

## Lakeshore Community Chorus Annual Report 2019

- The Lakeshore Community Chorus board of directors meets monthly throughout the year. Our current board as of March 2020 is as follows:
  - Larry Sharp, President
  - Shirley Sutton, Vice President
  - Richard Hutchins, Treasurer
  - Pat Sharp, Secretary
  - Board members: Jim Bailey, Wendy Gronbeck, Brenda Marcy, Kathleen Markland, Mary Terzino
  - Staff: Nancy Plantinga, Artistic director Vivian Boot, Accompanist

### Overview

The Lakeshore Community Chorus was founded in the spring of 2010. Tim Heck, a retired high school choral director and Nancy Plantinga, a retired middle school band director, both from the Chicago area, came together along with a small group of interested singers to form the chorus. The first concert was held in the spring of 2010. Their goal was to bring the enjoyment of choral music to the local community and to provide a place where community singers could come together to sing and expand their capabilities. The directors wanted to perform a variety of choral music, and to challenge our singers. That philosophy has continued. The chorus now has over 40 members. Over the last ten years we have performed before over 7,000 concert attendees. We perform at least two major concerts each year and have performed in several venues. We also perform free concerts at senior living facilities or nursing homes each year.

### 2019 accomplishments

- Our January 2019 Annual meeting included election of officers and presentation and discussion of the final calendar year 2019 budget report. We also agreed that our May 2020 concert would have a budget like the May 2019 budget.
- In January and February, we moved forward with planning and rehearsal scheduling for our May Concerts, "Oldies but Goodies" featuring music of the 50's and 60's.
  - May 18 & 19, First Congregation Church, Saugatuck
  - The concerts featured Douglas UCC church pastor Salvador Sapienza as commentator and a guest performance by the Holland Windmill Chorus. The concerts were a great success.
    - Concerts: Saturday evening and Sunday matinee
    - Total attendance 262

- In 2018 the board formed a 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee. May 2020 is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our founding.
  - The committee, initiated planning of events surrounding our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season (December 2019 “Season to Remember” and May 2020 “10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert”
  - We decided to commission a choral work to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to be performed in May 2020
    - We selected poet Linda Nemece Foster to compose a poem about the West Michigan Lakeshore communities
    - We selected composer David Brunner to compose music based on Linda’s poem.
    - Contracts were put in place in December of 2018
    - The final piece was completed during late summer 2019.
  - Budgets were developed for the anniversary season including both December 2019 and May 2020 concerts.
  - Fund raising goals were established to support the higher cost of the anniversary season
  - We developed collaborations with Saugatuck HS and Allegan HS Choirs to participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations
    - Saugatuck High School music director committed their chorus to perform with us at our May 2020 concert
    - Allegan High School Choir committed to perform with us at Allegan High School on the Friday before our May 2020 Anniversary Concert
  - We worked with local school art programs to generate art works to be displayed at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts during the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert events in May
    - Four school art programs committed to create artworks supporting our May 2020 concert to be displayed at our concert venue, Saugatuck Center for the Arts.
  
- We applied for grants from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA) and the Allegan County Community Foundation to support the commissioned piece and activities surrounding the anniversary concert
  - We received a \$2000 grant from the Allegan County Foundation
  - We received a \$4000+ grant from MCACA
  
- The Saugatuck Center for the Arts was selected for both December and May concerts:
  - Contracts were put in place
  
- In August we conducted direct mail and in person fund raising efforts to residents and businesses in the Saugatuck-Douglas-Fennville area to support the anniversary season.
  - We ultimately raised just over \$14,000 from this campaign
  
- Music was selected for both the December and May concerts including favorite music from LCC concerts over the last 10 years.
  
- This anniversary season is LCC’s first implementation of a fall to spring concert season rather than the previous calendar year concert season.

- Our budgeting and fund raising will be oriented around this calendar.
  - This brings us in line with other arts organizations and grant funding organizations
  - We have also aligned the contracts for our artistic director and accompanist with this calendar and have moved to 12-month contracts starting July 1<sup>st</sup> and ending June 31<sup>st</sup>.
    - This provides more stability for both the chorus and the artistic staff.
  - Our annual community fund raising starts in late August and continues through late November, so this also fits the new season calendar.
- Our December concert, “A Season to Remember” was very successful
    - Concerts on Saturday evening and Sunday matinee
    - Total attendance 503
- Financial history and actions to provide financial stability:
    - When we founded the chorus in 2010 it was a small volunteer organization. We did not provide salaries for our directors or accompanists. The chorus was small (around 25 members). We performed in a variety of venues in the Saugatuck area, including churches, the local micro-brewery, and at outdoor events in Saugatuck and Douglas.
    - As the chorus grew and as our audiences grew, we developed a relationship with a local church to use their facility for rehearsal space and concerts for very nominal rental fees.
    - In the first 4 years the board budgeted for each concert but did no annual budgeting. However, ticket sales were not matching expenses and there were no fund-raising activities.
    - We reached a crisis in 2014 when there were not enough funds to start rehearsals for our fall concert. At that point we initiated what became an annual community fund raising effort reaching out to residents and businesses. That fundraiser was very successful, raising over \$7000 from 100 fund raising letters to individuals and contact with local businesses. This set the pattern for future funding.
    - We now budget on an annual basis and have good success in projecting expenses, concert ticket revenue and fund-raising levels.
    - Over the last 6 years we have met our goal of establishing reserves that protect the chorus from unexpected events or expenses.
    - We ended 2019 with reserves to fund all expenses for a full concert
- Final comments: At this point we are fortunate to be in a position where we have the following:
    - Dedicated and talented chorus members
    - Talented and creative artistic director and accompanist
    - A presence and recognition in the lakeshore communities
    - Growing and appreciative audiences, many repeat attendees
    - Financial patrons within the community and local businesses.
    - Successful grant funding support
    - Collaborations with local schools and other community chorus’s
    - A successful partnership with the Saugatuck Center for the Arts
    - An active and engaged board of directors

Larry Sharp  
Board President

**Footnote: March 28, 2020**

- Our organization like many others has been affected by the Corona virus pandemic. We cancelled/postponed our May 2020 anniversary concert to May of 2021. We wanted to protect the health of our chorus members by cancelling rehearsals in March, April, and May. As we were making these decisions, the SCA started canceling events in March and April. We have everything in place to go forward next year. Fortunately, the Saugatuck Center for the Arts and our other collaborators are committed to participate in 2021.
- We are now working on planning our annual holiday concerts for the first weekend in December of 2020. We hope that the country is back to a degree of normalcy so we can return to performing.