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Suzanne Rader-Kinkel believes the more you give to others, the more you will receive in life. The Miller Place resident says, "As a recent senior executive who was affected by our economy, I still believe that our life is not measured by our accomplishments, but rather by the accomplishments of others who have helped along in their life's journey."

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Karen Van Houten, upper left, leads teens from Studio K in a recording at Cove City Sound Studios in Glen Cove. From left are Joe Ball, Lauren Doherty, Zak Thompson, Adara Mifsud, Olivia Buonsante, Zoe Black, Ashlyn Libert and Michael Recchia.

PHOTOS BY JOE EPSTEIN

Teens make their own music

At Glen Cove studio, 8 students create hits — mix of oldies, popular

BY JENNA KERN-RUGILE
Special to Newsday

Many Long Islanders spent Super Bowl Sunday glued to the game, but for eight talented teens the action took place in the main room at Cove City Sound Studios in Glen Cove.

The teens, part of a new group called Studio K, are hoping to follow in the footsteps of some of the other singers who've recorded at Cove City. Mariah Carey, Billy Joel, Jennifer Lopez, Whitney Houston and Celine Dion all have recorded there.

Studio K's eight members — Joe Ball, Zoe Black, Olivia Buonsante, Lauren Doherty, Ashlyn Libert, Adara Mifsud, Michael Recchia and Zak Thompson — were brought together by Karen Van Houten, artistic director of Simple Gifts Productions in Centerport. Like the cast of the hit TV show "Glee," the teens blend their voices in



Karen Van Houten, artistic director of Simple Gifts Productions, coaches students.

beautiful harmonies, creating lush arrangements of some of today's most popular songs — along with some from their parents' generation.

Over two days at Cove City, Studio K recorded four tunes for its premiere CD release: Miley Cyrus' hit "The Climb"; "Bad Day," made famous on American Idol; "This Is Me" from the film "Camp Rock," and Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" from 1981.

"Each song features one or two of the singers in the lead, with the others backing them up," explains Van Houten, whose performing arts company

offers a range of programs for kids from kindergarten through high school. "Everyone gets their turn in the spotlight."

The recording was made "for the experience of recording a professional CD," said Van Houten, who added it will be used to promote the group and the program, with proceeds ultimately going to charitable causes.

Said Libert, at 16 the oldest member of the group, "Singing is what makes me who I am, and being in a world-class studio is a dream come true." Buonsante, 14, agrees, calling it "amazing" to know that she's singing into the same microphones some of the most popular singers in the world used.

"What I find most empowering about Studio K is how Karen took eight individual kids and over a period of just a few weeks turned us into a singing group," said Recchia, 12, who has been performing in musicals on Long Island and Manhattan since he was 5. "She worked really hard to find the right songs for our voices and the best combination of singers to create really great harmonies."

Cove City Sound Studios is owned by Richie Cannata, who has recorded and toured with Billy Joel and The Beach Boys,

among others. For Studio K's session, Cannata's son Eren — a musician and songwriter like his father — took on the role of producer, with engineering by Chris McDonald. "It's all about encouraging the next generation of singers and performers," Eren Cannata said. "These kids are very talented, and being able to record in a real studio setting — not just someone's basement setup — is an experience they'll never forget."

Although the group only formed in November, Studio K has big plans for the future. "The purpose of this group is to take kids with raw talent and give them professional training and an amazing opportunity to record in a studio of this caliber," said Van Houten, who is looking to open a new, larger performing arts facility in the near future. "Simple Gifts has outgrown our space in Centerport, and with all the talented young singers and actors on Long Island, I can't wait to get into a new location that can showcase their work."

Van Houten has plans for a younger Studio K program and a possible singing contest that will let even more LI teens and tweens show their stuff. Visit simplegiftsproductions.com to keep up to date on all the details.



WHO'S COOKING: Lula and Frank Koscheka prepare Moamba stew.

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