

Best Bets



Maria Graft and her dog, **Sammy**. The Christian recording artist hosts a CD release concert Saturday at Holy Family Parish, Inverness.

Graft hones her craft in Nashville

Maria Graft will host a CD release concert for her second recording, "Running Home," at 8 p.m. Saturday at Holy Family Parish, 2515 West Palatine Road, Inverness. The concert is the kickoff of Holy Family Church's 20th year anniversary concert series.

Graft has spent the last few years doing concerts for churches and women's groups. This CD is a project that consists of many of the early songs Graft wrote while becoming a born-again Christian in the late 1990s.

"I have been basically waiting to do this album since I put out my first CD ('A Labor Of Love, Songs for the Entire Family'), but being and wife and mother first, I had to wait for the right timing," said Graft. "So about two-and-a-half years later, that time finally came. The record is all original material, except for a rendition of 'Amazing Grace' at the end."

Morgan Cryar, an award winning singer/songwriter and longtime Christian artist in Nashville, helped Graft select songs to put on the CD.

"What took me a year to do on my previous album, working one night a week in a friend's basement studio, took all of about one month to do with this record," explained Graft. "My two daughters each got to take a trip with me to Nashville. One came for the weekend where we laid down the instrumental tracks and the other came when I had to go back to do the vocals on the last song."

Graft got the flu her first week out there and had to return to finish.

"I don't think you can peg me into any particular musical pigeon-hole, except that it is Christian and some people have called it 'inspirational' music. My main goal is to touch hearts and inspire people to new levels of their own spirituality."

Graft lives in Barrington with her husband and three children. She served as the director of Holy Family's children's choir in 2001 and 2002, and regularly cantors at weekend liturgies.

Admission is free (free-will offering). For more information, call (847) 359-0042 or visit www.holyfamilyparish.org

FIRST CHOICE