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## HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

There are many ways you can help The Choir School!

**Give the gift of time!** Join our team of volunteer mentors, tutors or homework helpers. One hour a week. Training provided. Or Volunteer to lead a fun enrichment activity for students like an art, cooking or exercise class.

**Support a student's year-round involvement** through a gift to the Annual Scholarship Fund.

**Help purchase a digital piano** so students can practice at home.

**Honor a loved one with a gift to The Choir School** in his/her honor or memory this holiday season.

**IT'S EASY!** Use the enclosed envelope or online @ [www.cathedralchoirschoolde.org](http://www.cathedralchoirschoolde.org).

**Donate needed items** such as healthy snacks and new educational or science kits for our after-school program.

### In this issue

*Charting A Course  
for Success*

*Halls are Humming  
at the Mentoring  
Academy*

*Dear Friends*

*An Emerging Leader*

### Upcoming Events

#### Holiday Concerts

December 4 @  
10:30 a.m.,  
*Advent Carol Service,  
Cathedral Church  
of St. John*

December 14 @  
5:30 p.m., *featured music  
at the Delaware Commu-  
nity Foundation's Annual  
Holiday Reception, Univ.  
of Delaware, Arshat Hall*

December 24 @  
10:00 p.m. *Christmas  
Eve Concert, Cathedral  
Church of St. John*

#### Monthly Director's Tour:

December 7 @  
5:45 p.m. *Learn more  
about The Choir School  
with an inside look! Meet  
our students and sit in  
on a rehearsal. Free and  
open to the community.*

For 2012 tour dates,  
visit our website!



Aspen Morehead with her mentor Stephanie Lord

## Charting A Course for Success

Aspen Morehead came to the Cathedral Choir School, shy and introspective, at age 6. She had few friends and always wanted her mom within sight while she was in rehearsals and performances. Life was full of change and uncertainties during much of her childhood, but The Choir School remained the positive constant in Aspen's life.

Today, her demeanor remains quiet, but underneath is a focused, resilient young woman who, at 13, is "always trying until I get it right," says Aspen. Her determination has yielded many accomplishments, whether maintaining honor roll status, competing on Conrad School of Science's varsity volleyball team as the only 8<sup>th</sup> grader, expanding her musical repertoire, or traveling abroad through summer service projects as part of the People to People Student Ambassador Program.

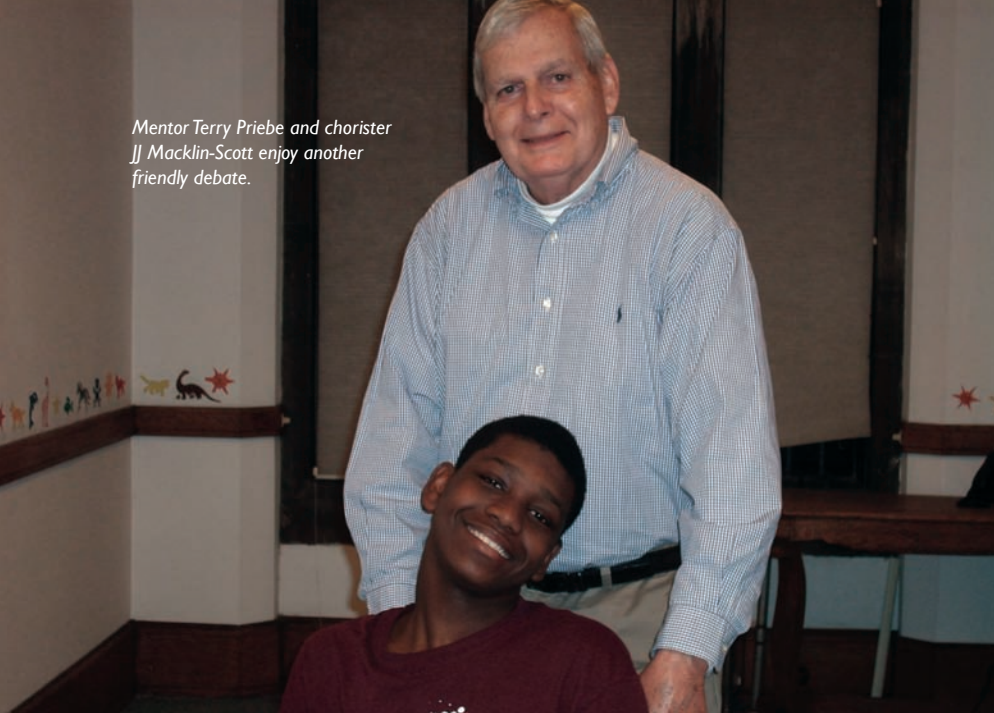
Her experiences with People to People the past two summers have offered an opportunity to hone her interest in science, develop leadership skills, gain access to interesting global destinations and connect with like-minded students from across the U.S. with a common goal in making a difference in the world.

Students are nominated by their teachers based on grades, personality and leadership qualities. The first year, she traveled to Australia, studying the Great Barrier Reef. This past summer, Aspen, the only Delaware student, and 30 other students visited Costa Rica, participating in projects such as cleaning beaches and painting schools.

Aspen hopes to attend the Charter School of Wilmington for high school next year and is particularly interested in oceanography, a subject that has fascinated her since she was a child. Her experiences as a Student Ambassador have reinforced the importance of staying focused on schoolwork to reach her goal of becoming a marine biologist. She recognizes participation in The Choir School plays an essential role in that process. "They support me in whatever I'm doing" she shares. "The Choir School offers an environment of both teamwork and discipline. I feel like I am more mature than others my age because I'm in a weekly structured environment."

Stephanie Lord has been Aspen's mentor at The Choir School for the past four years. They meet weekly to tackle everything from algebra homework to "normal teenage stuff". Stephanie encourages her to focus on extracurricular activities that will build her high school resume. "I have tried to instill in Aspen the concept that she can be anything she wants to be, but she has to work for it. I have seen her come a long way, growing from a shy girl to a mature young woman. Aspen is on the cusp of achieving great things".

Mentor Terry Priebe and chorister JJ Macklin-Scott enjoy another friendly debate.



## An Emerging Leader

A “spark” is how Ja-Meair “JJ” Macklin-Scott describes himself, an emerging leader among his various peer groups. JJ joined the Choir School in 2008 and now at 16, has “grown significantly not only in height,” jokes his mentor Terry Priebe, “but in stature.”

During their weekly meetings, JJ and Terry can be found deliberating over their latest topic of choice and challenging each other to consider new perspectives. “JJ comes to me with an idea that may be related to his schoolwork or another area of interest and we expand on that,” explains Terry. “For example, we’ve contemplated questions such as ‘Who caused WWII?’. We research the various scenarios, then create a timeline and conclusion to our questions. The curriculum evolves depending on the subject.”

Most recently, the two have studied major rivers of the world such as the Nile and its role in commerce and the deforestation of the Amazon. Issues around ecosystems are of particular interest to JJ, who has worked as a camp counselor the past two summers at the DuPont Environmental Education Center nestled on the Christina River in Wilmington. He also participated in the choir’s Washington, DC Tour last summer, singing at the National Cathedral as well as the historic St. Paul’s Church, K Street and St. Mary’s Episcopal Church. He and the other choristers stayed on campus at George Washington University during the weeklong tour.

In the coming months, JJ will continue researching colleges. He’s already been working on a cost analysis of tuition as part of his mentoring sessions with Terry. And a bit of a MAC guru, he plans to take advantage of opportunities that will enhance his computer skills, such as a video editing project he was recently tasked with by Choir School volunteer Mike Short. One of JJ’s goals is to land a job at Apple after college.

JJ also recognizes his role as a leader to the younger choristers in the program. “I have been involved for a few years now and feel like I can offer some advice to the other students. I even got my younger sister involved in the program.” The Choir School will be expanding its youth leadership program in the months ahead by incorporating a structured curriculum that involves training opportunities for its teen members. “The focus of The Choir School on developing youth through the structure of a mentoring program and a multi-generational choir is exceptional,” says Terry. The collective approach of mentors, staff, tutors, choir members and families all working together truly makes a difference for students like JJ and others”.

## A Word from Our Director of Music

Since I started as Director of Music in August, the question many people have asked me is how I am enjoying my new position. To answer, I have greatly enjoyed my first three months. My family and I have been made to feel very welcome by the Cathedral and Choir School communities through kind words of support and numerous events.

Recruitment of new choristers is progressing at a steady pace with six new students joining since September and many more youth interested in becoming part of the program. The Choir School has really become one of the ‘places to be’ for young people in the Brandywine Village neighborhood.

The response to our Evensong on October 16th was very positive. Thanks to all who attended. I felt it was an effective way to advertise The Choir School to a greater audience of people who do not get to hear us on a regular basis. It was also heartening to see the choristers enjoy being part of a choral and liturgical tradition that is hundreds of years old. Evensongs and other performances outside of our regular Sunday morning duties at the Cathedral are a vital means to spread the word about this program, which is one of the few of its kind in the United States.

We have many exciting musical performances coming up over the rest of the program year, including an Advent Carol Service on December 4, a performance at UD’s Arsht Hall as part of the Delaware Community Foundation’s holiday event on December 14, our Christmas Concert on December 24, further Evensongs at the Cathedral, as well as a trip to Philadelphia in May to perform Evensong at St Paul’s Church, Chestnut Hill. I encourage you to attend as many of these events as possible. It takes many supporters like you to make what we do possible.

Thank you!

Eugene Lavery

## Dear Friends,

After an eventful summer that included a successful Brandywine Village Summer Camp and a weeklong Washington, DC Tour by the choir with performances at the National Cathedral, this fall has been just as busy! We welcomed our new Director of Music, Eugene Lavery, and his family to The Choir School. Eugene has brought his exceptional musical talent and energy to continue the program’s legacy of music and choral training.

The after-school Mentoring Academy continues to thrive with full afternoon schedules where students receive one-on-one mentoring, tutoring and assistance with homework. I encourage you to consider learning more about opportunities to make an impact in a student’s life by joining our team of mentors and homework helpers. You can make a difference!

We are grateful for the Longwood Foundation’s support through a \$75,000 matching challenge grant this fall to help fund year-round academic support for our students through the implementation of a structured academic component to our summer camp. Many thanks to Longwood and the individual donors who made this match possible.

Our Board of Directors continues to grow as four new members, Janet Dill, Beth Jones, Harvey Zendt and John Newlin were recently elected.

Thank you to all of those who have reached out to The Choir School in generous support of our search for a new home. We have received a wonderful response from churches, individuals and organizations throughout Wilmington and are encouraged by the strong interest of the community to see that The Choir School continues its work with children and youth. A committee, led by Harvey Zendt, is well-underway visiting sites and in discussion with potential partners. We will continue to keep you apprised of developments in the coming months.

Thank you to our many supporters and partners! We wish you and your family peace and joy this holiday season.

Vicki Tashjian,  
Board President



## Halls are Humming at the Mentoring Academy

The halls are humming with activity as students join us each afternoon for mentoring, homework help, piano and voice lessons. 18 students are meeting one-on-one each week with their mentors and six students are waiting to be matched with a mentor. Students are busy learning spelling words, the new Singapore math methods, algebra, geometry and French. During October, we had a spooky good time within the darkened Cathedral as students embarked on a scavenger hunt to collect their Halloween treats. The following week, we attended the dress rehearsal performance of The Magic Flute at the Grand Opera House. Our students are now exploring the various facets of New Zealand through lesson plans created by our Ameri-corps Public Ally, Eric Hydeman who is on staff with The Choir School through the school year. Delaware 4-H is joining us for five weeks to present their Health Rocks! program focused on tobacco, alcohol and drug prevention. And we’re about to start cooking our way through the colors of the rainbow!

We welcome your ideas and support!

Please contact Leslie Acker-Rowe at [lacker-rowe@cathedralchoirschoolde.org](mailto:lacker-rowe@cathedralchoirschoolde.org).



Mackenzie works on a project in our upgraded computer lab, thanks to a donation of MACs from West Center City Seekers and office furniture from Work First Casualty.