

Musician spreads word: Everyone can sing

Margie Warner spreads the joy of music with new CD, which highlights funny parenting moments

By **AMY L. ZITKA**
Special to Weekend

CHESTER — Margie Warner, lovingly known by preschool children as Music with Margie, teaches and entertains her audience depending on the age level.

Her sons may be in their late teens now, but the songs the Chester musician writes entwines her storytelling abilities with circumstances that parents encounter with younger children.

Warner, who delights children through her concerts, and teaches — as well as entertains — her younger crowds in her preschool program, will be performing four free concerts at area libraries this month to help kickoff the upcoming release of her new CD.

The "Free Fun Family After-School Concerts" will take place today at 4:30 p.m. at the Brainerd Memorial Library, Haddam; Nov. 9 at 4 p.m. at the Henry Carter Hull Library, Clinton; Nov. 16 at 4:30 p.m. at the Deep River Public Library; and Nov. 29 at 4:30 p.m. at the Killingworth Public Library. The performances will include songs from her highly-awaited new CD, "On the Road with the Fun Family."

"I personally love this project," Warner said of her new musical compilation that was two years in the making. "I really think this is my best effort."

Warner wrote all except for one of the songs on the disc, and she tested them out over the summer. "The response was great," she added. Some of the songs she wrote a long time ago, while others were more recent compositions.

"On the Road with the Fun Family" features several acclaimed Connecticut musicians, such as Phil Rosenthal on the banjo, lead guitar and mandolin. Warner plays the rhythm guitar on the songs.

"We wanted to expand it out of the folk and bluegrass realm," Warner said of the new disc. "On the Road with the Fun Family" follows up Warner's 2005 release, "Singin' 'Round the



Margie Warner holds children's music class at The Killingworth Library. "On the Road With The Fun Family," a live performance to kick off the release of her CD, will be at the library Nov. 29.

Campfire." The songs include the presence of such instruments as flute, percussion and electric guitar.

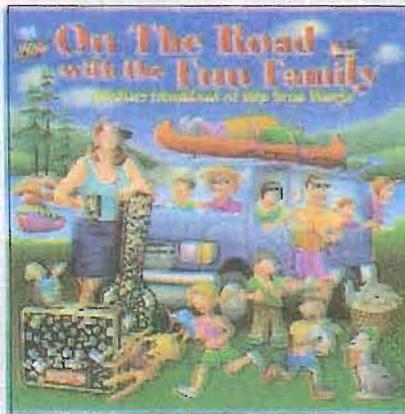
"This CD is an eclectic mix," she said, while her first CD was filled with campfire songs. "Each song tells a story. All the stories are based on parenting — funny things that happen on family vacations and parenting in general."

Warner's new compositions, as with those in the past, rely on storytelling and come from ordinary, but telling circumstances.

When one of her sons was younger, he was a voracious reader. When it was time for sleep, he would hide under the covers with a flashlight and read. This inspired her new tune, "Turn Out The Lights And Go To Bed!" Other songs, such as "Bird on the Roof," "I Still Love Baseball," and "The Art Project" were drawn from

similar circumstances.

Warner brought back "The Campfire Kids" from her first musical compila-



tion, and they perform on every song on the new CD.

"I looked back at the first CD, and

I loved the songs with them on it,"

she said. "The Campfire Kids" are 13 area children who accompany her on the songs. They are average neighborhood children who were selected for their spirit rather than vocal ability.

Warner's philosophy is everyone has talent — it just needs to be encouraged and developed.

"My philosophy is all of us or none of us are singing," she said. "My theory is we're all born musical."

"Having a joyful spirit is more important than being on pitch," according to Warner. "My goal is to get all children to be musical beings. Too many adults tell me horror stories of being told they had no talent and were left out as kids."

Warner has been teaching through music since 1979. In her "Music with Margie" pre-kindergarten curricu-

lum, Warner teaches preschoolers, kindergartners and special education students.

The program entertains even infants, who bounce and move to the melodies. The preschoolers learn to think positively by telling Warner their "happy thought" or what made them smile that day after holding her toy magic wand.

The children also learn through the songs such concepts as expressions, days of the week, colors and counting. Warner also tests the children's memory within the songs.

Warner traded in her corporate job to spend more time with her sons after they were born.

"When they were born, I just wanted to play with them," she said. "The songs from my childhood came back to me when I was pregnant."

Warner then began to volunteer in her son's preschool class, and "I found it made me happy."

In 1990, she began to volunteer in the then newly-formed EIP class at Chester Elementary School, combining her love of children, singing and guitar playing. That led to a paraprofessional position with the state's Preschool Services for the Blind working through Chester Child Center. Warner was trained in music, mobility, speech and occupational therapies.

A decade ago, she developed her musical pre-K curriculum — "Music with Margie." Throughout the recent years, besides her Music with Margie program, she has participated in

"Puppetunes" with puppeteer Maria Otfinoski, performing social development program. This year, Warner also became a member of the Connecticut Storytelling Center and will be a featured artist in their "Tellabration" festival next year in Willimantic.

"On the Road with the Fun Family," which includes printed lyrics, so parents can learn the words, will be available at local stores, at the concerts, or from www.MusicWithMargie.com. The first 100 prepaid orders will have their copy signed, numbered, and delivered free.

— Brad M. Horrigan | Special to Weekend