

# High note

Overland girl says singing at Carnegie Hall 'amazing'

By Regina DeLuca  
Staff writer

Diana Strutman, 12, of Overland recently completed her second year with St. Louis Children's Choirs.

As a member of the SLCC's Choristers, she recently returned from a trip to New York City where the group performed at Carnegie Hall. The SLCC shared the spotlight with the Toronto's Children's Choir. The two choirs performed together under the name International Children's Choir.

"It was amazing," Diana said of the Carnegie Hall experience. "They gave us a 10-minute standing ovation."

Diana, who currently is home-schooled, said she first learned about the SLCC from her music teacher at the public school she then attended. Her teacher encouraged Diana to audition for the group.

"I got into the second level — Chorale group," she said.

At the end of the first season, Diana's singing was evaluated and she was moved to Choristers (upper intermediate level). Next year, she will sing with the Concert Choir (advanced).

Diana said she hopes to continue singing with

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St. Louis Children's Choirs director Ethelyn Sparfeld directs a choir during a rehearsal at the SLCC headquarters, 11631 Olive

Bldv. in Creve Coeur. Diana Strutman of Overland is pictured in the first row, fourth from left. (Rick Graefe photo)

renovating the 24-year-old firehouse at 10789 Midland Blvd.

Free hot dogs and available.

# Choir

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SLCC for the next five years.

"I love music and singing," Diana said. "This is a great experience (singing with SLCC). I hope to become a famous singer, singing spiritual and classical music."

The choirs were founded in 1978 by Diane Finley for children ages 8 to 18 who wanted to learn music and quality singing.

When Finley moved out of Missouri in 1982, she passed the baton to Ethelyn Sparfeld, who thought she'd direct the choirs for two months.

"But after those two months, I saw that this was my niche, this is why I had had all this training before, and it just turned my life around, too," Sparfeld said.

Sparfeld recently left the Principia school in Town and Country — where she taught music for 25 years — to become the full-time musical director of the St. Louis Children's Choirs.

"We're much more recognized nationally than we are in St. Louis," Sparfeld said, attributing it to the choirs' travels and performances with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

That recognition also has

crossed international waters. The Concert Choir has traveled to Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Japan.

In April, members of the SLCC performed Webster University composer Kim Portnoy's "Wreath of Memory," a collection of poems written by children of the Holocaust.

"It was stunning," Sparfeld said. "It was so moving that many of the children had tears either coming down their face or you could see them glassed over, they were so moved. And the audience was just enthralled, and many of them were weeping at the end."

Staff writer Carolyn Marty contributed information to this story.

## ANSWER TO TODAY'S PUZZLE

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