

PREACHING TO THE CHOIR

For JENNY-LEE CHAPERON singing is a way to give back to the community



Singing in public can be a nerve-racking experience, even for someone as confident as Ashwood resident Jenny-Lee Chaperon, who was a

dancer for more than 15 years.

She clearly remembers her first rehearsal with the Ashburton choir Our Community Sings. "I was running late so it had already

started," she says. "And there wasn't really a big explanation of how they do things, it was just: bang, we are singing."

Chaperon slipped into the alto

section and was quickly enthralled by the joyful atmosphere. A few months on, she has taken on the role of choir ambassador. Led by conductor Kym Dillon, Our Community Sings is a diversity choir welcoming people from all walks of life, with no auditions and no singing experience necessary.

The choir is part of a network of With One Voice community choirs run by non-profit organisation Creativity Australia, which helps members make friends, find mentors, build confidence and even improve their English and find jobs.

Chaperon says the Ashburton group, which has 35 members, is not only about singing, but building friendships and community spirit. "It's a very inclusive choir; it's not all people who are able-bodied and not all people who are successful," Chaperon says. "People might have struggles in their life, but this is a little outlet for them to come along to. I absolutely love it."

Chaperon took on the ambassador role to complement the volunteer work she does at Ashburton Support Services as a line-dance and ballroom-dance teacher. Chaperon

took on more volunteer duties last year after leaving her career as a medical secretary for something with more "personal satisfaction". She is also studying for her diploma of leisure and health through her work at the centre.

"I know for a fact that the dancing keeps them going for longer," she says. "They have to use their brains and engage different parts of their bodies which helps them prevent falls; once you have a fall, sometimes that can be pretty tricky to come back from."

"The lovely thing about the choir is that you don't need to have a trained voice because irregularities that you might have in your voice get gobbled up by the rest of the choir," she says. "We have some very quiet, timid people and to see them come out of their shell is just a beautiful thing."

The Ashburton Our Community Sings choir meets at 6.15pm on Wednesdays at Ashburton Baptist Church, 8 Y Street, Ashburton. Details: visit creativityaustralia.org.au

JOANNE SIM

jsim@mmpgroup.com.au

AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST BBQ - BEER & BLUES FESTIVAL!

AS BBQ AS IT GETS!

- Mouth-watering BBQ Food!
- Awesome Craft Beer Garden!
- Victoria's Greatest Live Blues Bands!
- Biggest Ever BBQ Cook Off!
- Family Entertainment!
- Visitor Competitions!
- Master Classes with **Andy Groneman** 20 times USA Grand Champion BBQ Master!



BLUES BREWS BBQs!



GOURMET BARBEQUE Festival

1-3 MARCH 2013

SOUTH BEACH RESERVE
ST KILDA, MELBOURNE



GRAM

WWW.BAR-BQFEST.COM.AU

For more information contact Graeme on 08 8271 5278 / 04 6899 1698
or e-mail graeme@edgeexpo.com.au

BUY YOUR ENTRY & MASTER CLASS TICKETS ON-LINE @ WWW.BAR-BQFEST.COM.AU