

# SOUTHERN View

CASHMERE, ST MARTINS, HILLSBOROUGH, BARRINGTON, SYDENHAM, CRACROFT, WESTMORLAND, HALSWELL, BECKENHAM



Singing for strength: The Cantabrainers Choir held its first-ever Christmas concert last week.

Photo: Christy O'Hagan

## Cantabrainers on song for Christmas

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"Singing lifts our spirits and our mood. We come to maintain and improve Building confidence in speech, are our goals to reach. Pitch, tone and volume we exude."

**THESE** are some of the words sung by the Cantabrainers, a choir for people with neurological conditions, which has celebrated its first year with a Christmas concert.

The choir was started in February by Therapy Professionals Limited, inspired by a similar group in Auckland called the Celebration Choir.

It incorporates people who have had conditions like strokes, Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis, which can affect their speaking.

Therapy Professionals managing director Shonagh O'Hagan said music could help them find their voice again.

"Most say their confidence has improved and they're going out and doing things they were not doing before."

The choir is run by music therapist Kimberley Jones and speech language therapist Susan McDonald.

Ms O'Hagan said last Wednesday's concert, held at Hohepa Canterbury's hall in Barrington Street and supported by Creative New Zealand,

was a great success.

"It was very moving; we had some people who were in tears. The songs were arranged and they developed a story to go with it. It was all about somebody with a neurological condition and the shock of finding you have a disability and working your way to accepting that and accepting you are a changed you."

She said some of the songs were parodies developed by choir members, while others sang solo parts or played the piano.

About 45 people were part of the choir with between 25 and 30 turning out to each weekly rehearsal.

Members ranged in age from 40s to 90s. Choir sessions are run out of the Mary Potter Community Centre and resume for 2013 in February.

Ms O'Hagan said anyone who may benefit from joining the choir could make enquiries with the Therapy Professionals Limited office on 377 5280.

"Before we started choir we could hardly even speak. Our voices were so soft because our breathing was so weak. But now you hear us sing aloud, we're really quite unique. In the therapeutic choir."



Harmony: The Cantabrainers Choir

Photo: Shonagh O'Hagan

## Community Diary

### To submit your notice

Email to [diary@southernview.co.nz](mailto:diary@southernview.co.nz)  
or post to Community Diary, P.O. Box 39176 Harewood, Christchurch 8545

**CIVIC** Toastmasters meet fortnightly on Tuesdays at the Plunket Centre, 5 Twigger Street, Addington, 5.45pm to 7.15pm. Next meetings January 15 & 29. A great opportunity to see how Toastmasters can help you improve your confidence & speaking skills. Phone Penny 332-7182 or March 021 377-021 or email [civic@toastmasters.org.nz](mailto:civic@toastmasters.org.nz)

**CHRISTCHURCH** Scrabble Club extends a warm welcome to new members. Join us and learn how to better your scores and broaden your idea of the game. We meet at the Sydenham Community Centre, Hutcheson St, Wednesday afternoons from 12.30pm to 4pm & Friday evenings from 6.45pm to 10pm. For further info phone Shirley 332-7263 or John 332-5996.

The Community Noticeboard is for non profit groups or organisations. Items submitted must include a phone number and any associated costs and must not be more than 50 words. This is a free service from Mainland Press which reserves the right to edit submissions or to withhold items from publication if they do not fit the criteria, or due to space constraints.

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