

On the Move



Karin von Voigtlander/Staff photographer

Carol DeYeager (left, holding guitar) practices with other members of the Christian band Cornerstone at her Greece home Sept. 4. The band was rehearsing for a Sept. 7 performance at High Falls in Rochester.

Coming together for a good cause

STORY BY MIKE LATONA

For most of its nearly 10-year existence, the musical group Cornerstone has played primarily for church congregations. But on Saturday, Sept. 7, members ventured outside for a very special public performance.

On a beautiful late-summer evening, the group played in the midst of downtown Rochester's High Falls district as part of the annual CURE Childhood Cancer Association illumination ceremony. Offering such well-known church songs as "City of God" and "Amazing Grace," Cornerstone led off a program that highlighted Childhood Cancer Month this month.

Band member Dana Marzovilla noted that the crowd grew steadily as the 30-minute set went on, with passers-by as well as patrons from outdoor restaurants stopping to listen and applaud. Following Cornerstone's concert, local dignitaries made appearances on behalf of CURE, followed by speakers who talked about how their lives have been affected by cancer.

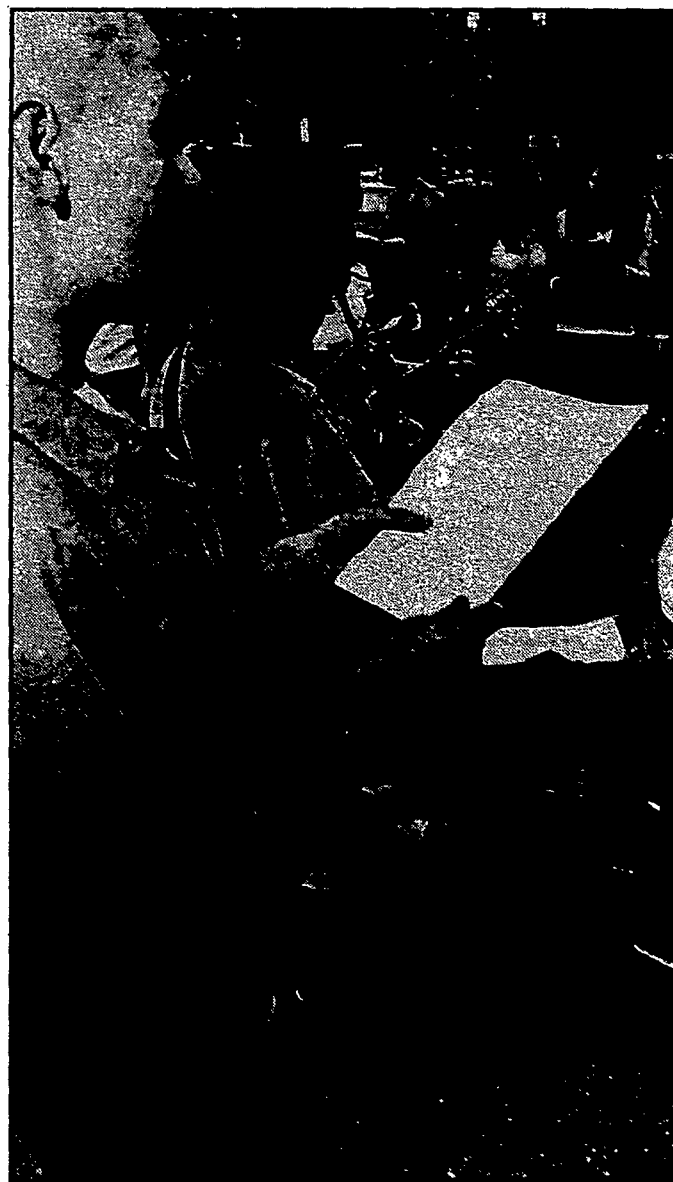
To close out the program, all participants took part in a procession across the specially lit High Falls footbridge, carrying glow sticks to accentuate the illumination ceremony.

"It was a lot different than any other usual gig," said Dana, 18. "It was really moving to see all these people who had been suffering. There were people talking about how they'd had to spend Christmas and birthdays in the hospital. That kind of hit hard. I was just glad I could be there to offer up something (by performing), because I've been given a lot."

"There were people who had had cancer, and people who have cancer right now," added Kasey Schultz, 15, another Cornerstone member. "Just hearing what some of the families have gone through, you're like, 'Wow.' It was very touching."

Kasey's own family has lived the experience. Her younger sister Lauren, who turns 8 on Oct. 13, was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of 3. Fortunately, the cancer has been in remission for nearly five years.

CURE (Counseling, Understanding, Resources and Education) is a nonprofit group offering financial and emotional support for families of children with cancer in the Rochester and Finger



Josh Kaffer

Simon Shipkowski sings with other members of Cornerstone during the Sept. 7 concert at High Falls.

Lakes areas. Cornerstone became involved in the Sept. 7 program through Kasey and Lauren's mother, Amy, who is on CURE's planning committee and suggested that the group perform. "Of course, they were happy to do it," Amy Schultz said.

Cornerstone involves 15 to 20 members who are mostly teenagers and young adults. For several years the group had played Saturday-evening Masses at St. Charles Borromeo Church in Greece, where most of the musicians are parishioners.

However, Cornerstone's music had been on hiatus for several months, due in

part to a different kind of serious illness. The group was founded in 1993 by Jim and Carol DeYeager, but Jim DeYeager suffered a massive stroke in May 2001 and is now recovering at home. (The DeYeager family will be profiled in next week's On the Move.)

Although they stopped performing at Masses, group members continued meeting weekly for fellowship. Then, they reconvened this past spring to perform at a benefit dinner for Jim DeYeager at St. Charles Borromeo. Dana, who had gotten to know several Cornerstone members from diocesan retreats, made his debut with the group at that benefit, taking over Jim DeYeager's guitar slot.

"I was all for it. Jim taught me a lot of guitar when I was on retreats. Trying to step in for him, I didn't even have to think about it," said Dana, a parishioner at St. Theodore's in Gates.

At this point, Cornerstone members are uncertain about their short-term performing schedule. Carol

DeYeager said they'd like to play again at special events, and Dana ventured the possibility of putting on a Christmas performance.

Regardless of their musical future, Dana and Kasey said that friendships within Cornerstone are so strong that they plan to continue meeting even if there isn't a concert right around the corner.

"We all have fun together. It's one of those things that you want to keep going back to," Kasey said.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For more details on CURE, go to www.curekidscancer.com