

Singing for Watoto 🎵

Africa mission gets support from local CD

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The Packet

Cathy Harris wears her faith on her sleeve. She thanks God for life's small pleasures, and offer's prayers for everything else. In her Bonavista home, the well-thumbed Bible on the coffee table is all it takes to see where her heart is.

Harris found her calling in the Salvation Army church, as a missionary to needy countries the world over. "I love what it stands for, I love that they do and how they reach out to fallen humanity," she says. Her faith is her calling, but music is a passion.

"I sing, mostly. I play occasionally," she laughs. Her songs, she says, are inspired by God.

This year, she is putting one passion to work for another - she has just released her second CD, the proceeds from which will go directly to her next mission to Africa.

Harris, along with four others from Bonavista, are gearing up for a trip to Uganda. Watoto Village is a mission-run village for orphans, and it's here Harris will lead the missionaries-to-be.

She and nine others are set to fly to Africa in April. Due to personal reasons, 6 members of the group have had to back out. But that's not stopping Harris She's determined the group will go – in September. The extra time will let them raise more funds for the trip, and secure more people..

"We know we have to put money in it ourselves," says Harris. Airfare, accommodation, vaccinations and food will tally about \$3,000. Each missionary needs at least \$1,000 of project money to contribute to building a house, or some other infrastructure project, in Watoto.

Her CD, He Understands My Tears, was recorded in Bonavista last fall and produced by Craig Pardy. It features local musician Robert Little, and plenty of toe-tapping banjo melodies. The Bonavista Salvation Army Singing Company children's choir, led by Narissa Short, rounds out the performances. Kent Short also lent a hand to background tracks for the children. Harris thought the young voices were appropriate for a CD that is helping children in another part of the world.

In fact, the music itself is a fitting way for Harris to get to Africa. It's music that brought her and Watoto Village together in the first place.

Watoto Village sends a children's choir around the globe, raising awareness for the 1,200 orphans that live in Watoto. Harris saw the choir perform in Alberta, and knew immediately it was the mission for her.

Harris relies on signs from God to guide her life, and this was one she couldn't pass up. (she gleefully remembers how she felt at first some years ago when she says God first told her to go overseas: "No, I'm not going to Africa – I'm scared of cock roaches!")

The title track, He understands my tears, is not an original, but Harris chose it for it's apt message:

"It's not about missions, but the title was what caught me. Acknowledging that there are so many people who feel life is hopeless, but God understands your tears."

Missions, she says, reach out to young and old, men and women alike, and even all faiths. The upcoming trip to Africa, members of the United, Pentecostal and Salvation Army churches will all be travelling together. Harris says there are still places available if anyone else would like to join the mission.

"I'm putting the call out to anyone who has the heart to do this," she says. To apply for the trip, contact Harris at prodigal_ministries@yahoo.ca.

Her CD will be available for sale in stores between Clarendville and Bonavista. To hear a sample of Harris' work, visit www.thepacket.ca.

Singing for God - Cathy Harris has just release a CD, the proceeds of which will go towards her upcoming mission to Africa.