



The High School View

The High School View is staffed and prepared entirely by students from the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, and published on their behalf by The Martha's Vineyard Times.

Minnesingers perform ambitious holiday program

BY ANINA GARVIN

The Minnesingers annual holiday concerts were held last weekend at the Old Whaling Church in Edgartown. The group, consisting of students in ninth through 12th grade, put together an arrangement of diverse and challenging songs for the Island community, displaying their talent and hard work.

Director Abigail Chandler has been working since the start of the school year to ensure her students can understand both the lyrics and melody of the music. "We rehearse weekly leading up to the December show," she said, "but it only turns out to be 14 rehearsals, and when you're learning 20-plus songs, 14 rehearsals is not a lot of time."

Each student is held accountable for learning their part on their own. When it comes to group rehearsals, it's a matter of putting everything together.

Junior Minnesinger Ella Ehrman spoke to the importance of individual commitment. "You just don't want

to be the person who doesn't know your part in a song," she said. "So everyone kind of has a responsibility to learn their parts. And then it comes together really well."

Ms. Chandler loves to challenge her students, especially when it comes to performances, and her dedication to the group is reflected in her diverse and complicated song choices, which for the holiday show includes many religions and cultures.

Ella said, "We have the classic carols, obviously, and then we have a Hebrew piece that's really pretty; we have a Portuguese piece. Usually she tries to include pieces from other places."

Junior Minnesinger Luiz Lacerda said, "Because the community gives so much to us [through fundraising and support], when we have a big audience like we do in the Whaling Church [during Christmas in Edgartown], it feels like we're giving back."

Choreographer Ken Romero works with the group to add dance to their perfor-



The Minnesingers sing at their final dress rehearsal before their annual holiday show.

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mances. "I leave a lot of room within the choreography for students to bring out their personality," he said.

Stage manager Jeffrey Caruthers is behind the lighting and setup of the venue. His role is to emphasize different aspects in the concerts. The arrangement of the stage, as well as the lighting, influences

the tone of the show, he said. It directs the audience's eyes to where he wants their attention to be.

Sophomore Minnesinger Hydee Turner finds that the environment helps the group to grow as a unit. "We're all friends," she said. "We're a group working toward a common goal."

Though being at practice every day for hours at a time with the same people can become chaotic, the group manages to come together in order to perform at their best.

"Before the show, we always have a team meeting," said Ella. "We always sit in the kitchen of the Whaling Church and we all go around

and talk, and that's very bonding. I think the concert really brings everyone together."

Luiz finds that the hard work he and the group have put in over the past few months has paid off. He said, "We hold a lot of power when we perform for other people. It just feels really rewarding." HSV

Building bridges across generations

BY PICKLE EVILLE AND ISABELLE ANTHONY

Junior Hannah McCormick started the Generations Club this year at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) with the aim of connecting students with seniors on-Island from ages 60 to 96. Every other Saturday, students meet with 10 to 12 older adults at the Federated Church's parish house in Edgartown, where they engage in activities such as group discussions, partner storytelling, holiday-themed games, and interactive show-and-tell sessions.

The death of Hannah's grandfather this summer inspired her to create the club for her capstone project. Capstone is a project-based class offered at MVRHS where students have the opportunity to delve further into diverse interests.

"He was a big part of my life. I knew I wanted to do something related to older adults and intergenerational connections, since I had such a strong connection

with him," Hannah said.

While the Generations Club has only begun meeting this year, students have already been making impactful connections. Junior and vice president of Generations Club Maeve Cook-Martin shared an anecdote about someone she met at a recent meeting.

"We were talking ... and

I told her about how I like marine biology. She told me that her family worked in marine biology for a while. She offered to connect me with resources and people in the field, and was just very nice to talk to," she said.

Maeve was inspired to join the club after having a positive experience visiting Windemere, the senior liv-

ing facility on-Island, when she was younger. She has brought her grandfather, Peter Cook, to every meeting so far. She thought it could be a space for him to make connections after the passing of his wife.

"I didn't think about it really until our first meeting, when [Hannah] was asking whom we should

invite," said Maeve. "I said my grandpa should come. Then it really got me thinking that a lot of elders have loved ones who have passed, and they don't have a lot of people they can talk to."

Cook greatly valued the club's ability to make those in the older generation feel seen. "I think for our generation, it is more than a little bit of a pleasure to be invited, as a senior or elder, to participate in this kind of connection. Because it's possible for a lot of people in our age group to begin to feel irrelevant, that our time for doing things is perhaps in some ways, considered come and gone," he said.

Retired teacher Nanci Dator agrees. "Seniors and high school kids don't often mix, unless you are family members. The opportunity to find that the kids were interested in getting to know us is fascinating," she said.

Dator also enjoys the interactive qualities of club meetings. She reflected on how one week, mem-

bers were asked to bring in something that reminded them of their travels. "I brought a painted tile that represented a holiday trip I took from Switzerland to Italy, and also a Christmas ornament from Europe," she said.

Hannah feels that the club is also very beneficial for the younger generation, as they can receive influential life advice. "It's really important to get advice from someone who has lived longer than us. They know more about the world because they have had a lifetime of experiences," she said.

Overall, the club has become a valued experience for everyone involved. "I spent 25 minutes in a one-on-one conversation, and that was very useful, because we discovered across almost 70 years of distance that we had a great deal in common," said Cook. "That was as detailed as any conversation I've ever had with anyone. I said some things that would have had to be teased out of me in my past." HSV



Juniors Lucy Magden and Kellry Aredes speak with older adults at a recent club meeting.

ISABELLE ANTHONY