

## Voices of Joy Community Choir celebrates 20th anniversary



**By Rod Urquhart**

The inspirational VOJ Voices of Joy Community

Choir is celebrating its 20th Anniversary with a Special Concert: "20 Years of Music and Friendship" Sunday, June 10, at 3p.m., at Bethel Community Christian Reformed Church, 333 Davis Drive Newmarket.

The VOJ Voices of Joy Choir is an inclusive musical community. All in York Region and South Simcoe are welcome in the choir regardless of ability or training. The choir was formed in 1998 through the inspiration of the late Linda Middlebrook, who was its first conductor.

20 years ago, the choir met for the joy of singing. Over its time together the members of VOJ have become ambassadors for people with special needs giving them an opportunity to participate in their community in a meaningful and socially valued role.

Concerts and practices create opportunities for individuals to develop self worth and self respect. Choir members are able to perform and feel proud of their accomplishments.

In allowing people the freedom to sing in any way they can, to be encouraged and applauded for their efforts, in an environment of unconditional love, growth and happiness results.

The choir is a family who supports each other, and members have become good friends.

The choir performs two fund-raising concerts a year: one at Christmas time and one at the end of the season. The choir is invited to sing at approximately three venues in the Community each year for an honorarium.

Last October, the choir was able to host the University of Guelph Chamber Singers and then in February the choir traveled by bus to Guelph to sing with the University of Guelph Symphonic Choir. This was a wonderful experience for every member of the Choir.

The Guelph Choir is under the direction of Dr. Marta McCarty.

This 20th Anniversary Concert will feature past conductors, such as David Holborn, and the Choir's 20-year history, and most definitely the joy of singing. The choir has about 50 members and rehearses weekly at Bethel Christian Reformed Community Church.

Bethel Church holds up to 400 people and any money raised is used by the choir, for things such as singing lessons, hall rentals, and general expenses of running a choir. The choir members meet every Monday night from September until June at Bethel Church. The Choir has a dedicated group of volunteers, and are very thankful for the support of local Sponsors and Advertisers whose financial gifts are invaluable.

Tickets are only \$10 or \$15 at the door. Children under 12 are free.

For tickets, contact a member of the VOJ Voices of Joy, or phone Joanne in Aurora at 905-727-3290 or Janet at 905-775-8821. Light refreshments will be served after the Concert.