

Can't beat learning by song

Wendy Kay

IT'S no secret children love to sing and dance. Turn on the music and off they'll go, jiggling along to the beat and singing at the top of their voices without a care in the world.

So it was always an anomaly for Beacon Hill primary school teacher Nuala O'Hanlon that once children went to primary school the singing often stopped.

"Children respond so well to lessons laced with music, they remember the words, the content, the stories in the songs," Nuala said.

"It's a perfect way to teach them about life and values. I have always sung with the children, it was an integral part of my teaching day. But many teachers are reluctant. They say, 'Oh, I'm not musical, I can't sing, or I haven't got time'."

That's why Nuala joined forces with another Beacon Hill educator, Kathryn Radloff, to create publishing company, Keystone Creations, and provide resources to teachers – even those without a musical bone in their body – to teach through song.

However, after combing libraries and educational supply stores and frustrated by the lack of songs containing value-laden lyrics, the pair used their musical backgrounds to create their own. With Nuala writing the lyrics



Nuala O'Hanlon and Kathryn Radloff of Beacon Hill have created a CD of songs which teach children values about life.

Picture: VIRGINIA YOUNG -PP4282051

and Kathryn, the music, the pair has designed a musical world of learning for teachers, parents and grandparents to introduce to their children.

Using a diverse mix of styles and vocal ensembles, the music is the medium to teach a range of life skills and values, including transportation, school rules, family, friendship and safety. A

variety of singers, including Kathryn, perform the songs, while Nuala along with children sing in support.

"It was the perfect way to combine our passion for singing and teaching," said Kathryn.

The teachers' resources are aimed at different age groups, each containing CDs, songs, reproducible lyric sheets and

music scores, while the album *Sing To Learn!* is perfect for home use. New songs are also available to download from the Keystone website.

"Our songs give children simple values relating to good behaviour and encourages them to put these behaviours into action, they are singing and picking up important values and school and life

concepts, without even realising it," Kathryn said.

"After all, music is the language of older children today," said Nuala. "They go to concerts, they have iPods in their ears, it's what they listen to. It's an ideal way to get messages across to our younger children in school, hence our slogan: A Lesson In Every Lyric."

■ For more information, visit keystonecreations.com.au.