

Cathedral Choir School Students Inspire Convention Delegates and Guests

A presentation made by Andrea Higgins

Following the Cathedral Choir School's performance at convention, several of the students spoke about what the program means to them. This is Andrea Higgins' presentation. Find more by following the Convention link at www.DioceseofDelaware.net.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Andrea Higgins. I am 18 years old and a senior in high school. I am in my eleventh and final year in the Cathedral Choir School. I first became acquainted with it in 1998 when I was attending the Debnam House Day Camp. One week there was a trial session of the Choir School that allowed campers to get a feel for what it was about. I enjoyed the music we sang during the session, and that fall I had my mother enroll me.

Over a decade has passed since then, and boy, have I changed! Looking back, I realize that without the Choir School I probably would not have become the person I am today. The morals, lessons, and skills that are taught by Dr. Roland, and all the other adults who are involved with the Choir School, have helped me to build character, gain responsibility, and learn respect for myself and others.

I've grown up in the inner-city of Wilmington, where many of my teenage friends have become involved with the usage of drugs and alcohol, and/or have become pregnant. I feel lucky that God blessed me with the opportunity to join the Choir School, because I may have ended up with my friends, making the wrong decisions. Even more, I am grateful for the Choir School's mentoring program. With the motivation of my mentor, Ms. Susan, and the mentoring administrator, Ms.



Leslie, I have been able to perform extremely well in school and maintain my GPA, which is a 3.58. Also, I was able to improve the scores of my SATs, and since having a mentor, I have been inducted in my school's National Honor Society.

Not only has the Choir School helped me to mature and helped my academic performance, but it has also exposed me to the world outside of Wilmington. I've been able to meet people and travel. This has given me the trust and confidence to step outside of my safety net. I now know there is a whole world out there waiting for me to make a difference, whether it is singing about the love of God or being a leader to younger children in my community.

This is why I chose to apply to a college across the country. In the fall, I will be moving to Los Angeles to attend the Fashion Institute of Design and Mer-

chandising. I chose to attend this college because I want to become a fashion stylist and fashion show producer. Yes, I have a passion for fashion, and I love all the glitz and glamour. But one of the primary reasons why I chose these two careers is because I want to be an advocate that speaks out against standards that cause men and women to develop eating disorders and cause young teenagers to be insecure about the person God has created them to be.

I see fashion styling as an art. You are taking the creations of designers and putting them together to create an expression and/or a statement. My goal as a fashion stylist is to make a statement that our world is changing and so is fashion and that everyone deserves the chance to feel beautiful. Without singing about the love of God, I probably would have never realized that God is also an artist and he has made a statement. His statement is that he created us to be beautiful in our own ways, and I want to commit my life to expressing this.

Although I am moving across country, I want to continue being a part of the Choir School, whether it be singing with the choir when I am in town, donating money to the scholarship fund (so more youth won't be on the streets making mistakes), or even talking about my experiences to people I encounter across the country. I thank Dr. Roland and Mr. Boatman for being there for me all these years. I credit you two for helping me get to where I am going in life. Thank you.

This article was originally published by the Episcopal Diocese of Delaware in the May, 2009 issue of its newspaper, *The Delaware Communion*.