

Vitamin L News

Fall 2015

This fall Vitamin L needs to raise \$5,000.00 in extra donations by Dec. 15 for a matching grant from the John Ben Snow Memorial Trust. This grant will enable Vitamin L to give partial scholarships for our concerts at several financially challenged schools in Central New York.

To help raise these funds, we held a yard sale and bake sale on Sept. 5. Several Vitamin L chorus members helped out and they decided to sing for the shoppers and advertise the sale in costumes (banana, apple and broccoli). They were industrious and creative in their efforts and it was heart-warming to see how the older members welcomed the new chorus members into this effort. The sale raised \$535.75 toward our \$5,000.00 goal. Go Vitamins!



Random fun discovery: We discovered a delightful video on youtube of an Australian group called "Loosely Woven" performing Vitamin L's "Walk a Mile" at a concert. The singers range in age from young adults to senior citizens. It is touching to know that this song is inspiring empathy in Australia! To see the video, go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and type in *Walk a Mile Loosely Woven*.



Vitamin L at a lakeside concert at Independent Lake Camp in Pennsylvania

From a Vitamin L Alumna...

"The Vitamin L Project encourages positive character development in young people through uplifting, inspiring music."

This statement from Vitamin L's website describes the group that Jan and Janice have so lovingly created and nurtured all these years.

But to someone like me, a former chorus member and long-time believer in Vitamin L, the group means so much more: it's a family. It's a group of the older and younger brothers and sisters you always wanted, a group of people your age who share your passion for music and performance, and a group of people who have been through very similar experiences.

It's a group of young adults who, despite any fears they may have, pursue their love of song. Many chorus members I've talked to said that they had some sort of stage fright or performance apprehension before they started Vitamin L. But there's something about the support and passion of your peers that drives away any fear you have. I remember clearly that the more concerts I did, the less nervous I was about doing presentations in class. The confidence I gained from Vitamin L has helped me through my high school and college years and beyond.

As someone who was a chorus member for 7 years and a board member for 2, I can honestly say that the messages that Vitamin L sings about are always relevant. Even now, at 22, I still use the lessons I learned from the songs. The two that I think about the most are "That is a Mighty Power" and "Express Yourself." "Mighty Power" is such an impactful song that it really spoke to me as a young adult. The idea that anyone can make a positive change in the world even

through small actions is something that inspires me to continue working with non-profits like Vitamin L.

"Express Yourself" is also extremely important to me, mainly because when I first learned this song, I was wondering how to do exactly that. Telling young people that it's okay for them to be themselves regardless of what other people think is one of the most important things we can tell them.

An event that showed me Vitamin L's vast influence occurred during my final semester of college at SUNY Oswego. I was told I needed to put in 20 hours of community service to an organization. I instantly thought of Vitamin L. What better way to show my thanks than to give back to an organization that had given me so much? I announced to my class that I would be working with Vitamin L. I started to explain what Vitamin L does when one of my classmates raised her hand. I was surprised because no one else had gotten a question during their presentation. I was ready to explain further when my classmate asked if I could sing "Walk A Mile." I was so stunned that I just stood there for a moment. Here, in Oswego, someone was asking me to sing "Walk A Mile."

Another classmate asked me if I would sing "Mighty Power." Soon the whole class was talking about how they had always loved to see Vitamin L perform. I remember being so amazed that I could barely speak. I was seeing the physical evidence of how far Vitamin L's message had spread. These college seniors in their early 20s were all excitedly talking about Vitamin L. It was like being transported back in time and is still one



of the coolest experiences I've ever had.

Vitamin L is so much more than a singing group. It is a support system and Life 101 course all rolled into one. It is one of the most valuable experiences I ever had the privilege of being a part of. I would not trade my time with Vitamin L for anything. It helped form me into the confident and competent adult that I am today. And for that, I will be forever grateful.

- Hannah Rawlings
Program Lead for Healthy Homes through
Thurston County Public Health and Social
Services. Olympia, Washington

Please support our \$5,000.00 matching grant opportunity!

The John Ben Snow Memorial Trust will grant Vitamin L \$5,000.00 for providing partial concert scholarships for financially challenged schools if we raise \$5,000.00 above our general donations by Dec. 14.

**Please considering giving an extra gift toward this effort by making a tax-deductible donation online at www.vitaminL.org or to:
The Vitamin L Project 105 King St. Ithaca, NY 14850 Thank You!**



From a Vitamin L Current Member...



Dorothy Cotton and Kai Feldman, April 2015

I'm Kai Feldman. I'm thirteen years of age, and I've been in Vitamin L for three years. I love singing with Vitamin L! Being a member of the chorus has been a remarkable experience for me and has had a huge impact on my life in so many ways. It has made me an altogether more compassionate and aware person. Before I joined Vitamin L, I was already active in some social justice causes, but this didn't involve performing for elementary-age kids. When I perform with Vitamin L, it's amazing to realize that we're planting the seeds of love and kindness in the younger generation.

Vitamin L sings about human rights in the song "Some Rights in This World." I believe all people have the right to clean, drinkable water, unpolluted air to breathe, healthy food choices that aren't genetically modified, the freedom to love who they naturally love, and the freedom to be who they are. We look different on the outside, but on the inside we all need the same things: love, food, water, and rest. When I'm singing the Vitamin L song "Look a Little Deeper" at a school show and doing the sign language, it is

very meaningful to me. Many of the children are watching us carefully and trying to learn the signs. I think this is a particularly important song to perform since there is still so much racism and judgment in the world today.

My first concert with Vitamin L was at a fundraiser for Suicide Prevention at a polo match. I was very excited because my first show happened to be Vitamin L's 1,000th show. Later, Vitamin L had a huge concert at the State Theater to celebrate reaching 1000 shows, and I was proud to be a part of it. We were joined by the Dorothy Cotton Jubilee Singers and Dorothy Cotton herself! She was a civil rights leader and I was so excited to meet her. Dorothy spoke about singing with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the role music played in the civil rights movement. She also spoke about her book, "If Your Back's Not Bent," which she wrote about her experiences in the civil rights movement in the 1960's. Then Dorothy sang with us on the song "This Little Light of Mine." She was so inspiring that I decided to read her book and learn more about her life and the work

she did. The next day I ordered her book and it got to my house two days later. I started reading it immediately! I was so inspired that Dorothy became one of my role models.

Once I had finished the book and thoroughly thought it over, I decided that I wanted to meet with Dorothy and a group of Vitamin L members to ask her some questions and to learn about non-violence and how it worked. I wanted this meeting to help other chorus members to connect to the unique opportunity that Vitamin L offers and to help them delve deeper into the meaning of the messages we want to spread through the Vitamin L songs. Dorothy agreed and we met in April. We were all enlightened and moved by her words. We can change the world with a collective group of people, but sometimes all it takes is just one person—you and your two hands—to make the world a better place. Dorothy spoke with us about how important it was to look within ourselves and see the potential for each of us as individuals to affect change. The Vitamin L song "With These Hands" offers the same message. Everyone left this gathering with a new sense of what Vitamin L means to them.

All in all, Vitamin L has had a huge influence in my life.

*- Kai Feldman, 8th Grade,
Lehman Alternative School*

I asked Kai to write an essay for the newsletter because I was quite taken by his enthusiasm and interest in Dorothy Cotton, social change, and connecting deeply with the meaning of the Vitamin L songs. He was 11 years old when he first heard Dorothy talk and decided to read her book. I found that quite unusual for someone his age, and I wanted him to share a bit of his experience in this essay. - Janice Nigro

THE GRATITUDE REPORT

In the last six months The Vitamin L Project received contributions and grants from individuals and groups, including Vector Magnetics Fund and the Kathy Yoselson Fierce Determination Fund of the Community Foundation of Tompkins County.

**A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS,
SINGERS, BOARD MEMBERS and VOLUNTEERS**

***If you would prefer to
receive this newsletter
via email, please contact us at
vitaminLproject@hotmail.com.***

Center for Transformative Action
The Vitamin L Project
Anabel Taylor Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
(607) 273-4175
vitaminLproject@hotmail.com

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage

PAID

Ithaca, NY 14850
Permit No. 780

Inspiring children since 1989!

Vitamin L
at the
Apple Harvest
Festival
Tentative date:
Saturday, Oct. 3. Check
www.vitaminL.org
for time

The Vitamin L Project is a Project of The Center for Transformative Action



Some Vitamin L singers at the 2015 Ithaca Festival