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CHORUS ABILENE

Educating Voices, Hearts, & Minds through Music

YOUTH HANDBOOK 2009-2010

General Information

Chorus Abilene Office Hours are 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday through Friday. The office observes all AISD school holidays. The office is located in the Elks Arts Center on the corner of N. 1st and Cedar Streets downtown. Entrance is through the Cedar Street entrance. Offices are closed at various times during the summer. Although we are generally open during the singing season, it would be wise to call before coming.

Office Address: Mailing – PO Box 3358, Abilene, Texas 79604

Physical – 1174 N. 1st

Office Phone: 325-673-SING (7464)

Office Email: info@chorusabilene.net

Office Fax: 325-673-7465

Website: www.chorusabilene.net

Office Assistant: Marisue Meyer (Monday & Tuesday)

Office Hours: 10 – 2, Monday-Friday

Gwynn Haseltine, Executive Director

Office Email: gwynn@chorusabilene.net

Home Email: ghaseltine@suddenlink.net

Home Telephone 672-9667

Amy Krake, Assistant Director Marketing & Special Events

Office email: amy@chorusabilene.net

Telephone: 668-9344

Mrs. Gaye Lynn Williams, Children's Chorus Conductor

Home Email: randygayewilliams@gmail.com

Telephone: 673-1613

Isaac Bray , Boys Chorus Conductor

Home Email: inb04a@acu.edu

Telephone: 669-7020

Mr. Jonathan Krake, Youth & Chorale Conductor

Home email: jonkrake@yahoo.com

Telephone: 660-5823

MISSION STATEMENT

The overall mission of the organization is to promote choral music through performance and participation. Our vision for the youth choirs is to educate voices, hearts, and minds through music.

COMMUNICATION

The success of any organization is based on the disbursement of accurate information through effective, reliable communication methods. When you have questions concerning Chorus Abilene, try to direct your question to: **1) The Handbook, 2) Recent email or rehearsal notes, 3) Lead Parent of your child's choir, 4) Head Parent, 5) Administrative Assistant, 6) Conductor or Executive Director.** The conductor is happy to speak with you about musical concerns you may have; however, the time around rehearsal is best used for communication with singers.

Office Phone Calls

When you call the Chorus Office, please identify yourself, and/or your child, and the choir in which you or your child sing. There is an answering machine to take your calls when the office is not open.

If you receive a phone call from the Chorus Office that requires a response, please return the call as soon as possible. If you do not wish to receive phone calls at work, please indicate such on your registration form or request this directly to the Office.

E-mail Communication

The primary method by which a singer will receive Chorus information is by e-mail. Therefore it is very important that the office has a correct email address for each parent and/or singer. Some information will be for the singer and some information will be for parents, so the Chorus is happy to have both singer and parent email addresses on our list. If a parent does not wish a child to receive e-mail from the Chorus Office, please notify the office. **Please make an effort to obtain an email address.** Public libraries have computer terminals from which you may access your email account(s). Hotmail, Yahoo, & G-mail are some free email service providers. If neither singer nor parent has an e-mail address, every attempt will be made to notify singers of the Chorus information by regular mail or by phone.

Newsletter

At the end of most months, a short newsletter is sent. It is emailed in PDF format for those who have email and a printed version for those who do not have email will be distributed at rehearsal. Please contact the office if you have trouble opening the email version and we will arrange for you to receive a printed copy. We attempt to use email whenever possible in order to reduce expense. If there is someone you would like to have the email version sent to, please let us know and we will be happy to send it. Sometimes family members use this as a way to stay up with our events.

The newsletter contains information about upcoming events, as well as a calendar for the following month. It is also linked to our website if you need to access it that way.

Rehearsal Notes

At attempt is made before each performance or special event to send a short rehearsal note home with each singer to remind them of details. As singers often forget to mention that they received a note, please check your child's music folder for this information. We encourage them to slip the rehearsal notes in the back outside cover.

CHOIRS AND THEIR HISTORIES

Chorus Abilene was founded in 1990-1991 with 23 adult singers as The Classical Chorus of Abilene by Dr. Betty Karol Wilson, who successfully led the chorus for fourteen seasons. Chorus Abilene is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. The chorus is not affiliated with AISD, any of the three universities in Abilene, or any church. Chorus Abilene is artistically and financially independent and therefore must raise all its own funds and supply all its own needs. Funding comes from singer tuition, ticket sales, fundraising events, individual and corporate donors, and, if awarded, grants from foundations and arts councils.

The Classical Chorus, as the original adult chorus is known, sings a wide variety of repertoire: oratorios, masses, and motets, as well as spirituals and contemporary secular literature. Each year they perform in the fall and at Christmas in conjunction with the youth choirs. They then present a Masterworks concert of their own in April. They have performed the Mozart and Verdi Requiems with the Abilene Philharmonic and *Solomon* and *Messiah* with the Texas Baroque Ensemble and the Mercury Baroque Ensemble, in addition to collaborating with the Abilene Ballet Theatre and the Abilene Community Band.

The Youth Choirs exist to:

- Challenge young singers to study and perform the best choral literature for children's voices composed by musicians from around the world;
- Instill in each child a lifelong love of music;
- Contribute positively to the development of each child's self-esteem in an environment that requires cooperation among peers and strives for artistic excellence.

The choruses also exist to provide the Abilene community the opportunity to hear and experience both the beauty and sincerity brought to music by a child's voice.

The Youth Chorus was founded in 1993 and sings classical, contemporary, and international music. The Youth Chorus consists of singers, grades 5 - 8, from Abilene and its surrounding communities. They usually perform in three to four subscription concerts per year as well as many community sings such as Artwalk, at hospitals and retirement communities, and for various other civic organization by request.

In response to parent requests following the first tour, in 1999 the Board of Directors approved the founding of **Chorale** for more experienced young singers, grades 9 - 12, who are ready for even more challenging choral literature. Chorale also performs in three to four subscription concerts per year as well as community sings such as Artwalk. CYCH also sings performances at hospitals and retirement communities, as well as accepting other performance invitations.

The small ensemble **Vivace!** was formed in 2007 to provide an answer to frequent performance requests which could not be accommodated by an entire choir. Vivace! is chosen from Chorale members who, with parental agreement, commit to an extra hour of rehearsal per week and agree to make every effort to accommodate performance requests which may be received with short notice. In addition, there are occasional requests for performances during the school day. While we make every effort to be conservative with these occasions and ask each member of Vivace! if the date is convenient, parents should be in agreement that occasionally missing an hour of school (which they should call to excuse), is permissible. Vivace! members must be responsible with their scheduling, know

when their own conflicts exist, and communicate clearly and quickly with us. There is an additional charge for membership in this group.

In 1997, with encouragement from teachers and parents, the Board of Directors of CCA created the **Children's Chorus** for musicians in grades 1 - 4. This choir meets weekly, studies the basics of reading music, and does not tour. Performances for the Children's Chorus include singing at three - four of the subscription series concerts and occasionally at retirement homes or other community singing events.

New in 2008 was the **Boys Chorus**. The Board of Directors believes that offering young men a place to sing with other young men who love music in a safe and reassuring environment as their voices develop will give them the foundation to build on for a lifelong love of singing.

The youth choirs have performed with the Abilene Philharmonic, the Abilene Opera Association, the inter-collegiate opera, McMurry Opera, and the Abilene Ballet Theater. They have hosted the Fredericksburg Children's Choir, the Amarillo Boys' Choir, the Manila Children's Choir, the New Zealand Youth Chorus, the Moscow Boys' Choir, the Vienna Choir Boys, the Texas Boys Choir, and have performed for Barbara Bush.

Chorus Abilene also believes that singing in many different places and in intensely musical situations trains better singers; therefore the Chorus is dedicated to international tours on a regular basis. (For information about where the groups have been, see Tours.)

Acceptance into any of the Chorus Abilene groups is based on the musical skills exhibited in a yearly audition, not by financial status, race, creed, or gender.

LEADERSHIP

Board of Directors

Chorus Abilene is a non-profit organization whose policies are determined by a Board of Directors. The Board will generally meet on the second Thursday of September, November, January, March and May at a place and time to be announced, normally at the Chorus Abilene office location. Board meetings are open to any interested parent or adult singer. A list of Board Member names, addresses, and the calendar of meetings is kept at the chorus office and is available upon request.

Conductors

Jonathan Krake is beginning his fourth year as director for the Youth Chorus and Chorale. Mr. Krake received his undergraduate degree in Music Education and his Master's Degree in Choral Conducting, both from Hardin-Simmons University. He is a member of Who's Who Among American High School Teachers, The Chancellor's List, Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, the Texas Music Educators Association and The Texas Choral Directors Association. In addition to his directing responsibilities, Mr. Krake serves as Worship and Outreach Minister at Southwest Park Baptist Church. Prior to accepting this role, he was Music Specialist at College Heights and Lee Elementary Schools and served as the church pianist at Broadview Baptist Church. He also worked for three years as the Associate Choir Director for Cooper High School and was the instructor of an award-winning Advanced Placement Music Theory Class. Mr. Krake also directs the Vivace! ensemble. He lives in Abilene with wife Amy and sons Connor Paul and Camden Daniel.

Gaye Lynn Williams, Conductor of the Children's Chorus, is in her 7th year with the Chorus. She received a Bachelor of Sciences degree in education with a specialization

in music from Abilene Christian University in 1980. Since that time, she has worked as a music teacher and an elementary classroom teacher in both the public and private school settings, and has ten years experience conducting a 1st – 4th grade choir as well as a 5th-8th grade choir. She was the director of a local Christian school for 3 years. She has taught piano privately throughout most of the past two decades. Mrs. Williams is currently employed with AISD, working at Long Elementary as a 1st grade teacher. She attends Beltway Baptist Church. She is married to Randall Williams and has 3 children who are beginning their own families: Justin and wife Hope and granddaughter Hannah, Kristen and husband Brandon Pierce, and Cara and husband Brenton Dowdy. Kristen had the privilege of joining the Classical Youth Chorus at its inception in 1993; she and Cara participated in the Chorus for 5 years and 4 years respectively.

Isaac Bray, Boys Chorus Conductor, is currently completing his student teaching for his undergraduate degree in Music Education at Abilene Christian University. A talented singer, Mr. Bray was selected as a member of the Texas All State Choir three times during his four years of high school. At the university level, he is a member of the Texas Music Educators Association, Mu Phi Epsilon music honor society, Kappa Delta Phi education honor society, and Phi Eta Sigma academic honor society. Academically he has been on the Dean's list every semester at Abilene Christian University. Mr. Bray has been a semi-finalist at the National Association of Teachers of Singing Texoma Region convention. He studies voice with Dr. Michael Scarbrough and received private piano instruction for 11 years from Shirley Anderson. He sings with the *A Cappella Chorus*, ACU's top choir, and has performed in several opera productions with ACU opera.

He is an alumni of the Youth Chorus and Chorus Abilene is proud to have him as part of our family, joining sister Sarah, from the Children's Chorus, and father Sheldon, from the Adult Chorus.

Executive Director

Gwynn Haseltine, Executive Director, graduated from Oklahoma Christian College with a degree in Social Work. She has been involved with Chorus Abilene since 1994 in a variety of roles, serving as Lead Parent and Head Parent, and on the Board of Directors, before accepting the position of Executive Director in 2002. Her husband Jeff is a professor at Abilene Christian University, and they have four daughters, each of whom sang multiple years with Chorus Abilene.

Accompanists

Van Hayes, Accompanist for the Youth Chorus and Chorale, has accompanied our youth choirs for the past 14 years. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from McMurry University and his Level 1 Orff Schulwerk training in music education at SMU. In addition to his association with the Youth Choirs, Mr. Hayes is the Music Teacher at Wylie Intermediate School, where he teaches over 400 third and fourth graders every day. He also serves as organist at Aldersgate United Methodist Church. Mr. Hayes has accompanied every youth tour and in 2005 served as Tour Conductor for the youth cruise tour. His wife, Kristy, is the Choral Director for Wylie High School. Mr. Hayes is also the originator of what has become the informal slogan for the youth choirs: Adapt, Improve and Overcome!

Terry Graham, accompanist for the Children's Chorus, has a Bachelor of Music Education and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Angelo State University. She has also completed Levels 1, 2, & 3 of the West Texas Kodaly Initiative. Ms. Graham has taught elementary music for AISD at Taylor Elementary for 18 years and has been a coordinator for the AISD Children's Convocation Choir for 3 years. She served as an assistant director of the Classical Children's Chorus during its inaugural year in 1997-98. She has also taught private piano lessons for 25 years. She is currently chairman of the AISD Elementary all-district choir committee and is the proud parent of 3 sons, Michael, 26; Nathan, 21; and Zachary, 19.

MEMBERSHIP EXPECTATIONS

Accepting membership in any of the choirs requires a faithful commitment to the mission statement of Chorus Abilene. The Board of Directors respectfully asks that all participants, singers and parents alike to:

1. Encourage your child to honor their commitment to participate for the entire singing season (August 2009 – April 2010);
2. Assist your child's individual daily practice of their music at home;
3. Pay the monthly tuition in a timely fashion;
4. Participate in Chorus Fundraisers to benefit all singers;
5. Volunteer your time and energy to Chorus events.

TUITION AND REGISTRATION FEE

The singing season for Chorus Abilene is August 24, 2009- April 29, 2010. Each chorus member is required to pay a **monthly tuition fee of \$40 for 9 months**. Monthly payments are due by the first day of each month (August-April). **A late fee of \$10 is assessed if payment is not received by the 10th day of each month**. Some families choose to pay the entire yearly amount (\$360) in advance. Tuition for Vivace! is \$20/month. Tuition will not begin until rehearsals have started.

Multiple Family Member Monthly discounts

If a family has more than one member participating in the chorus, fees will be reduced \$5 per month for each member. For example: The Smiths have two children singing, one in the Children's Chorus and one in Chorale. Their monthly payment would be \$35 for the Children's Chorus member and \$35 for the Chorale member.

Tuition scholarships are available (see Scholarships) if financial circumstances are such that additional help is required.

Registration Fee

In addition to monthly tuition, a **one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$40 is required of every singer**. In order to purchase music at discount prices and have the music ready for the first rehearsal, this fee is due annually by **July 30**.

Invoice and Payment Reminders

An email monthly tuition payment reminder **only** will be sent as a courtesy. If payment is not received by the tenth of the month, an invoice for the monthly tuition, plus a \$10 late fee, will be sent. If you have any questions about payments, scholarships, fundraising totals, etc. please speak directly to the administrative assistant or executive director. Neither the attendance taker nor conductor has financial information.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Tuition Scholarships are available for a limited number of singers. To apply, please fill out an application form available from the office and mail to the Chorus Abilene Office no later than June 30. Notification of scholarships will be mailed by July 30.

A singer may be granted a full or partial scholarship. The names of those applying for scholarships are kept confidential. The parent of every scholarship recipient or the recipient him/herself will be asked to volunteer time to the organization when possible.

In the past, scholarships have been supplied by The Dian Owen Foundation, The Kiwanis Club, The Greathouse Foundation, The Rotary Club of Abilene, The Junior League, The Rotary Club of Sweetwater, and anonymous individuals. If you know of someone who would like to sponsor a child in the chorus, please call the Executive Director with that information.

* If a singer joins the choir after the scholarship dates have passed, he/she should call the Executive Director and ask about potential scholarships still available.

PAYMENTS

The following information is required on any payment made Chorus Abilene:

- 1) Reason for payment (tuition, tour, retreat, tickets, etc.);
- 2) Singer's name (make sure last name is included if different from check remitter);
- 3) Singer's Choir.

Your clarification on the memo portion of your check will help us with proper accounting of the money we receive. Cash should **always** be given in an envelope with the singer's name and reason for payments written on the outside.

All checks or money orders should be made payable and **MAILED TO:**
Chorus Abilene PO Box 3358 Abilene, Texas 79604

All checks returned to Chorus Abilene by the member's bank will be charged the same fee per item that is charged to us. **Never give the conductor or attendance taker any payments.** Although it may be convenient for you, each conductor has their own full-time job and neither comes to the office regularly. Attendance Takers are volunteers and also do not come to the office.

Please mail or bring all payments directly to the Office. If you are unable to mail or to come during office hours, you may slip your payment (in an envelope) under the locked door. **Do not** bring payments to rehearsals unless so instructed. **Do not** give payments to the Head Parent, Lead Parent, or Attendance Taker, unless so instructed.

If your singer is participating in Tour 2010, please make separate payments for tour.

OTHER EXPENSES

Singers will pay additional fees for retreats, social activities, tours, and other special opportunities. Parents will be notified of payment deadlines as they arise. The following are some examples:

Choir T-shirt	\$10	Mandatory for all singers – Sept. 1, 2009
Fall Retreat	\$25	Overnight stay, rehearsal, etc. for Youth, Boys, & Chorale
No pencil/no music Fines	\$.25 - 1.00	per violation (we take this seriously)
Lost Music Folder	\$35	Singers should be responsible with music
Cleaning/Repair of Costume	\$ 7	Mandatory for all singers at end of season
Tickets to Concerts	\$ 6-9	Optional - The cost is per person, per concert. This is discounted price for singers. (See Ticket Sales)
Choir Photos/Recordings	Variable -	Optional

REHEARSAL

<u>Choir</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>
Boys Chorus	Monday	6:30 – 7:45 p.m.	ACU Williams PAC
Children's Chorus	Thursday	4:30 - 5:30 p.m.	St. Paul's UMC
Youth Chorus	Tuesday	6:15 - 7:25 p.m.	ACU Williams PAC
Chorale	Tuesday	7:30 – 9:00 p.m.	ACU Williams PAC
Vivace!	Thursday	4:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Southwest Park Baptist

Small Group Rehearsals may occasionally be requested by the conductor.

Rehearsal Attendance

Membership in Chorus Abilene is a commitment to faithful, consistent, and punctual attendance. All members of Chorus group are expected to attend all rehearsals and performances.

Choral music is a group experience, yet each individual is very important. The absence of just one person changes the sound and artistry of the entire group. Attendance at rehearsal is very important as choirs only meet once a week. In addition, the type of repertoire and the number of copies of music that are ordered are based on the complete enrollment. With this in mind, it is understood that the **commitment to Chorus Abilene is from August to April**. If members feel that they are unable to fulfill these expectations, they should reconsider their decision to participate.

Attendance Policy

A total of three absences per semester are allowed. These three absences are for any reason: i.e. school program, family conflict, illness, etc. If two absences accumulate prior to any particular concert, the singer will not be allowed to sing in the concert unless the singer has made arrangements with the conductor to prove to the conductor that the singer knows the music. Because the choirs rehearse only once a week and have approximately 6 rehearsals prior to a concert, two absences would mean a singer has missed 25% of the rehearsals. No child benefits from trying to perform unprepared; nor does the group benefit from trying to maintain balance disrupted by a constantly absent singer.

It is also extremely important to be timely. If a singer is late, they will be counted as tardy. **3 tardies equal 1 absence.** This rule will be followed when counting absences as related to performing. Being tardy not only means your child has missed the important beginning of rehearsal, but disrupts the flow of rehearsal for the other singers and takes conductor time to re-explain.

Occasionally a conductor will call an additional rehearsal. These rehearsals are

necessary for group performance and will be counted as make-up rehearsals.

When a singer accumulates 2 absences, the Attendance Taker sends to the parents a written summary of the singer's attendance. The conductor retains the right to a final decision concerning the readiness of each singer to perform. A review of attendance records is done prior to auditions for the next singing season.

Attendance is taken at all events: Weekly Rehearsals, Dress Rehearsals, Concerts, Community Sings, Fundraiser Singing Events, Tour Rehearsals. Before August arrives, the chorus administration and conductors create the performance and rehearsal schedule for the whole year and try to inform parents of all scheduled events. Everything on the calendar is considered as regular rehearsals - not "make-up" or optional rehearsals.

At times, the Chorus receives an invitation to a community sing after August and is accepted because it constitutes a valuable performance opportunity for your child. It is hoped that each choir member will want to perform with the group; however these additions will not be counted as "missed rehearsals".

If the singer has a contagious illness, please do not send them to rehearsal. If the singer has the flu, a stomach virus, bronchitis, a fever or strep throat, pink-eye, please do not send them to rehearsal. Should such illnesses or an emergency occur prior to a rehearsal or event that prevents the singer from participating, please contact the Attendance Taker for the singer's choir as soon as possible.

For **all** absences, please let the Attendance Taker know in advance if your singer will miss. If you were unable to notify them ahead of time, please let them know as soon as possible.

Please be respectful of all those in the Chorus who are relying on your participation at performances and scheduled events. Do not cancel your Chorus commitment for another event planned at the last minute when we have been courteous enough to give everyone a schedule well in advance.

At the end of the year, we have a celebration and honor those singers with excellent attendance records.

Canceled Rehearsals

All AISD school holidays are observed. If AISD is closed due to weather (snow, ice, flood) on a rehearsal day, all rehearsals will also be canceled. If a tornado warning has been issued by the national weather service (meaning a tornado has been sighted in our area), of course we are not having rehearsal. If a tornado watch is issued, rehearsal will be held. It is up to the parent to decide whether or not to bring the singer to rehearsal. If rehearsal is canceled, every effort will be made to have it announced on KRBC, KTXS, KTAB, and KEAN radio.

Yearly Calendar

A yearly calendar is distributed to every singer at the beginning of the singing season. The Chorus management asks that each singer and family carefully **read the dates and reserve concerts and rehearsal times in each singer and family's personal schedule.** Please refer to the monthly newsletter or up-dated letters from the chorus for any changes in the printed yearly calendar. Although we do our best to give you a schedule at the beginning of the year, occasionally this may change slightly.

Missed Rehearsals

When a singer misses a rehearsal they should:

- Call or email the Attendance Taker for the singer's choir and learn what repertoire was

rehearsed;

- Find out what announcements were made;
- Determine if any music was distributed; if so, pick up the music at the Chorus Office. If music was distributed at rehearsal, it is the **Singer's or Parent's responsibility** to go to the Chorus Office that week and pick up the music. **It is not the conductor's responsibility to bring the music to the next rehearsal.** Singers should not come to the next rehearsal and say "But I don't have that..." Please help your child to be responsible.

Dress Rehearsals

Mandatory attendance - If you miss a dress rehearsal, you cannot sing in the corresponding concert. At Dress Rehearsal, come to the performance location wearing complete concert attire. The purpose of the dress rehearsal is to run through the logistics of the concert and touch on a few musical issues. Every effort will be made to honor the **suggested** ending time. If we are running late, please do not interrupt. If you have a concern that must be addressed, please speak to the Backstage Parent, Lead Parent, or Head Parent, and your concern will be "messaged" to the conductor or executive director in the most efficient manner possible. Please do not "double book" dress rehearsal times!

High school students often have many demands on their time. We work very hard to accommodate these and will often reschedule their rehearsal **IF THEY NOTIFY US AHEAD OF TIME**. Please have them check their calendars and let us know as far ahead as possible of a school conflict.

Rehearsal Procedures

The following weekly rehearsal procedures help us achieve the discipline and professionalism for which Chorus Abilene is known. Our rehearsal rules are created: 1) for the safety of the singers; 2) to achieve an orderly rehearsal where much learning can be accomplished; and 3) to show respect and courtesy for others.

1. **Arrive at rehearsal 5 minutes prior to rehearsal time, but no earlier.**
2. No matter where the rehearsal is, remember that we are guests of that facility and the facility may have other events occurring at the same time. Respect the facility. Do not roam about the building. Stay in the lobby or rehearsal area. Keep conversations quiet. This is particularly important for Youth & Boys – ACU choirs rehearse there regularly. (Parents of the Children's Chorus, please relax in the appropriate area but do not use any of St. Paul's supplies.)
3. **Check in with the Attendance Taker**, clearly stating the singer's name.
4. If the singer arrives late, be stop to check in with the Attendance taker. A singer is counted as being late if they arrive after warm-ups have begun.
5. **Always bring your music to rehearsal.** Put your music in alphabetical order inside your folder. Use the outside back pocket of your folder to add any handouts that are distributed at rehearsal.
6. Take your assigned seat before rehearsal begins. Take out pencil and be ready to sing.
7. At all times show respect for every singer, the accompanist, the conductor and any parent helpers.
8. **Do not bring food or drink (except water) into the rehearsal area.** Try to eat a nutritious meal before you arrive at the rehearsal. If you forget and arrive with food, the Attendance Taker will ask you to go outside to finish eating. The singer is

still responsible for being on time. **Bringing a bottle of water is encouraged** so that singers do not have to leave the room in order to get a drink. Plan to go to the bathroom prior to rehearsal, so that you do not have to leave.

9. Parents and interested members of the community are always welcome to observe rehearsal. They should sit quietly on the back row.
10. Questions pertaining to the music are always welcome. However, as we rehearse only once a week, make sure any questions you have about rehearsal and performance schedules, what to wear, etc., have not already been answered in a handout, the newsletter, or a letter sent directly to the singer or the singer's parent. Please ask questions (not pertaining to music) before or after rehearsal. **Rehearsals are for rehearsing.**
11. If singers bring a cell phone to rehearsal, they **MUST** be on silent and put away. If they ring during rehearsal, they are at risk of being taken up until the end of rehearsal.

Because music and pencils are required for rehearsals, a small fine will be assessed and recorded by the Attendance Taker if a singer does not arrive at rehearsal with both of these items. A singer cannot rehearse to the best of their potential without their music or a pencil to take notes. They will be charged the following:

\$.25	Without a pencil
\$1.00	Without music folder

The money gathered from these fines will help pay for choir operating expenses.

SAFETY

Safety is an ongoing priority. All requests and procedures have been developed with both efficiency and safety in mind.

Rehearsal Safety

Parents, please do not drop off your child more than 10 minutes early or leave the child unattended. This creates a liability issue for the rehearsal space we use, as well as being dangerous for your child. If the singer is young, escorting them into rehearsal is a good idea. If the singer is older, wait a minute before you leave. Very rarely changes must be made, and you and your child may have forgotten or our communication attempts may have failed.

Do not plan to pick up your child 30 minutes after rehearsal is over. We will never leave a child unattended; however no one wants to stay for an hour while you finish at Walmart. The conductors generally run a tight schedule and will release singers promptly at the ending time of each rehearsal. By running even 10 minutes late, you are taking another parent's time to stay with your child. Of course, we understand that at times, unexpected events arise for all of us. **Youth Chorus Parents**, if you are more than 10 minutes late, your singer will be asked to sit inside the Chorale rehearsal where you must come to get them, therefore interrupting Chorale rehearsal.

Children's Chorus singers should be escorted inside the first door. You may watch them go inside but please wait a minute before leaving. If possible, please wait to pick them in the lobby. We do not allow them to go past the sidewalk outside the door at St. Paul's to wait for you.

Please drop off and pick up Boys and Youth singers at the west (revolving) door of ACU's Williams Performing Arts Center. This leads into the main central lobby and

will decrease noise for any other rehearsal going on. **Pick up will be in front of the south double glass doors. Do not ask your child to wait on the west or north sides as no one is there to monitor.** The choir room is just inside the south door and we would like them to wait INSIDE the double doors – not out on the sidewalk or in the parking lot. They will be able to see you from there when you drive up.

For Chorale singers who drive themselves: The Chorus office must receive written permission for your singer to remain after rehearsal talking with their friends. Otherwise we will expect them to depart as soon as rehearsal is over (and watch them do so). If you pick your singer up, please be on time. Mr. Krake has come directly from his regular job to rehearsal and has been working for 13 hours. He will not leave your singer but would really like to go home.

Concerts

You may not always be able to attend a concert and be there to pick your child up just as soon as it is over. **Please do not ask them to wait outside for you** – please plan to come inside to get them. It is not always possible to give you an exact time of when the concert will be over.

If you have some special occasion arise and are picking up your child early, please make sure you check with the backstage parent ahead of time and before taking them. Do not ask them to “meet you” anywhere.

Medical Release

We have not yet had occasion to use our medical releases; however should an emergency arise, the medical release may be extremely valuable in securing prompt medical attention for your child. Please make sure that we have your notarized copy and that all information is accurate. Although you do not have to have a new medical release each year, **please be sure to notify the office if there is any change in information, such as a change in physician or insurance.**

TICKET SALES

Season Ticket Sales

Four subscription series concerts are offered in the 2009-2010 concert season. Season ticket holders are assigned seats first (for reserved seating events) and receive the seats closest to the performers. Only Season Ticket holders may exchange their tickets for a later concert if they miss a concert. Season ticket holders receive a copy of the Chorus Newsletter and invitations to educational events and receptions.

This year there are three Season Ticket Plans:

Plan A Adults	Four Concerts	\$40
Plan B Seniors, Student, Military	Four Concerts	\$31
Plan C Choir Discount	Four Concerts	\$27

Concerts are: October – all; Christmas – all; April 10 – Adults only; April 24 – Youth only.

After the first concert of the year, season tickets are no longer available for sale. Both **Plan A** and **Plan B** will save each purchaser \$5 over individual prices.

The **Choir Discounted** Season Ticket does not save you money; however it allows you to purchase all of your tickets for the year at one time. In addition, if you choose not to attend the April 10 Adult only concert, you are able to exchange those tickets for some to a youth concert (which does save you money). This is useful when you know that you have

grandparents or other family (friends) in town who will want to regularly attend your singer's concerts.

General Public Individual Ticket Sales

Individual tickets to regular concerts are \$10 for Adults and \$8 for seniors, military, and students (see information below for children under 5) for three of the four concerts. Ticket prices for the Christmas concert are \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors, military, and students.

Choir Discounted Ticket Sales

Each singer in the Classical Chorus is entitled to up to 4 discounted individual tickets per concert. Discounted tickets must be ordered and payment received in the office by the Friday of the week before the concert. For example, if the concert is on Saturday, October 10, the discounted tickets would need to be **purchased** by Friday, October 2, 1 p.m. Please do not call on Friday and ask if we will hold your tickets at the discounted price for you to pay at the door the following week. For most concerts, we try to have a staff member on site during 1 rehearsal in order to facilitate ticket purchases and will notify you ahead of time about that date.

	<u>Three Concerts</u>	<u>Christmas Only</u>
Regular Price Adult Individual Ticket	\$10	\$15
Regular Price Sr/St/M Individual Ticket	\$ 8	\$12
Choir Discount Ticket	\$ 6	\$ 9

For Choir Discount Tickets, you may purchase all of your tickets for the year at once or for each concert. At this time, the four youth choirs are scheduled to sing in three concerts and will not sing at the adult April 10th concert. They will also sing at Spotlight on Feb. 13; however this is not a subscription series concert and tickets are sold separately.

Ticket Orders

How to reserve your tickets for a performance:

- 1. Phone Order: 673-7464** Please have ready the following information:
Number of tickets needed; Name, Address, Phone Number; Which choir(s) the singer is in
- 2. Send your check to the Chorus Office (see Payments).** Once your check is received in the Office, your tickets will be mailed to you.
- 3. Come to the Chorus Office, pay in person (cash, check, charge).**
The seating chart, if applicable, is available only in the Chorus Office.
- 4. At the Door - Reserved tickets will be held at the door before the performance ONLY IF they are pre-paid.**

Children over four years old must have their own seats at a performance and pay the full student price or choir discount price. Formal concerts are usually 1 hr. to 1 ½ hrs. in length and are therefore probably not suited for children under four. **There are other opportunities to attend local free concerts of shorter duration where it may be easier to move around with your child.** We always welcome family members at these community sing concerts (See Types of Concerts). **Please be aware that if during a concert a child is making noise that may disturb the performers, the recording, or the rest of the audience who have paid for their seats, ushers or staff will ask the parent to take the child to the lobby.** We love families and having young children grow up listening to the music, but we must balance the needs of the audience and group as a whole.

MUSIC

For each singer, a music folder filled with music for each concert will be distributed at the first rehearsal. It will have their name page on the front cover and a roster of their choir inside the back plastic cover. Two #2 pencils must be brought by the singer to every rehearsal. A pencil pouch for a ring binder is a good way to stay up with this. **If the singer loses his/ her music, the lost music fine of \$35 must be paid.** At the first rehearsal following each concert, music will be returned and new music received. The conductor will specify any exceptions to this rule at rehearsal.

Please make every effort to maintain music in good condition. If music is returned stained with coffee, water, dog slobber, etc., the singer will be invoiced for the replacement cost.

UNIFORMS

Informal Choir Uniforms

This uniform consists of Choir T-shirts, Dark Blue Jeans, and tennis shoes, all purchased by parents. The Jeans should not be hip-huggers, low rise, bell-bottoms, or contain rhinestones, pockets zippers, or other decorative additions. Jeans should not have holes, or drag the ground. Jeans should be dark blue: not black, not faded, not light blue. T-shirts and jeans are worn at all community sings. T-shirts must be worn tucked in when performing. Flip-flops are never permissible.

Formal Uniforms

Chorus Abilene provides each singer with a formal uniform worn for all subscription concerts. To complete the formal uniform for **boys**, parents must provide black pants, black dress shoes, and black socks. For smaller boys, we have a few pairs of black pants at the office which may be borrowed. Girls in the Children's Chorus may have two options: if blouses, skirts and vests are issued, parents must provide white opaque tights and black shoes. If long dresses are issued, follow Youth/Chorale information. For girls in **Youth/Chorale**, parents must provide black hose and black shoes. Acceptable styles of girls' shoes are low-heeled and plain, since safety on and off risers is a key issue. Shoes with oversized chunky heels or extremely thick soles, high heels, boots, open-toes, sling backs, or sandals are **not** acceptable.

For all concerts, girls may NOT wear:

Fingernail polish; large hair-bows of any color; watches, necklaces, or dangling earrings. (Girls may wear small pearl or silver earrings and age appropriate make-up.)

Boys' Hair styles should be neat and pulled away from the face.

Girls' Hair styles should be pulled back from the face. Do not try to individualize your child's appearance. When the singer arrives for a concert call time, the backstage parent will assist any singer who has not followed the dress code.

Do not make permanent alterations to the uniform or cut the uniform fabric. They are very expensive to replace. Your child will be assigned the uniform that best fits him/her from the available uniforms. Please take good care of the uniform and do not allow your child to wear it for functions other than choir concerts. Please remember that these uniforms are just that - uniforms - and not a fashion statement for either boys or girls. We want a unified appearance so that audiences will focus on our sound and the fact that we sing and work together as one. You may dry clean the uniform between concerts, **but please do not wash.**

Uniforms are assigned in the fall of every year. If the Costume Parent deems it appropriate, re-assignment of uniforms may occur and new body measurements may be taken at any time, and especially between semesters of singing. **All uniforms belong to Chorus Abilene and must be returned at the End of the Year Celebration on April 27.** Singers are asked to pay a \$7 cleaning and repair fee for each costume. If the uniforms are not returned by this date, the singer will be charged a \$65 replacement fee. The singer will not be eligible to re-enroll in the choir until the uniform has been returned.

HOME STUDY and MEMORY DAY

For each singer to participate successfully and to the best of their ability, **music practice at home is necessary.** Home practice includes breathing and vocalization exercises, rhythmic drills, and memorization of specific literature.

If necessary, a **Memory Day** may be scheduled (usually at the weekly rehearsal two weeks prior to the concert). On Memory Day, each singer is asked to sing their part of the music in small ensembles for the conductor or an adult assistant. If music is not memorized, the conductor or assistant may ask to hear the memory work again. **All concert music must be memorized.** If a singer does not have the music memorized, they will be asked not to participate in that song during the concert, or may be asked not to participate in the concert at all.

TYPES OF CONCERTS

Chorus Abilene has three different types of concerts: Subscription series concerts, community sings, and Fundraiser sings.

Subscription series concerts are Oct. 10, Dec. 12, and Apr. 24 for the youth and Apr. 10 for adults. An admission fee is charged. Participation in Subscription series concerts **is required of all singers in the participating choirs.** If we are invited to sing with the Abilene Philharmonic or any other arts organization, that concert is considered of equal importance to a subscription series concert. This year extra engagements include: Youth, Chorale & Boys at the Abilene Nutcracker on Nov. 20-22 in small ensembles (no more than 2 performances). Although singers may choose which two performances to attend, this is required.

Community sing concerts are events like singing for Artwalk, at the Mall of Abilene, for a retirement home, and other community related concerts. Each singer is expected, as part of their commitment to the choir, to attend each of these concerts. If a family conflict arises and a singer is absent, this absence will be counted as one of the three permitted absences per semester. Occasionally we are asked to sing at other events – please check your calendar for a listing.

Fundraiser sings are events like the Mexican Dinner and Spotlight. A portion of the event always features the entire choir. **As each singer benefits from the fundraisers, we expect each singer to participate.** If a family conflict arises and a singer is absent, this absence will be counted as one of the three permitted absences per semester.

Chorus Abilene often receives requests to perform for local clubs and organizations. There must be an adequate number of singers available for this particular request before it can be accepted. Chorus Abilene reserves the right to decline these invitations or to request payment from the clubs for these appearances.

Chorus Abilene will not take singers from school to participate in these community

concerts without the express permission of parents, and almost always limit daytime performances to Vivace!. In addition, we try to limit Vivace!'s schooltime performances to one per semester. If you are interested in special singing opportunities of this type for your singer, please contact your conductor or the office.

CONCERT INSTRUCTIONS

- Dress rehearsal is just that – so come in uniform just as you would for the concert.
- Singers need to arrive **10 minutes before Call Time**.
- Check-in with the Attendance Taker.
- Singers should go to their assigned pre-concert area for warm-ups with the conductor.
- When warm-ups are over, go to your designated seating area.
- Respect and follow instructions of Backstage Parents, the Stage Manager, or the Concert Manager.
- You may bring something to read for the waiting time. Gameboys and CD's are not allowed. Cell phones must be on silent.
- If a parent volunteer adjusts your uniform or hair style, go with it.
- **The night before a concert, do not have sleepovers or other activities that keep singers up late into the night. Proper rest is required for good singing.**
- Eat a light, but nutritious meal before an evening concert.
- **Come to Call Time dressed in your uniform.** Do not plan to change into your uniform at the concert location unless granted prior permission.
- **Singers normally will remain seated together for the entire duration of the concert.** They will be released at the end of the concert – not at intermission nor as soon as they are finished singing. Although concerts tend to be a little late for our younger singers, they do not happen very often and it is very educational for them to hear the older singers and the adults.

AUDITIONS

Auditions for new youth singers in are held in May of each year. Acceptance into Chorus Abilene groups is based on the musical skills exhibited in a yearly audition, not by financial status, race, creed, or gender.

If you have been in the Chorus Abilene organization, you need only schedule an audition to change choirs, for example from Children to Youth or Youth to Chorale. However, all attendance, payment records, and behavior are reviewed by the conductor prior to re-acceptance into the choir, even without an audition. If such a review indicates that the singer does not have a serious commitment to the organization, the conductor may ask the singer to withdraw.

For auditions, the singer should come prepared to sing “My Country Tis of Thee”. (Exceptions can be made for Children's Chorus auditioners who do not yet know this song.)

In addition to singing a solo, the auditioner may be asked to:

- 1) **Clap or speak rhythms** using whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes
- 2) **Identify pitch names** on the staff

3) **Identify musical terms**

4) **Sight sing.**

Although auditions for all choirs include the same components, competency expectations are higher for Chorale. A sixth grader is not expected to know as much as a ninth grader. **With solos at all levels**, the conductor is listening for: tone quality; diction (Are the words understood and pronounced correctly); staying “in tune” with oneself; courage; and desire to sing.

TUITION EXCHANGE

For those volunteer tasks that require a larger time commitment to Chorus Abilene, an exchange for tuition is offered. **Please refer to the Volunteer Job descriptions to learn the responsibilities of the tuition exchange jobs.**

100% Tuition Exchange

Head Parent

Attendance Taker for each youth choir (one for each choir, a total of 4)

Office Worker

Lead Parents for each choir, (a total of 3)

Uniform Coordinator for Youth & Chorale together.

If a parent accepts a TE job and cannot fulfill their obligation or neglects to complete the task, the singer will be invoiced to pay full tuition.

VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Tuition Exchange jobs are noted in the following explanations. Tuition Exchange is applied to the regular monthly cost of tuition; it does not apply to the registration fee.

Head Parent

The Head Parent coordinates the non-musical activities of the four children’s choirs. The Head parent:

- ◆ Serves as consultant to the Conductor and Executive Director;
- ◆ Is the main liaison between the staff and the Lead Parents of each choir;
- ◆ Is the main liaison between parents and the Board of Directors;
- ◆ In coordination with Lead Parents, is responsible for finding parent volunteers;
- ◆ In coordination with Lead Parents and staff, organizes fall retreat;
- ◆ Communicates with Lead Parents concerning backstage volunteers beginning 2 weeks prior to each concert;
- ◆ Keeps copies of all the children’s choirs’ rosters;
- ◆ Keeps a copy of all the phone tree committees of all the choirs;
- ◆ Keeps a copy of e-mail addresses for all children’s choirs;
- ◆ May initiate Phone tree messages in consultation with the Conductor or Executive Director;
- ◆ Is actively involved in all fundraising projects of the Youth Choirs; especially coordinating volunteers for the Mexican Dinner and Spotlight;
- ◆ Attends the Parent Orientation;
- ◆ Plans End of the Year Appreciation/Ceremony;

- ◆ Arranges for volunteers to staff the front desk for the audition process in May.
This is a 100% TE job. Applications for this job are taken in March of each year and require at least one year of choir experience.

Lead Parent

A parent volunteer responsible for communicating with the parents of children in their particular choir. **The Lead Parent** is a member of the Parent Advisory Committee.

- ◆ In coordination with the Head Parent, the Lead Parent finds volunteers for tasks pertaining to choir needs: drivers for transportation, chaperones, backstage parents for each concert, Mexican Dinner or Spotlight workers, concert ushers as needed;
- ◆ Is responsible for creating a phone tree if needed;
- ◆ Notifying singers without email of important information;
- ◆ Keeps a list of all the volunteers for that particular choir and what tasks each volunteer has contributed;
- ◆ Responsible for answering questions from your choir.
- ◆ Attends the Parent Orientation and any All-Parent meetings;
- ◆ Reminds singers to bring water for backstage at concerts;
- ◆ Actively involved in all fundraising projects of the choir you serve;
- ◆ Providing notes to your choir to go home from rehearsal (please clear all notes through the office before distributing);

**** Remember that all choirs work together. This is a 100% TE job.**

Attendance Taker

Each choir has one person to take roll at every rehearsal, dress rehearsal, and performance. The Attendance taker needs to arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the event and make sure everyone checks in as they arrive. A singer is considered tardy if they arrive after warm-ups have begun. **This position requires extreme faithfulness to the chorus schedule.**

The Attendance Taker keeps **the roll book** in a notebook along with:

- ◆ Fine Assessment sheets to record fines for singers without music or pencils;
- ◆ Stationery & Stamps to mail rehearsal information to those who missed rehearsal;
- ◆ Mailing labels for the choir;
- ◆ Choir rosters;
- ◆ Seating charts;
- ◆ Copies of the latest Newsletter;
- ◆ Extra copies of anything that was distributed.

The Attendance Taker also assists in rehearsal and

- ◆ Organizes new standing or seating charts as the performance area dictates and as the conductor requires;
- ◆ Takes notes on rehearsal for the office and the conductor;
- ◆ Makes announcements/reminders at the end of rehearsal;
- ◆ Keeps records of why singers missed any rehearsal or performance;
- ◆ Telephones singers missing from rehearsal, dress rehearsal, or community sings;
- ◆ Confers with conductor and E.D. concerning singer attendance records;
- ◆ Prepares a report on each singer's attendance (with/without applicable fines) when a

singer reaches 2 absences. This report is sent to the office and to parents.

- ◆ At the conclusion of the rehearsal, the Attendance Taker gives the absence list to the conductor to consult later.

The Attendance Taker should most of all be compassionate, understanding, and able to explain the rules.

This is a 100% TE job.

Uniform Volunteer

Because Youth Chorus and Chorale use the same uniform, we combine the Uniform Volunteer position for these 2 choirs. This person:

- ◆ Measures all singers in that choir and assigns appropriate costumes to each singer - this is usually done at the fall retreat;
- ◆ Makes all alterations or repairs to costumes or arranges for this to be done;
- ◆ At times, re-assigns uniforms throughout the year to complement the growing needs of the singer;
- ◆ Checks backstage before each subscription concert to see if extra accessories are needed;
- ◆ At the end-of-the-year celebration, collects all uniforms and cleaning. If uniforms are not returned on time, you will need to call those people and make arrangements to retrieve the uniforms.

This is a 100% TE job.

Office Worker

This person is responsible for assisting the chorus administrative assistant in a variety of office work assignments. These assignments will include preparation of the monthly newsletters, answering phones, selling tickets, stuffing letters, etc. This person is asked to give 3 hours per week to the chorus at a time agreed upon by staff and volunteer.

This is a 100% TE job

Non-TE Volunteer Opportunities

The following volunteer jobs are also available and must be completed to administer the chorus and its concerts in an efficient manner.

Riser & Piano Coordinator

Typically we use our risers and electric piano at other locations 3-4 times per year. We ask each choir to be responsible for 1 moving and returning occasion. If you have a small trailer and/or pickup and can help with this, please let your Lead Parent know. This is one of the hardest volunteer positions to find.

Photographer/Videographer

Chorus Abilene attempts to record each event for both internal use and public use. We solicit pictures and videos taken by parents at all events, rehearsals, and concerts of any type. Often staff is extremely busy with organizational matters and does not have time to photograph or video the event as well.

Backstage Volunteers

Backstage volunteers are essential to a successful concert. Each choir in the children's division has 2 backstage volunteers assigned to their particular group for each concert. A

Head Backstage person for a particular concert is appointed by the Head Parent and is asked to “trouble shoot” events as they occur and make on the spot decisions. The Head Backstage Parent makes the decisions for all the choirs or communicates with the Executive Director or Conductor to do so.

If you are a backstage volunteer, **it is your responsibility to attend the dress rehearsals, as you must know the backstage chair set-up, the location of bathrooms, directions received from artistic director and conductor, etc. before the concert.** The dress rehearsal informs you of the entrances and exits of the choir, and when and where these happen in the program. It also gives you a chance to get to know the children and observe what their personalities and dynamics are. During dress rehearsal the backstage volunteers will receive a seating/standing chart from the conductor or the Attendance Taker.

- **A backstage parent will assist singers in your choir and monitor them in their seats.** It is important to keep the backstage area quiet. Whispering, “tiptoeing”, and walking around backstage may not seem loud up close, but the sound travels out to the audience. Singers may bring books (but not CD’s or Gameboys) to keep them occupied. Singers should stay in their designated seats and areas.
- **All backstage parents should inspect singers as they arrive to insure that everyone is dressed appropriately and according to the rules in the Handbook.** Please make sure that everyone’s hair is pulled back from the face and that inappropriate jewelry has not been overlooked. As a backstage volunteer, it is helpful to have some supplies on hand: cough drops, tissues, extra tights, extra bow ties and boys’ black neck buttons, extra barrettes, hair pins, safety pins, etc. The uniform parent for your choir should give you a bag of extra clothing items that may need to be replaced at the last moment.
- **Backstage volunteers need to line up singers in the right order several minutes before they go on stage.** Escort them quietly to their entrance, in their lines ready to go. While the choir is performing, backstage volunteers are asked to position themselves so as to be able to see the singers when they are on stage.
- **If a child sits down during a performance, that is your emergency signal from the child!** Please go on stage **immediately** and remove the child, evaluate the need for medical care, and act promptly. Do not worry about interrupting a performance!
- When your choir’s time on stage is complete, please be ready at the appropriate place to escort the singers back to their designated seats. **After each concert, backstage parents should review the area, pick up any trash or programs and collect any lost items.**
- **A backstage volunteer does not need to purchase a ticket to the concert.**

Chaperones

From time to time we will need chaperones for retreats, tours, or other social events which require adult supervision. The Conductor, Head Parent, Lead Parent, or Tour manager will communicate with chaperones as to their duties, where they need to be, rules and regulations. Chaperones are expected to be able to pay their own expenses for retreats, local tours, and other social events. For a national or international tour, if at all possible, the Tour Committee will investigate methods by which a portion of the chaperone’s expenses might be supplemented.

Phone Tree Committee

In some years a Phone tree is created to help facilitate communication within the

membership of the choirs. Each member of the committee will have 3-6 persons that they will need to call with the messages to be distributed. The phone tree is used when information needs to be conveyed to each family within a short period of time. **Please call your list as soon as you receive the message and make sure you call your Lead Parent to let them know that all of your calls have been made.** If you do not reach someone by phone, please try and try again. These calls are very important. If the Head Parent is in your choir, please call them as well. Do not assume that they have this information. After your calls have been made, do not forget to contact your Lead Parent. That message will then be relayed to the Head Parent and the Conductor.

Auditions

Volunteers are needed for auditions at the end of each year. If you volunteer to assist at auditions for 1-2 hours, you will greet new singers and their families, oversee the filling out of registration forms, administer written tests, help with any other functions needed to keep the auditions running smoothly, and, in general, be a source of information to prospective members. You need to arrive at your “host” position half an hour before auditions begin. Auditions for the children’s divisions are held every May.

Local Transportation

Throughout the year, we have a variety of events that require transportation (visits to the retirement homes, retreats, run-out concerts, etc.) and several volunteers per choir may be needed. If you volunteer to be a driver, you are not reimbursed for gas or mileage. Please be sure to carry proof of your insurance with you.

Rehearsal Assistants

In the Children’s Chorus, parents are sometimes needed to assist the singers in finding their place in the music, organizing their folder, learning to sing parts, playing musical games, etc. Musical skill is not required, but a great smile and hugs are always welcomed. Please let the conductor or Lead Parent know that you are interested in helping.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is a continual activity shared by all singers, parents, and the Board of Directors. The money from most events is applied to operating expenses. This helps to keep the tuition and ticket prices lower. The following are this year’s planned fundraisers that apply to the normal operating budget.

Authentic Mexican Dinner: This Fundraiser has been held for 12 years and it is a popular, casual, family-type dinner. Tickets are \$6 each. The choirs perform while everyone enjoys their dinner. Parents are asked to set up, serve, clean-up, and at times, donate goods for the menu. This fundraiser helps us maintain tuition costs at a lower level. Therefore we ask that each singer sell 10 tickets at \$6 each or make a donation of \$60 to the choir. This year the dinner is November 14.

Spotlight: This is a theatrical evening on Feb.13, featuring solos or ensembles of choir members, complete with props, costumes, and dancing. All children’s choirs will participate. Individuals may audition for solos or duets (of their own choosing, according to the theme) for this event. Auditions are typically held the week following the Dec. concert, so if your singer plans to audition they will want to select a song much earlier. This event is comprised of a performance, dessert, and a silent auction. Tickets are \$25/each.

TOURS

The Board of Directors of Chorus Abilene determines when and if any of the choirs will tour. Tours are taken because they offer opportunities not available in Abilene. Sometimes the opportunity is a chance to work with a special conductor, to sing in an outstanding acoustical setting not found in Abilene, or to learn about a culture and its music different from that experienced in Abilene.

A Tour Committee will research options and advise the Board on locations and possible companies. The Executive Director and the conductor of the choir which is touring will be members of the Tour Committee. The Board of Directors will make any final decisions on whether or not a tour is taken. Tours are generally taken every two-three years. The next tour will be in June, 2010.

A singer must be 11 years old to be eligible for an international tour.

2010 –Spain

Previous Tours include:

1998 - The Classical Youth Chorus performed in the International Children's Choral Festivals in York and London, England;

2000 – Chorale received outstanding recognition as performers at the Niagara International Music Festival;

2002 - A combined group from Youth/Chorale toured England and Paris, performing in Salisbury Cathedral, St. Paul's Church, and College Moliere.

2003 - a combined group was the featured choir at opening ceremonies of the Texas Music Teachers Association State Convention.

2004 - Toured Italy for ten days, performing in Rome, Pistoia, and Lucca.

2005 - Members performed aboard Carnival Cruiseline's *Elation*.

2007 - Austria for 10 days from Munich to Vienna, performing in Salzburg's St. Peter's Abbey, at a music festival in Irnfritz, and in Vienna, as well as singing informally in many other locations.

Tour Finances

Tour is ultimately the financial responsibility of each singer's family. Once a tour has been chosen and a cost determined, the tour committee will suggest to the Board of Directors, for their approval, a list of possible fund-raisers to supplement parental payments. The Tour Committee will determine the number of fund-raisers and whether the particular event should be classified as an individual or group fund-raiser. The proceeds of **group fund-raisers** will be split among all participants and then added to each singer's tour account, while the proceeds of **individual fundraisers** will be added directly into the individual singer's account. Although fund-raisers are supported by the Board of Directors, **financial responsibility for all tour expenses ultimately remains with each singer.**

If a parent is interested in heading up any fundraisers, please speak with the Executive Director.

Tour Chaperones

Tour Chaperones must be approved by the Tour Committee or Tour Manager. A potential chaperone should convey one's history of working with children, any special talents that might be used on a tour, and why one is interested in chaperoning this particular event. An effort is made to offer chaperones a discount on the price of the tour; however chaperones do not go free and the discount is usually small. The Tour Committee will determine what amount the chaperones must pay for the tour.

Tour Clothing

The dress code for the tour is determined by the Tour Committee. For safety reasons, singers will be asked to dress with shirts that are alike. Singers are on the tour as representatives of a group, not as individuals. The packing list, detailing wardrobe, will be distributed 3 months prior to the tour. Baggage is limited to a 22" suitcase and one backpack.

Attendance Requirements for Tour Singers

All tour singers must attend all pre-tour workshops and the specially called pre-tour rehearsals which occur prior to departure, including 2 full day rehearsals after school is out and prior to the trip. **Although school may interfere with a particular rehearsal, the workshops and all-day rehearsals are mandatory.** That is why we give your schedule early. Do not ask for special arrangements. **If your singer cannot commit to an extended rehearsal, for whatever reason, please do not commit to tour.**

Information concerning itinerary, cost and payment schedule, repertoire, educational and musical benefits, **mandatory pre-tour workshops, reports**, packing lists, safety tips, etc. will be distributed to parents. **Contact the Executive Director for any particular questions about the tour.**

PARENT ORIENTATION

It is absolutely essential that every parent attend the orientation session! Why is it essential? Because over the years we have discovered that those parents who attend understand the goals of the chorus, how the organization is managed, and their role and responsibility as choir parents. Parents will meet the parent leadership of the choir, Parent Volunteer committees, and be informed of the parent volunteer responsibilities for the year. The conductor will also share the musical goals of each chorus for the year. Calendar events and fund-raisers will also be discussed.

At the Parent Orientation, you will be asked to bring your singer's **Medical Release Form** (necessary for the Chorus to have in case a medical emergency should arise during rehearsals, performances, retreats, tours, etc.); and complete a **Photo Release Form** (if not already done), allowing us to use photos of your child for publicity purposes. This will also be the time when you will be asked to volunteer to help with various events throughout the year.

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Major decisions are often made by the conductor, the executive director, and the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). The Parent Advisory Committee is comprised of the Head Parent and Lead Parents of youth choirs. Major motions suggested by the PAC must be approved by the Board of Directors of Chorus Abilene.

ALL-PARENT MEETINGS

Two all-parent meetings are held each year, during first rehearsal in August and January. These are important meetings and are called because a response from parents is needed in order to make decisions that will affect the future directions of the chorus. If a Parent cannot attend an all-Parent meeting, please contact your choir's Lead Parent after the meeting to discover what valuable information you missed. Under unusual circumstances an extra Parent Meeting may be called.

DONATIONS

Chorus Abilene, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. We exist on donations from individuals, and, when awarded, grants from arts organizations, foundations, and corporations. **Encouraging your friends and business associates to support us is necessary and greatly appreciated.**

Tax-deductible donations should be sent to the office at PO Box 3358, Abilene, TX. 79604. Individual and Corporate donor names are listed in the programs. In addition to our heartfelt thanks, donors receive newsletters and special invitations to receptions and educational events.

Gifts given in memory or honor of a loved one will be acknowledged by the Board of Directors, and if instructed so by the donor, names will be printed in the next program.

If you are interested in providing a yearly scholarship for a deserving singer, please contact the Executive Director or a member of the Board of Directors. If you would like to consider assisting the chorus in the creation of an endowment, please contact the Board President.

Each year, Chorus Abilene receives a large amount of money from members of the community who have no formal connection with us in order to support this organization where your children learn and mature through music.

It is our hope that, in future years as you find yourself able, you will remember that others have invested in your child and that you will return the gift so we may continue to help encourage future generations of music makers.