



Anna ... Onward!

By Beth Foreman, Features Editor

She may be young — seventeen years — but Anna Flores is already living the LWML motto: “Serve the Lord with gladness.” Overflowing with energy, gifts and eagerness, Anna is a beautiful illustration of today’s Lutheran Women in Mission.

Anna, a senior at Riverhead High School, Long Island, New York, is learning all about juggling — juggling the hours in a day as an honors student, a Christian band member, a sister and

daughter and granddaughter, an LWML teen leader, and even a contestant on *American Idol*.

“David defeated Goliath and when I was a little kid, I wanted to be like that. I was little, but I was going to save the world!” She may not be saving the entire world, but she is striving to make a difference for Christ.

One night she’s reviewing for an AP exam — physics or English or U.S. history; the next day she’s shopping at

[Photo above] Anna and her mother share convention moments.

LUTHERAN WOMAN’S QUARTERLY (USPS 322-660) is published quarterly — spring, summer, fall and winter — by the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, P.O. Box 411993, St. Louis, MO 63141-1993.

Periodicals postage paid at St. Louis, MO. Canada #R129889093.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LUTHERAN WOMAN’S QUARTERLY, P.O. Box 411993, St. Louis, MO 63141-1993. Annual subscription rates: 10 copies or more to one address, \$4.00 per year; individual subscriptions, \$5.50 per year. Single issues available for \$1.50 plus postage. Call Office. (Available in Braille, large print, or on cassette tapes free from Lutheran Blind Mission, 7550 Watson Rd., St. Louis, MO 63119; 1-888.215.2455)

the dollar store for eyeglasses as part of her teen LWML’s mission project; the next night she’s leading her teen LWML group in devotions or writing music for her church’s youth band.

And when she’s home, Anna’s home is overflowing. “I have two older brothers, mom and dad, and my grandmother from Portugal is spending time with us — and two cats, Oliver and Plato.”

Her LWML life began when she was young. “I started going to Ladies Guild meetings with my mom when I was twelve or thirteen. She always thought it was a good thing for me to do. Tuesday nights were LWML nights!”

It wasn’t long before Maureen Consiglio, Atlantic District LWML president, encouraged Anna to start a Friends Into Serving Him® — a teen LWML group — at their church, Holy Trinity, Middle Island. “She convinced me to start the group and helped so much by sitting with me at a few meetings to help me learn how to run things. Then she invited me to the district convention this spring — which was great fun!”

As a mentor, Maureen — or “Mrs. Consiglio” to Anna — has guided this young woman as she launched TLC —

Teens Living with Christ, the name the girls chose for their Friends Into Serving Him® group. Anna describes a mentor as someone who “not only teaches but stays with you to make sure you get through things okay.” She compares mentoring to teaching someone how to ride a bike. “I would hate for someone to teach me how to do something — like riding a bike — but wouldn’t stay with me to make sure that I can do it. A mentor holds on and doesn’t leave.” Maureen is to Anna an example of what Paul described in 1 Thessalonians 5:11: *encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

“This year, we met once a month and really had fun. We usually had six girls who’d come, and we had so much fun we tried to meet twice a month. But our lives are so crazy — some girls had soccer and another one had a club. I had the ACT test and midterms and sometimes I had to cancel. I felt terrible, but I had so much homework!



Knowing Anna ...

By Joan Nathan, Anna’s pastor’s wife

“They didn’t want me. I didn’t make it.” These were Anna’s first words to me about her audition for *American Idol* last summer.

They didn’t want you? My heart sank for this young woman. I began to know Anna with her joy-filled spirit when she joined our church youth band. However, it was her audition for *American Idol* that introduced me to her bravery. After spending three days among strangers, she was out of the competition. With her shy smile, she adds, “But that’s okay.” Beautifully, this disappointment placed a mark in her heart reflecting the honor of a godly young woman.

We're taking a break from meeting now, but we'll start again in the fall."

For these six girls, Friends Into Serving Him® is more than an opportunity to have fun. They are united by faith in Jesus as their Savior. Having been led to faith in Him by the Holy Spirit, they continue to be led by the Spirit as they look for ways to respond to the salvation they have as a gift from God. They meet together for fellowship and devotion time, and Anna helped the group focus their efforts into two mission projects: Bible collection and eye-glass project. "A woman at my church gave me a newspaper story about a little boy who was Muslim and then heard God's Word. He was so happy he finally heard about Christ through this Bible program. I read the article to the girls, and we thought we wanted to do this! We collected old Bibles and then shipped them to missionaries overseas to distribute."

The eyeglass project was fun for the girls as they received cash donations from church members and then shopped at the dollar store for different styles and prescriptions. "I think we bought over 60 glasses from the dollar store! We collected over 200 eyeglasses to mail to needy people."



Anna performs a solo during the convention sing-a-long.

"I really enjoy how we come together and [serve] God in what we're doing. We can have a cause and really help people. In life today it's really hard to reach out and help people and to speak about God to others." Anna is no doubt like so many of our Lutheran young women who have heard the Gospel message and want to respond to it in their lives. She has discovered that LWML gives her an opportunity to serve her Lord with joy!

Learning to use her gift of music to serve the Lord is one of Anna's goals. Her audition for *American Idol* as a 16-year-old was one of many singing adventures.

Her *American Idol* experience, where she sang "Sway" by the Pussycat Dolls, started when a friend invited her. "We were part of 50,000 people! Some people were dressed in outlandish outfits! I didn't fit in with the way some others dressed," Anna said.

Stepping in front of the judges required bravery. "I was so nervous! My body was shaking like wind blowing. I was so worried about the girl next to me that I wasn't concentrating 100%. I felt like I slipped up and the whole piece crumbled. I tried to save myself. I sang my 16 measures. Some people were asked to stop



Anna assists with the ingathering at her district LWML convention.

"I did it for fun! I was just excited to spend time with my mom!"

Although she wasn't selected to go on to the next *American Idol* competition, she wasn't disappointed. "I realized it wasn't what I wanted to do!"

Anna's dreams are much different from the *American Idol* scene. "I hope that I can use my voice in a way that God would like me to."

Involved in her high school chamber choir which recently placed first in a competition, Anna's voice also rings outside secular venues. She helped organize the 4-member youth band at her church. They sing contemporary

songs as well as their original compositions. "The guitarist and the drummer write the music, and I work out the vocals with the melodies. We really enjoy that! In fact, we're doing a fundraiser concert this weekend so we've been practicing a lot."

This past summer Anna traveled to Europe for a three-week concert tour with the United States Youth Ensemble.

Anna is carefully considering a future as a musician. "My vocal teacher said that this would be a taste of what life will be like if I try to pursue music. If I have fun living out of a suitcase and traveling around, then I would like to look into it."

before they finished their piece."

Her memories of the lifetime experience include seeing Ryan Seacrest, the *American Idol* celebrity, and taking a couple of pictures of him. "I even talked to him!"

The best memory, however, is spending time with her mother. "I had more fun hanging out with my mom." Together they toured Philadelphia and indulged in a Philly cheesesteak sandwich. "I finally understood why they call it a "Philly!" Philadelphia! I thought there was some guy named Phil who invented the delicacy!"

Still, she knows that “passions and hobbies” can’t always put food on the table. “Teaching English is something I’m also looking into.” Like many high school students, Anna isn’t sure where her future will lead. “There is so much that I enjoy and that I want to do with my life. I have my music and English and science that I love. So much that I want to look into — and I don’t have time to do it all!”



Even as an individual, Anna is eager to serve in small ways. Her latest project was to revamp old jewelry from her church’s long-standing holiday fair. “I love to make jewelry, and when some of the women approached me about remaking the old jewelry, I agreed.” Anna’s church holds an annual holiday fair, and, according to Anna, the jewelry was leftover “stuff from the 70s and 80s. Gaudy earrings!” She has redesigned a few pieces and started wearing them to church. “I want to see if anybody notices, because they’ve been seeing the same jewelry for who knows how long!”

College is the next adventure in Anna’s life, and like so many students,

she has mixed emotions. “Sometimes I don’t want to grow up! I like staying home and my mom packing my lunch. I am really excited, though, to go off to college and be independent.” She is eager to find a church where she can continue LWML activities. “Once I’m in college I’m hoping I can find somewhere I can stay involved — even if it’s online.”

While this young woman’s life is certainly busy, she seems to have her priorities straight. Her faith in Christ keeps her grounded and encourages her to look for ways to reach out to others with His love. So much of what she does seems to be a reflection of 1 Corinthians 10:31: *whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

Portland 2009? It may seem like a long way from *American Idol* auditions... a different world, but Anna — and many others like Anna — fits beautifully.

Look for a beautiful smile, listen for a lovely voice, and you’ll find Anna — or perhaps other high school young women who are eager to serve the Lord.

Anna says, “I can’t wait for Portland! I’m definitely going!”

Anna’s disappointment is momentary because she knows how much God and her family love her. The *American Idol* audition is one step in her journey to discover herself, gaining confidence in what she likes and what music fits her style. Anna is thoughtful about what she learned from her audition: “I found out that this is not what I want to do. I want to perform opera.”

Even though she didn’t succeed on *American Idol*, she “made it” in a different way. Her big, sweet smile says, “Good-bye, disappointment!”