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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2017

# Richmond Christmas choir celebrating 20 years of community music

By Gordon Lambie

The ecumenical Christmas choir is an annual tradition in the Richmond area that dates back decades; two, to be precise. It was in 1996 that the group first came together at the behest of Audrey Husk and Heather Barrie and under the direction of Francine Beaubien. Thanks to a year off in the winter of 1998, that makes this year the group's twentieth of singing together for the holidays.

The group, which draws its vocalists from Richmond and the surrounding communities, is known for its cantatas telling the traditional nativity story through song and verse. Under the musical direction of Richmond Centre d'art music teacher Diane Duguay since 1998, the composition of the choir has grown and changed over the years, accompanied by a wide range of instrumentalists.

"We've always had a violinist or a flutist, sometimes both, to add color to the performance," noted Beaubien, who has stayed on with the choir as pianist and a project coordinator over the years. "One year we had a string trio and other years I had students help out with percussion."

Baubien and fellow coordinator Charlotte Griffith both pointed out that many of the group's members have been involved since the early days, with other dedicated members having passed away.

Asked if the group is doing anything special for their anniversary year, Griffith explained that the choir has taken on a challenge.

"The format this year is not a Cantata," the choir member said, explaining

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# Mansonville Optimist Club celebrates with a family Christmas event



MABLE HASTINGS

By Mable Hastings

On Sunday, December 3, the Mansonville Optimist Club held a family fun day at the Baluchon School in Potton with over 150 in attendance. The event included inflatable games, miniature horse rides, outdoor games, indoor face painting, crafts, a hot dog lunch and a visit from the Snow Fairy, North Pole Elves and

Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus.

The children lined up after lunch and had their photos taken with Santa and Mrs. Claus and each child shared their wish list and received candy bags from Santa. The young and young at heart were quick to find a free knee and whisper into Santa's ear as smiles were abundant with joy.

"This year we wanted to do some-

thing special in celebration of family," said organizer, Jennifer McGeean. "We normally have Santa come and distribute gifts but this year, we put our funds toward activities that the children and their parents could enjoy together."

Jennifer was quick to acknowledge the help of those who coordinated the event with her: Erin Oliver, Shana and

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