio in Newburyport donated his time and space. Russ Munroe, the audio-visual director at Amesbury High School, recorded the narratives and mastered the CD. Brian Nickerson, the music director at River Valley, offered the school's music hall as rehearsal space. Amesbury High and Middle schools provided space and equipment as well.

The CD was recorded over two days. It features the carols "O Holy Night," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," and "The Wexford Carol;" classical instrumentals including "Für Elise" and "Christmas Time is Here," and contemporary selections like "Believe" from "The Polar Express" and "Walking in the Air" from "The Snowman."

Narratives of "The Little Match Girl" and excerpts from "A Child's Christmas in Wales" and "A Christmas Carol" round out the recording.

Laura's favorite selection is "Walking in the Air." "It's a nice song," she said. "It's got a really pretty rhythm."

The CDs, which are \$10, will be sold this weekend at the River Wrappers table at the Tannery mall on Water Street in Newburyport tomorrow from noon to 6 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. They are also available at several stores in Newburyport and Amesbury.

Laura, who is also a member of the Young Opera Co. of New England with fellow vocalist Allison, probably will record another CD some day. But she's taking a little break for now, and focusing on sales. The group got a boost from state Rep. Michael Costello, who bought 250 copies to give as holiday gifts.

"This was fun for my friends who have never been on a CD before," she said.

For more on the "Believe" CD and where it's being sold, visit www.believe-cd.com.