

Folk singer captivates kids in performances and on tape

By Jill Angelini
Journal staff writer

Jeff Sorg says he didn't realize how much he loved kids until he started working with them.

After years of performing a sing-a-long children's program, "Songs Say So Much," the Jersey City resident has mastered the art of captivating an audience of up to 200 youngsters.

Geared to kids 4 to 8 years old, Sorg is now marketing his program on cassette. The cassette, named after his sing-a-long "Songs Say So Much," is a mix of acoustic, folk and pop music, both originals and popular favorites.

"I wanted to expose the kids to different songs beyond the ones they hear on the radio," says Sorg, who moved to Jersey City from Long Island with his wife, Brenda, about 10 years ago. "There's a whole folk generation out there that they missed. Everything is electronic now. I want

to get back to the nitty gritty with them and show them how simple music can be."

A graduate with a degree in English from C.W. Post College in Long Island, Sorg received a grant from the New Jersey Council on the Arts for his work in children's theater. He also

Neighbors

played bass guitar in a couple of rock bands, and wrote children's books and newspaper features. A two-semester program he took at Columbia University called Performing Artists in the Schools ignited his interest in performing for children.

So he pulled his guitar out of the closet, put together a children's program, and tried it out in New York City public schools.

Most of Sorg's program is participatory.

"The response is great. I'm trying to draw the kids out," he says. "I don't like to just sit on a stool and entertain them. I like

them to participate. I like the interaction. I'm not a singer like James Taylor. If I had a voice like him, maybe I would just sit on a stool and sing."

Along with his renditions of "Old McDonald" and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," Sorg's cassette features titles like "Oh, My Favorite Sneakers," "I am a Cowboy," and "We're Going On a Car Trip." He is accompanied by a choir of children in some of the songs.

Sorg, who has a 2-year-old daughter, Emily, wants his work to be a positive influence on children. And he's even able to bring out the most introverted children.

"My main goal is to expose children to music in this fashion, and maybe turn their heads a little bit and give them something to strive for," he says.

Sorg performs his sing-a-long at private birthday parties, New York public libraries, and Battery Park (New York) City Toddler Series. His cassette is available at Baby Boomers in Hoboken and Eeyore's Books for Children in New York.