

Vitamin L News

Volume 4, Issue 2 • Spring 2007

Virtual Vitamins! Website Gets Dramatic Facelift

Thanks to the efforts of Cornell work study student Richard Kui, our website, VitaminL.org, underwent a much-needed transformation last fall. This assistance was made possible by The CRESPE Center for Transformative Action at Cornell, with which The Vitamin L Project is affiliated. Thank you, Richard, and thank you, CRESPE!

Our new site—complete with a new look, a slideshow, and the song “Mighty Power” playing in the background of the home page—enjoys full functionality, including a shopping cart function for purchasing CDs and songbooks. Click on any CD icon to browse for song selections or song lyrics; song samples can be downloaded for either high-speed or dial-up Internet access. You’ll also find sections on our history and purpose, concert and booking info, a teacher’s guide for incorporating our songs into character education curricula, past issues of *The Vitamin L News*, an informative “Helpful Links” section, and a photo archive with pictures dating back to the earliest days of Vitamin L!

In addition, we’re delighted to be able to accept tax-deductible charitable contributions to

Home
History
Our Purpose
Recordings & Song Samples
Lyrics
Song Books
Ordering Info
Letters & Comments
Concerts & Booking Schedule
Teacher's Guide
Workshops
Photos
Newsletters
Helpful Links
Make A Donation
Contact Us!

Member's Section | Admin Section

Vitamin L through the site via a secure PayPal account. This provides donors with an easy way to make an online gift to Vitamin L.

In the near future, we plan to add video clips. The member and admin sections, which are still “under construction,” will allow Vitamin L members—including advisory board members—to log in and access special organizational announcements, meet-

ing notices, and other internal communications.

Our improved website is a tremendously valuable resource for us. Please visit VitaminL.org, and spread the word to relatives, friends, and anyone else you think may be interested in Vitamin L.

- Lisa Wood,
Vitamin L advisory board

From one of our alumni...



“It’s hard to believe that it was 20 years ago...which shows what a powerful and lasting influence music can be in a young person’s life.”

My mother tells me that I was an early talker. Once I started, it was hard to get me to stop. I guess it was probably the same with singing. I can remember singing my heart out in the car even if we were only going around the block to the supermarket, and the all-out concerts I gave from the shower.

When I was ten, my parents decided to move our family to Ithaca, NY. We had a big yard sale to get rid of all our stuff before the move. I sold all of my “worldly possessions” and with the money I had made, I bought myself a little guitar in a black case. My mom told me that I could take some lessons when we got to our new home. I couldn’t wait!

When we arrived in Ithaca, I made sure to get right to those guitar lessons and before I knew it, I was at Jan Nigro’s house. My mother tells me today that she got a little nervous at the idea of dropping her child off at a music teacher’s house, but after meeting Jan she had no doubts that things would go well.

So, there I was at the beginning of a beautiful part of my life. I can remember Jan giving me the tape of his songs that he wanted to record and asking if I was interested in singing in the background. Was I in-

terested???? I could barely contain myself!! I practiced like crazy and knew every word of every song long before our first rehearsal in the basement of my elementary school. There I met the other kids who would share in my experience of recording songs in a real recording studio with microphones and buttons and all those instruments! We felt like the coolest rock stars ever.

After the recording “Walk a Mile” came out and our group became known, we were asked to do concerts. I think the first one was the hardest thing I’ve ever done. We were so nervous we really didn’t think we’d get through it, but at the end we couldn’t wait to do another. Soon it became second nature; we even had choreography and sign language and introductions to the songs. We got to travel, to go to different cities and schools to sing for other kids our age who loved Jan’s songs as much as we did.

Somehow I was getting older and the rest of the group was getting younger as members moved on to other things and new members joined, including my little brother. I always seemed to be the oldest “Vitamin” and I don’t think I fully left the group until I went off to college. I studied Art at Hamilton College and was the musical director of one of the campus a cappella groups, and

I’m sure I still managed to squeeze in an Ithaca Festival Vitamin L performance whenever possible.

Today I live in New York City where I’m a jeweler in the diamond district. The only singing I do is when I’m alone in the house, and I really miss it. I know that being part of Vitamin L changed my outlook on life and the way I do things today. I don’t think I would have become the strong, outgoing person I am without the lessons I learned from Jan and Janice. I learned so much about love and tolerance and self confidence from the music and working with the group. I really consider them part of my family. It was amazing to welcome Anthony, their son, to the family, and it’s great for me to see my friends from Ithaca having children of their own who love the music.

It’s hard to believe that it was 20 years ago that I first met Jan and Janice, which led to my being a member of Vitamin L. It just goes to show what a powerful and lasting influence music can be in a young person’s life. I will treasure my Vitamin L experience forever, and I know this music will continue inspiring and teaching kids for many years to come.

*-Emily Kord,
Jeweler, New York City*

THE GRATITUDE REPORT

In the last six months The Vitamin L Project received donations from numerous individuals and groups, including a \$10,000.00 grant from a foundation that wishes to stay anonymous, and \$1,000.00 from Tompkins Trust Company. Our Valentine’s “Love is in the Air” fundraiser dance with the Romantics jazz band raised \$1,350.00 for Vitamin L.

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS!

From a Vitamin L member...



“I know that I will carry all of the values and experiences that Vitamin L has made possible for the rest of my life.”

The Ithaca Festival has always been an important part of my year in Ithaca, and when I was little the highlight of the festival was always Saturday mornings at the Center Pavilion, when Vitamin L performed. Back then that was usually the only live performance I saw all year, and it was not enough for me. Luckily I had the tapes to see me through till June and every car ride was an opportunity to sing out with all my heart. I am pretty sure my favorite song back then was “Mistake,” but it is hard to be sure; I loved them all.

I am no longer five years old and I have been singing with Vitamin L for five years now. As a result of both growing older and being more familiar with the songs, my tastes have changed. I still love all of them and their messages of peace and good will, but I now have different special favorites. I look for little subtle things in

the lyrics or musical styles that appeal to me or songs that carry a potent message that I can relate to. That song for me is “Walk a Mile.”

I am a junior in high school and I have started to look at colleges and think about what I want to pursue with my life. I have decided that I want to be a diplomat or an ambassador and to help countries resolve conflicts. “Walk a Mile” really touched my life because it describes what I feel passionately about and it offers a way to deal with other people and entities in a way that promotes peace and can prevent war. The message is simple: “I want to walk a mile in your shoes/I want to know what you think and what you feel/So I really want to walk a mile in your shoes.” In just those few phrases it encourages understanding and compassion. The values that this world needs more of are present in the songs that Vitamin L performs in

an accessible and catchy form for young children.

Performing with Vitamin L has been an incredible experience for me. It has improved my confidence on and off stage, my performing abilities, and it has been so much fun. I love performing for young children and seeing their faces light up and their enthusiasm for the music. I feel privileged to be considered a role model for them. I know that I will carry all of the values and experiences that Vitamin L has made possible for the rest of my life. I also hope that if I ever become an ambassador, and I am in a position to make decisions that will affect people in other countries and situations, that I will sit back, close my eyes, and before I do anything, simply walk a mile in their shoes.

- Anya Gibian,
age 16, Junior, Lehman
Alternative Community
School

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of The Vitamin L Project is to encourage positive character development through music, by uplifting and inspiring young people with lessons that are meaningful in their daily lives. Our goal is that young listeners absorb the lessons of confidence, kindness, persistence, cooperation and forgiveness presented in the songs, and weave those concepts into the fabric of their character in ways that help them make positive choices and have healthy relationships with their families, friends and the world around them. Our goal is to reach and positively influence as many children as possible.

**Please support our unique outreach, service, and leadership work 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!**



Ahmed Telfair, Zach Montague, Katie Lane, Jan Nigro, Alexis Suskin-Sperry, Hayden Frank, Addy Davidoff, Teta Alim, Camille Halton, Gabe Mendola

In 2006, Vitamin L:

- *Performed 60 concerts*
- *Reached 14,700 youth and 4,000 adults in concerts*
- *Performed for 33 schools, 2 education conferences, festivals, camps and community events.*
- *Gave leadership and performing opportunities to our 70 chorus members*

CRESP

The Vitamin L Project

Anabel Taylor Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
(607) 273-4175

vitaminLproject@hotmail.com

"Keep doing what you're doing! I am thrilled to have had my students experience the rich message and positive energy of Vitamin L!"
*- Brenda Wright, music teacher,
Bath Central School*

We're on the Web!
www.vitaminL.org

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage

PAID

Ithaca, NY 14850
Permit No. 34

The Vitamin L Project is a project of The CRESP Center for Transformative Action at Cornell University