

Faith Wesleyan to be scene of African children's fundraiser

While the local hills might not be alive with the sounds of music, this Sunday Faith Community Wesleyan Church will be alive with the sounds of the African Children's Choir, a group of underprivileged children from Africa who tour together to bring their music to communities around the world while raising awareness of the situations they face.

The choir was started 30 years ago, in 1984, when missionary Ray Barnett went to Africa.

"It's a very simple story with a huge impact," said Emily Gronow, tour chaperone. "During the Civil War, [Ray] gave a small boy a lift in his car."

The young boy had just lost his parents, and as they drove, he began singing in the car. His singing has been described as being full of pure hope and dignity.

"It moved Ray deeply and sparked his passion to start up [a] choir to bring these children's hope and potential over to the western world," said Ms. Gronow. "In the last 30 years, over 100,000 families have been helped because of this mission and organization."

The choir is run by its parent organization, Music For Life, and consists of 18 children from Africa who tour around North America and the United Kingdom, singing their hearts out and helping to raise awareness about the conditions and life in Africa.

"The purpose of the Children's Choir is to lift Africa's most vulnerable children and families from poverty," added Ms. Gronow.

"The funds raised through these performances help provide support back home, for many things, including education through to a University level."

The choir has performed in front of many prestigious people, including Queen Elizabeth during her diamond jubilee, as well as alongside Paul McCartney, Annie Lennox, Keith Urban, Mariah Carey, Michael W. Smith and more.

They will also have a small role in the upcoming feature movie, Pan, starring Hugh Jackman.

"It's fantastic what it's doing, and every year it's creating ripple effects and creating change," said Ms. Gronow. The children "go back to their communities, and they help and are that ripple effect in their communities."

Sunday's performance at Faith Wesleyan, on Highway 10 south of town, starts at 6:30 p.m. While no tickets are necessary for entry, it is recommended that anyone interested call the church to reserve seats, as seating is limited. Donations will be accepted, and a love offering will be taken that evening for the non-profit organization.

"If for no other reason, people should come out to see Africa in a positive light, and have the opportunity to smile," said Ms. Gronow.

For more information on the organization, visit www.africanchildrenschoir.com. To reserve seating, contact Faith Community Wesleyan Church at 519-941-8773.