

Dear FCCC,

Nearly twenty years ago, on the morning after my junior prom, I stood ready to cut the first-ever CD with a choir I'd spent the last three years singing with. I was dog-tired, and the next several hours demanded nothing short of the hard work, concentration, and strenuous attention to detail I'd come to expect with the twenty-five other Chamber Singers I'd come to know like family. And of course, our marvelous conductor, Jon Noyes. When we wrapped, I left, knowing that this was going to be the perfect way for me to end my time with the Fairfield County Children's Choir.

Except it wasn't the end.

In the years that I've spent as an alumni, it still amazes me to think back on how those years with the Fairfield County Children's Choir shaped the person that I've become today. Now a wife, mother of two, and teacher in Fairfield, that hard work, concentration, and attention to detail remains. Not only has it helped to shape me, it has remained a part of my identity that I am enormously proud of.

Looking back, there were so many firsts in those years. For a time, I was the oldest "kid" in the choir, the very first to be able to drive myself, and my friends, to rehearsals. I remember our first trip to West Point for the holiday concert. The first summer tour outside of the United States. The first concert uniforms. The first time singing the Otto Fischer *Ave Maria*, and needing to hold up the deep alto 2 section because there were no guys in the choir. Performing the world premiere of *When You Believe* from the King of Egypt (sorry, Mariah Carey). The first performance with the Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra. And of course, the first time to Carnegie Hall.

As I moved forward through the years following the choir, I stayed in touch with Jon Noyes. I watched the choir's activities eagerly, looking on with no small amount of jealousy at what they were singing, where they were performing, and who with. I came back now and then, once to chaperone a summer tour to England and Ireland, to ask that the choir sing at my wedding, and then a few years ago to join the choir for the twentieth anniversary concert, now 9 months pregnant with my second child.

My children are now 6 and 4 years old, and love watching or listening to when Mommy was a kid in the choir. I hope that one day they, too, will join the choir, to learn those life skills and have those extraordinary experiences that I did. I look forward to seeing what the choir will do next, where they will go, and most importantly, for it to remain a part of my life.

Sincerely,
Lauren Noonan