On Saturday, February 26, the Chester Children’s Chorus Chamber Choir joined with five other choirs at The Church of the Holy Trinity in West Chester for an evening of song and readings to celebrate Black History Month.

I was deeply moved by the emotion of the evening, the beautiful singing of our 28 children and the other choirs, and most of all, by the attentiveness our children showed the other choirs. The CCC members were visibly touched when a small group of 6- and 7-year-olds sang the spiritual “My Lord, What A Morning,” a tune we used to sing years ago.

The other highlight for our singers was the classic arrangement of the spiritual “Soon I Will Be Done,” sung by the Holy Trinity choir. The children sitting near me were all drawn to the performance of one soprano, an older black woman who sang with extraordinary spirit. We all cheered wildly when they finished.

Near the end of the evening, the combined choirs—about 120 singers—sang a song I wrote, “Long Way To Go.” Our singers were very proud to be leading the other choirs.

Christian, who is 16, remarked on the segregation of the choirs, with almost all the black singers in the CCC and the West Chester University Gospel Choir, and the other groups almost exclusively white. I explained that a lot of second-graders who participate in the chorus’ Sing-to-Learn program at Chester’s Stetser Elementary School entertained senior citizens at St. Daniel’s United Methodist Church in February. CCC Assistant Music Director Daniel Beal, who teaches the Sing-to-Learn classes, led the performance. In Sing-to-Learn, a partnership between the chorus and the Chester Upland School District, children learn songs with lyrics that reinforce science, math, and other academic work. This year, Sing-to-Learn classes include 310 kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade students in three public schools.
of America is still this way and that while change continues slowly, it may not be fast enough.

Our Chester children want to sing out more, to share, to show off, to have fun, to celebrate their accomplishments and culture, and to be celebrated. This was a wonderful opportunity for them to do that. The children sound very good these days, and with your help, they can continue to show the world just how good they are.

—John Alston

CCC Board Adds Two Members

Swarthmore residents Elizabeth Rubin and Frances Vilella-Velez joined the CCC board in November, bringing with them a wealth of experience in nonprofit management and educational policy. Elizabeth is board president of Suburban Music School in Media and vice president of the national board of Transplant Recipients International. Frances, an attorney and consultant, assists education and nonprofit ventures with the design, development, and evaluation of programs. Elizabeth, an amateur flutist, says she is drawn to the chorus because it does “such an amazing job of offering endless musical opportunity” to children in Chester.

After eight years of board service to the chorus, most of them as treasurer, Leslie Price left the board last summer. Scott Kessler now handles budget oversight with the new title of finance chair. Mary McTernan, who has been development chair, has taken on the additional role of secretary.

READ WITH A CHILD THIS SUMMER

Adult volunteers are the essential ingredient in the success of our summer reading program for the 8-year-olds in our Training Chorus. We need volunteers from 11 to noon, Mondays through Thursdays, from June 27 through July 28. For more information, go to www.chesterchildrenschorus.org or call Managing Director Andrea Knox at (610) 328-8286. Last summer, volunteer Nancy Breitling read with chorus member Michanda Reed.