



**In 2007, Vitamin L:**

*Performed 46 concerts at 28 schools, 2 conferences, festivals, and community events.*

*Reached 10,000 youth and 2,600 adults in concerts.*

*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](mailto:vitaminLproject@hotmail.com)

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Ithaca, NY 14850

Permit No. 780

*"Vitamin L is amazing. They sing with such spirit and enthusiasm that it is contagious."  
Carrie Newkirk, teacher,  
Dryden Elementary*

**[www.vitaminL.org](http://www.vitaminL.org)**

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

# Vitamin L News

## “Teaming Up With Teachers and Schools”

Volume 5, Issue 2 • Spring 2008

The Vitamin L organization has an ongoing commitment to support character education efforts through the use of Vitamin L songs and themes.

Vitamin L complements its concerts with additional work with teachers and schools. When Vitamin L is booked for a school concert, we send out a pre-concert packet that includes the song list for the students to work on in advance, as well as suggestions about how to tie our lyrics, song themes, etc., into the classroom curriculum.

the Hero.” Students dressed as positive heroes and sang and danced to the song. Mike created a video of students and teachers being heroic around the school and set it to Vitamin L music.

Lanigan Elementary students in Fulton, NY, recently used the song “Welcome, Welcome” to welcome their new principal. They’re using Vitamin L songs at their morning meetings and have also tied Vitamin L’s messages and music to their program of “catching students” doing the right thing by making good

Adriana Clark wrote: “I think people benefit from the Vitamin L class because they hear the message of being a good person so many times that it rubs off on them.”

Vitamin L alumna Sierra Carerre is currently working on combining Vitamin L songs with art and dance for enrichment programs for low-income children at Hale House in New York City.

To further our connections with teachers and schools, Vitamin L hosted a free concert during the Ithaca Loves Teachers Winter Recess week on February 18. Also, in November, adult and youth board members reached out to schools across the state by attending the New York State PTA conference in Albany. Our eye-catching display board and “take-away” promotional materials drew interest from many in attendance.

Vitamin L works continuously to integrate the messages of our songs with teaching materials and character education curricula. Furthermore, our youth singers are truly dedicated to our organization’s purpose, taking to heart the roles they play not just as stage performers but also as peer leaders and mentors.



*A classroom visit at an elementary school*

This January at Skoi-Yase Elementary in Waterloo, NY, art teacher Jean Gaylord took action from the suggestions and worked with her students to make colorful posters with Vitamin L themes. These were then used to decorate the performance area.

Teacher Susie Davis, of Bellingham, Washington, wrote, “I want to thank you for the tremendous gift you’ve given to children and teachers through your music. I’m so glad to have your songs to bring to circle time and to discussions about compassion, teamwork, communication...”

In East Stroudsburg, PA, principal Mike Catrillo created a Hero Day around the Vitamin L song “Here’s to

choices.

Many schools across the US with active character education programs have a character trait of the month, such as respect, cooperation, honesty, etc. A number of them have found it useful to pick a Vitamin L song to go along with their character trait of the month—and to use that song in assembly programs to support their efforts. (See [vitaminl.org](http://vitaminl.org) - Teacher’s Guides, song topic categories for suggestions.)

Locally, Vitamin L board member Alice Wu has organized a six-week after-school enrichment program based around Vitamin L songs. These sessions have been led by teenage chorus members. Fifth-grade participant



*Beal, Lucy Rose and Ilana at the New York State PTA Conference in November*

## From a Vitamin L Member...

I am proud to say that I have been a die-hard Vitamin L fan since early childhood. I attended all of the group's local concerts, and listened repeatedly to the music at home. In fact, I recently gained newfound respect for my parents after seeing a home video of me running around the house in diapers, shrieking the words to "Walk a Mile". The song's magic never seemed to wear off for me, and several years later I wrote a desperate letter to Jan Nigro, asking to join the group. It read: "I have a special place in my heart for Vitamin L. I wish to be in Vitamin L someday. I understand I must wait because I am only seven and three quarters. This does not bother me, so you don't have to be concerned."

Evidently Jan heeded my advice and didn't become overly concerned, for Vitamin L continued to function wonderfully throughout my childhood. I was so passionate about the messages in the music, and tried to emulate the teenage singers I saw so frequently onstage. Vitamin L has been incorporated into the Ithaca community for many years, and therefore the organization was an actual opportunity for local children such as myself to have their dreams realized.

At long last, in 2003, my years as a devoted fan had paid off, and I was old enough to audition for the Vitamin L Chorus. When I finally joined, it was like becoming part of a large, energetic, and extremely musical family. I've made friendships through V-L that I will never forget, and I've experienced a learning process like no other— I began as a junior chorus member who could barely sing but had an embarrassing knowledge

of every song lyric, and later assumed positions of responsibility, such as the teaching of rehearsals and leading a V-L after-school program at Northeast Elementary School.

I joined the V-L Advisory Board in 2005 as one of five youth board members, and learned the value of patience and hard work through grant-writing, organizational meetings, fundraisers, and PTA conferences. My experience with the board members, and Jan and Janice has provided me with real-life examples of truly selfless people working for a cause. The workings behind Vitamin L really reflect its message— everyone contributes with such positive attitudes and such goodwill. After seeing how much energy it takes to maintain this project, Vitamin L has become all the more precious to me, and I often feel that same urge I had as a toddler, to shout Vitamin L tunes at the top of my lungs, daring anyone to deny their truth and significance.

Vitamin L is different from many other non-profit organizations in the sense that its most important results are clear and immediate, and as a chorus member I am one of the lucky few that get to witness results during each concert. Children waving, smiling, singing and clapping along with the music, dancing together and holding hands, punctuating each phrase with the occasional wave of a plastic lunchbox— this image makes all of the intensive preparation worthwhile. I truly believe that these constant interactions with happy young lives have brightened my outlook on the world, for they provide me with hope and the knowledge that I am making a difference. Vitamin L teaches lessons



in an ideal format— kids connecting with teenagers through the universal language of music. The songs present messages without forcing them onto an audience. Instead, they encourage children to join an environment in which values such as integrity, honesty, and self-worth are both "cool" and necessary.

Vitamin L has been a central piece in every stage of my life thus far, and therefore I understand both its appeal to people of all ages, and its ability to inspire children and teens alike. The one thing that is guaranteed in life is hardship, and I think every child deserves the chance to be exposed to positive influences such as Vitamin L, in the hope that they will realize their power to change a difficult world. I cannot think of a more honorable, hard-working and deserving organization, and I hope to someday be able to give back, in appreciation of everything Vitamin L has given me.

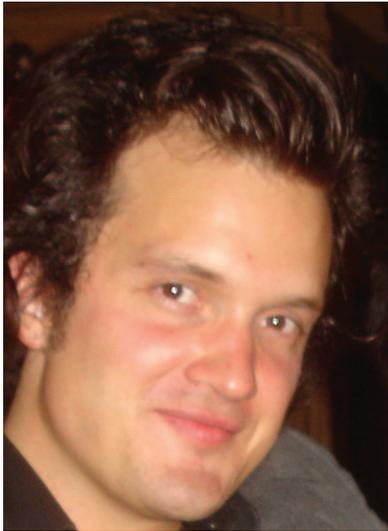
-- Ilana Gilovich, Senior, Ithaca High  
\* Ilana will be attending Cornell as an English major in the fall.

**Please support our unique outreach, service, and leadership work by making a tax-deductible donation online at [www.vitaminl.org](http://www.vitaminl.org), or to:**

**The Vitamin L Project • 105 King St. • Ithaca, NY 14850 • Thank You!**

# Vitamin L is Not Just a Name, It is Actually a Source of Love

*A Vitamin for Love*



Vitamin L is a source, a source of love, respect, kindness, connectedness, and most importantly, it has been a source of the courage to make a difference through the power of expression. Jan and Janice Nigro created an unreasonable possibility and they made it happen. Jan created songs to inspire youth to be better people. Then Janice and Jan created the avenue to get their possibility out there to the youth. Their possibility is real. As a member of the Vitamin L Chorus who loved the music and sang it with passion, I witnessed youth and adults alike being granted new possibilities. The music that Jan Nigro has written has words that influence what we see as possible and that inspire us to live with the power of those songs in our lives. There is no question that when all the students from a school are singing songs together, fully engaged, like, "I Want to Walk a Mile in Your Shoes," "Jumping to Conclusions," or "People are a Rainbow,"

their consciousness has shifted. It is powerful and real. Amazingly, the songs are so good they stick, keeping the message ringing in our ears throughout our lives.

Those of us who have helped spread this possibility and make it real have also had some of the most profound impacts from Vitamin L in our lives. What Vitamin L gave me is the tremendous impact of each song as an influence in my way of being in the world, as well as the strength and courage to be a person who knows I can make a difference. I have seen an audience transform. I have witnessed the power of words when they are expressed. And yes, I have done this all in front of my peers, who at the age of thirteen to eighteen were not such an easy crowd to sing songs about love and being a great person to. However, once you see it, once you are aware that your passions can make a difference, your fear of judgment dies and this stays with you forever.

Vitamin L is a source of inspiration giving young people the power to make a difference. I have spoken with and seen so many chorus members who are older than I am, and many who are younger, and it seems we all have an amazing ability to step in where our passions lead us and make a difference around us. I can't even count how many public speaking engagements or performances that I have given that came from my passions directing me to a place of knowing that I can and will make

a difference. The worth of a source as powerful as Vitamin L simply cannot be measured.

The strength Vitamin L gave me to pursue my talents, and to make change in the process, has led me into many projects, from leading campus peace organizations at Cornell University, to working directly with City Council Representatives in San Francisco, to working for the California League of Conservation Voters here in LA where I raise funds for the group that leads California in passing environmental protection legislation. This spring my band, the Makepeace Brothers, (made up of my three brothers and I) will be setting off on a month-long national tour called Mraz Magic Make Peace. We will be joining the tour with Musician Jason Mraz and Magician Justin Kredible.

Thank you, Jan and Janice, for being a source of empowerment for passions, love, respect, and inspiration. You have made an amazing difference; please keep it going for as long as you can. Along with all the others, I will support you when needed, and that's my word.

Sincerely,  
Finian Makepeace,  
Vitamin L alumnus, Los Angeles

*\*To hear Finian and his brother Ciaran, also a Vitamin L alumni, and to check their performance schedule, go to [www.makepeacebrothers.com](http://www.makepeacebrothers.com).*

## THE GRATITUDE REPORT

In the last six months The Vitamin L Project received donations from numerous individuals and groups, including grants of \$10,000.00 from the Triad Foundation, \$10,000.00 from a Foundation that wishes to remain anonymous, \$1,500.00 from The Service League, \$1,000.00 from Chemung Canal Trust, and \$500.00 from Tompkins Trust Company.

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