Chapel Hill women's chorus uses

music to help deaf children

HENRY GARGAN | PUBLISHED 07/12/11 3:32PM

When Lisa Park proposed

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responded with overwhelming enthusiasm.

As a member of the Women's Voices Chorus, Park and her fellow vocalists will perform Saturday to benefit the Center for Acquisition of Spoken language Through Listening Enrichment (CASTLE), a sub-service of UNC's School of Medicine.

The center works to improve its patients' speech and communication skills and empowers parents to act as teachers and participants in their children's development.

"CASTLE's role is to provide two things," said Hannah Eskridge, the center's program director. "Part of our role is to train specialists and teachers how to help kids listen and speak. The other part of that is a direct services component — the implants and the therapy."

The center, with its specially trained educators, provides a classroom environment for the children that uses music as a key part of its curriculum.

"It just seemed like a natural partnership," said Park, who has also worked with CASTLE as an audiologist for five years. "We have kids who sing, who play the violin or the piano, and we want to get the word out about what these kids can do now, as far as music goes."

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Park said that while the group normally focuses on filling its repertoire with music by or about women, Saturday's program has been

fitted to the cause at hand.

"All of our pieces will deal with the senses in some way," she said. "We're also singing a couple of premier pieces, one of which is about sight, from (Lana Walter's) poem 'On His Blindness."

The show, "A Musical Feast for the Senses," will take place at 4 p.m. on Sunday at the United Church of Chapel Hill on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. Admission is free. Donations are welcome.

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