

# **VARIOUS GIFTS - ONE BODY, ONE SPIRIT**

## **The Gift of Music: Maria and Kristina Sabetti (part 2 of 4)**

Every Wednesday evening two young girls race their power chairs through the long halls of Westminster Church, Minneapolis, MN. For nine-year-old Maria and six-year-old Kristina, it is hard to stop long enough for the “kid food” served before choir rehearsals begin.

During supper, Kristina may be seen drawing pictures of princesses with long flowing hair while Maria does portraits of people sitting around the table. Her pictures are rich in detail and may include glasses, the length of her subject’s hair, jewelry, and even nametags people at Westminster wear on Wednesday evenings. After supper, Maria leaves for Choristers and Kristina joins the other Seraphims, sometimes after quick spins through the building before settling in to sing.

Maria and Kristina have a genetic disease, spinal muscular atrophy. At times they become frustrated because they have lost their ability to do some things they used to do. In the past, both Kristina and Maria could walk with the help of walkers. Now, both use wheelchairs or sometimes, a power standing dani, which enables the girls to stand as they move. In addition, Kristina has juvenile rheumatoid arthritis and, as a result, is experiencing some loss of vision which may in the future result in blindness.

Their disability has not prevented Kristina and Maria from singing in the church musicals. Maria has already participated in four productions and both she and Kristina are singing in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* this summer.

In church school, both girls love to play games with the other children. Maria’s favorite activity is acting out the story of Jesus’ healing of people who were blind. She especially likes to play the part of Jesus. When she was asked what she thinks about when she hears about Jesus, she quickly replied, “Love!”

Whenever the children’s choirs sing for worship services, Kristina and Maria are there in their wheelchairs. The girls’ mother, Sarah, says, “We’re glad there is a place for them.” Members of Westminster are glad too – glad to have the musical gifts of two talented and lively girls.