Near the end of our summer concert, as the drummer lays down an easy-going groove, our 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders begin to sway in that easy way our children do. Softly they open the song, singing, “Aruba, Jamaica, oo, I wanna take, ya”. The audience murmurs approvingly, as most of them know well the Beach Boys’ Kokomo. The children, encouraged, continue more confidently, “Bermuda, Bahama, c’mon, pretty mama.” But then, an unexpected change of dynamics: the choir shifts to a near whisper as they sing, “Off the Florida Keys,” a lyrical and elegant moment not in the original Beach Boys recording. Our drummer plays quietly while the children float through the verse smoothly, dreamily. Sean, our assistant music director, added this dynamic and rhythmic softening to showcase his little ones’ ability to sing sweetly and accurately—and also to set up the approaching familiar chorus/hook.

POW!!!! “Aruba, Jamaica…..” The children hit it hard. They start clapping, and the audience quickly begins to clap along with them. Despite never having sung this song before mid-July, our children clearly own it, adding just a little more of the groove and rhythmic backbeat they’ve learned from years of singing and moving to R&B. Their performance generated a two-minute beach party.

Of course the original Beach Boys recording is wonderful—we just added a little CCC spice. This is what we do.

—John Alston, Artistic Director
WE ARE MORE THAN A CHORUS.
If you really look at it, we go through so many life lessons—helping us become better academically, and seeing the world differently. There are always two sides; in Chester, you imagine only one way of life, but here you have anything you want and can become anything.” —Wendell Wimbush, graduating senior, 2018
Cordelia Delson Steps Down
As Chorus Board Chair

After 16 years as the leader of the Chester Children’s Chorus Board, Cordelia Delson has stepped down from the position of Board Chair. Cordelia’s many contributions have been essential to the growth of the Chorus and we are very grateful for her sustained period of successful leadership.

In Jan. 2002, Cordelia was asked by John Alston to form and lead a board for CCC. John knew Cordelia from her leadership work with the Friends of Music and Dance at Swarthmore College and as an “older” member of the Swarthmore Presbyterian Nursery Day School. With three children and two grandchildren, Martha is passionate about helping children of all ages discover their “wholeness.”

Cordelia has been elected as an emerita member of the Chorus Board and will remain involved, serving this year as chair of the Program/Education Committee.

CCC WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

New Board member CRYSTAL HARRISON is a proud parent of CCC member, Nayomi Harrison, now a high school senior who has been in the Chorus since the third grade. Crystal still recalls being overwhelmed at her first CCC concert: “It was just AWESOME!” Crystal is an Accountant in the Finance Department of the Chester Housing Authority, and also serves on Widener Partnership Charter School Board. She believes in the children of Chester and the hope for a better future the Chorus provides.

THE REV. DR. MARTHA TUCKER joins the board with great excitement and broad experience. She is an Episcopal priest, developmental psychologist and lawyer who has served as Associate Rector at St David’s Episcopal Church and directed the Swarthmore Presbyterian Nursery Day School. With three children and two grandchildren, Martha is passionate about helping children of all ages discover their “wholeness.”

Swarthmore resident SUSAN CLAREY is retired after careers in publishing in New York, fundraising at Swarthmore College and communications for the Salvation Army. Susan was “simply blown away” by her first Chorus concert. “I feel privileged to have joined the Board, not only because of the opportunities the CCC offers children from Chester, but also because it gives all of us a chance to appreciate talented singers and great music.”

LISA DENNIS is a proud lifelong Chester resident and the parent of Alisa, a current CCC 7th grader. Lisa is the Director of the Office of Community Liaison in Chester’s Department of Public Affairs, the founder of The Chester Bereavement Project, and is also a Police Chaplain. As a musician and singer-songwriter, Lisa “values the Chorus’ ability to touch the hearts of its listeners with the message of the music.”
THE CCC CHECK IN: Ci-Ci

I would like you to meet Ci-Ci, because Ci-Ci is the CCC. Let me tell you why. Ci-Ci (real name Giazza) Davis joined the Chorus unusually late, as a high school junior. Shy at first, Ci-Ci worked hard and steadily to become a wonderful Concert Choir soprano who sang both Mozart’s and Faure’s Requiems with us. She shares, “I didn’t feel like I was a singer until I joined the CCC. It was strange and new. Now, we all have that bond and look out for each other. It’s like my second home.” Currently a first year Nursing student at Neumann University, where she was awarded a full scholarship, Ci-Ci continues to sing with us this fall semester—in addition to taking courses in Anatomy, Chemistry, Rhetoric & Writing, and Theology.

We were fortunate to be able to hire Ci-Ci to be one of our math coaches for this school year.

This is why I wanted you to meet Ci-Ci—she represents what the CCC is all about. We are lucky to have her continue to be with us, singing with and teaching our children.

—JA

Thank you, Kirsten

FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS Kirsten Halker-Kratz has been instrumental in supporting the growth and success of the CCC. Her passionate and dedicated service has positioned the Chorus to take this next step, the development of a rigorous academic program to support our children. To accomplish this mission, we have restructured the organization and created a Managing Director position, who will guide educational programming and replace the Executive Director position. We are grateful to Kirsten for all that she has done on behalf of our program: greeting the thousands of people who have come to our concerts during her tenure, nurturing the dozens of friendships on behalf of the Chorus, creating our private voice and piano lessons program, and for her dedicated service to the children and their families. We will miss her. We wish her the very best in her future endeavors.