

Vitamin L to mark release of new CD

Written by Jim Catalano Correspondent

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If You Go

- Who: Vitamin L
- What: CD release concert
- When: 1 p.m. Monday
- Where: Unitarian Church (corner of Buffalo and North Aurora streets)
- Cost: \$5-\$10 suggested donation
- Info: www.VitaminL.com

Vitamin L, a local youth organization that seeks to provide character education through music, will mark the release of a new CD with a Monday afternoon concert at the Unitarian Church of Ithaca.

“Sing for Dr. King! Vitamin L Songs for a Beloved Community” is a compilation of new and older Vitamin L songs, all written by Jan Nigro (except for “This Little Light of Mine,” which features local civil rights icon Dorothy Cotton on vocals).

“These are song that we felt were compatible with Dr. King’s teachings and ideals,” said Janice Nigro, director of the Vitamin L Project. “They’re all songs that support the creation of a beloved community, both in our community and our country. I grew up around Dr. King — my parents were involved with the civil rights movement, and I first met him when I was five — and his teachings and ideals have been really important to me. I’m very grateful that Vitamin L can honor Dr. King in song with this CD.”

There’s a new version of the Vitamin L’s theme song, “Walk A Mile,” which was on the project’s 1989 album. “The key on the original CD isn’t a great one for elementary-school kids,” Nigro noted. “The new ones are ‘Martin’s Heart’; ‘Martin is Calling’; ‘Stand Up Speak Out,’ which is about injustice, and really fits in perfectly with the Dignity for All Students act; and ‘Freedom Riders Got To Ride’ — a family friend of mine was one of the original Freedom Riders.”

Vitamin L also raised funds to give a complimentary copy to all the elementary school teachers, music teachers

and librarians in the Ithaca City School District. “We also got a grant from the Ithaca Public Education Initiative to give copies to some of the teachers in middle school and high school,” Nigro said.

Vitamin L has seen dozens of kids pass through its ranks since 1989. Many of them have gone on to play in area bands, including Thousands of One (Jhakeem Haltom), New Neighbors (Chris Frank) and Gym Class Heroes (Disashi Lumumba Kasongo).

“The daughter of one our first Vitamin L kids is in our group now, which is really cool,” Nigro said. “We’re trying to encourage positive character development and that kids grow up valuing integrity. That is a timeless need and a timeless effort — we happen to approach it through song and music.”

There’s a suggested donation of \$5-\$10 for the 1 p.m. concert, which will feature complimentary refreshments from Wegmans. To learn more, visit www.VitaminL.org