

# BEFORE

# AFTER



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Members of the Detroit's Children's Choir perform "Crayola Doesn't Make a Color for your Eyes" during their spring concert Saturday.

## Detroit Children's Choir fills a gap in young lives

By Bill Laitner  
Free Press Staff Writer

FreePress.com

HEAR THEM SING

Countless schools have eliminated vocal music — a gap that the Detroit Children's Choir is starting to fill in Detroit.

"If children don't have things like singing in their lives, if they're just existing, we're going to pay for that in the future," choir director Carol Schoch said.

Schoch, 60, of Farmington Hills led the group she founded through its sixth annual spring concert Saturday, calling it a chance for more than 150 children — ages 8 to 14, and 90% of them Detroiters — to inspire themselves as much as the audience. About 1,000 people gathered for the free event at Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, on the city's west side.

Singing a repertoire that included songs in Italian, Latin and Swahili, the choir — actually a combined chorus of nine choirs — sang with sweet and, at times, syncopated gusto.

Three of the nine groups that comprise the Detroit Children's Choir are based at K-8 Detroit public schools; a fourth has children from a private academy in Detroit, and other children were

recruited from neighborhood centers in the city, Schoch said.

Being in the choir for three years has been great for 11-year-old Deja Shipp, her mother, Donna Shipp of Warren, said before the concert as she passed out ribbons for parents to wear.

"This has made her blossom," Shipp said, adding that her daughter "doesn't mind at all getting up on Saturday mornings for the rehearsals."

A high point of the concert was the debut of a work written just for the group, called "I Will Sing."

Darren Herring, 43, of Holly, vocal coach at Cathedral Church of St. Paul near Wayne State University, said he composed it through a \$1,200 grant from the Village Club Foundation of Bloomfield Hills.

On Saturday, Herring's song seemed to bring hope and gladness to the hearts of all who heard its lyrics: "I will stand up for freedom, I will fight for what's right, in a world full of darkness, a song can bring light."



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