

PRESS RELEASE

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Local Singers Form Nonprofit Gospel Project

Portsmouth, NH—April 8, 2004—The Diversified Faith Gospel Project, a new, nonprofit umbrella organization developed to bring diverse communities and individuals together through life-affirming traditional and contemporary spiritual and secular music, is pleased to announce that it will begin weekly choir rehearsals on Thursday, April 29. Vocalists of all abilities are invited and welcome to attend.

“Our mission is to entertain and educate through performance, charitable outreach, and other community-building activities,” stated Dawn Boyer, the organization’s President and a vocalist with 20 years’ experience performing blues, gospel, soul and R&B across the nation. “We are an interfaith group that respects the various traditions of spiritual music and the value each brings to our culture. Our audiences can expect to hear, for example, African-American spirituals, blues gospel, rock gospel, folk gospel, and even secular songs that bring a message of hope. Perhaps the most important thing I can say about the group’s philosophy is that we value people’s different beliefs and ways of understanding spirituality. And we subscribe to the original meaning of the word gospel, which is ‘good news.’ Too many of us have become isolated in our society, and people are craving a way to connect and feel joy. Performing this music is our way of creating a space for that to happen.”

The Diversified Faith Gospel Project was started by five women who were former members of the seacoast-based Funky Divas of Gospel. “Our experience with the Funky Divas was invaluable,” said Boyer, a former Divas soloist. “But eventually some of us grew beyond that group’s scope. We felt that the only way to truly espouse the principles behind the music was to become nonprofit. Now, we can give back to the community in a way we couldn’t before. For instance, we’ll perform regularly in churches, nursing homes, hospitals and prisons for either a nominal fee or gratis. And, through the funds we raise at concerts, brunches, festivals and workshops, we’ll donate to charities.” Every performance will also have an educational side to it—the group plans, through programs and brief stories, to introduce audiences to the writers, vocalists and musicians behind the songs. “We want people going away not only feeling good, but with a deepened appreciation of the music and its impact on creating positive change,” Boyer said. “For example, many of us are familiar with the popular spiritual, ‘Wade in the Water,’ but not many know that the song was actually a secret code among slaves. It was their way of telling one another to walk through water during escape to stop bloodhounds’ tracking. And ‘Amazing Grace’ was written by a slave-ship owner who realized during one journey what he was doing, turned his ship around, and brought the would-be slaves back to their homeland. The song is about that experience.”

Those interested in becoming part of the choir and attending an orientation session should call 207-384-8318 or email dfgp@comcast.net for details and more information. Boyer stated, “We are very excited about this project and are looking forward to adding members to the organization. We feel strongly that we have something of great value to offer—and we’ll raise the roof with great music while we’re at it.”

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