





Dear NM Choir Supporter,

I hope you had a beautiful summer and enjoyed time with family and friends. As I am preparing for the 2023-24 school year, I am reflecting on last year. Our choir theme was love and it definitely showed in our classroom atmosphere as well as on the stage. Second term brought the largest group of choir seniors we have ever had, and their leadership was remarkable. Watching senior choir members such as Riley McEvoy, Sam Gallo, and Carolyn Bennett, form and develop lasting friendships with students in every grade level brought joy to each and every day. I always fret about choosing the right songs, hoping the choreography will be fun, making each student feel safe and welcome while also educating students musically and enhancing their vocal skills, but was reminded last year that these are not the key elements of a great choir program. The greatness lies within each and every student's heart that daily gives something of themselves while also remaining open to receiving love from those around them. It is the lasting friendships, the laughter, the teamwork, and the love of simply being together.

We enjoyed many traditions of NM Choir. We marched in the Homecoming parade and performed the National Anthem and Alma Mater at football games. Several students participated in MSVMA events. Riley Huff, Lux Peterson and Kohl Roggero participated in the MSVMA Regional Middle School Honors Choir and then went on to perform in the State Honors Choir as a result of their hard work and quality auditions. We registered ten events involving numerous students at MSVMA Musical Theater Festival. Eight of these events received first division ratings and three of them received perfect scores! Over 30 singers performed at MSVMA District Solo and Ensemble Festival and received very high scores including four events that scored perfect first division ratings. Eight students went on to compete at the state level and all received first division ratings. AND, the ms trio including Riley Huff, Jonas Slimko, and Bobby Gaston, received a perfect score at the state level!!! All five choirs received first division ratings at MSVMA District Choral Festival. I was especially proud of Nova Voce and Junior Norse Singers 3 who performed without a director. Their festival had to be rescheduled due to weather and Mrs. Ogren, our fabulous choir accompanist, could not attend the rescheduled date so I had to accompany rather than conduct. These two performances were something I will always remember  

Our fall concert was entitled "Let Your Heart Sing". We highlighted our first "Hearts of Choir" in the program, students who brought love to each rehearsal in various ways. We also featured the seniors in the closing song.

Soon the holiday concerts were upon us and NM fine arts councils combined to bring "love" to the stage. Our creative and talented art instructor, Chip Vanderwier, designed and assembled a huge heart wreath that was the focal point of our stage decorations. Members from the Reeths-Puffer Wind Ensemble joined us again on stage thanks to their wonderful director Rich Erne. The collaboration between orchestra, choir, art, and band musicians and artists is truly remarkable and a valuable NM fine arts tradition.

We barely blinked and Pops season was upon us. "Norse Beats" showcased one of the most amazing sets in our Pops history thanks to the very talented Sean and Yvonne Rekeny. I am always amazed at how choir staff and volunteers like Sean and Yvonne, Elizabeth Corradin, Rhonda Kinahan, Jana Warren, Erin Blais, and Andrea Matthews can materialize my whacky and intricate

ideas and concepts into something better than I imagined. Our SnapRaise campaign was beyond successful and Lisa Potts and her crew secured donors and sponsors allowing us to add detail to all aspects of the show WITHOUT charging any student costume fees! Many parents and staff members and students stepped up to help again this year, including some like Jenny Nagel who has helped EVERY year since the first NM Pops ❤️ Sage Brewer and CJ Bennett were once again constantly finding ways to help and support the choir. Riley McEvoy and Marilyn Gaston not only led an amazing choir council that worked so hard, but also represented NM Choir so well during their interview with Andy O'Riley for MuskegonChannel.com.

We finished the year with our third annual Positive Vibes Festival which showcases visual art, orchestra, and choir. Thank you to NM Fine Arts Boosters for underwriting this event and to all of our Positive Vibes sponsors and the City of North Muskegon for helping us with this event.

One of the best parts of my job is interacting with so many remarkable students. They inspire me and those around them with their positive energy and dedication.

Lux Peterson (6th grade): I loved Choir Council because I made so many friends from different grades.

Riley Huff (8th grade): My favorite part of choir last year was Pops and all the friends and memories you make along the way!

Marilyn Gaston (11th grade): Whether it be the graduating seniors or the younger middle school students, I care about and cherish my connections with everyone in choir.

Analea Wingard (11th grade): The choir family is an anchor of support in my life that offers a place where I can express myself and connect deeply with others through our shared love of music.

Luc Peterson (12th grade): Choir comes together as a team to create music and memories which will impact so many lives. This family will make you cherish the time you've spent with them and you will miss that time once it's over.

Riley McEvoy (12th grade): It's so easy to bond with one another because every choir member does their part to make choir class a judgment free zone.

The Norse Singers concluded the year with a performance of "In My Life" partially arranged by our exuberant strings teacher, Angela Corbin, for string orchestra and choir at graduation. These loyal young men and women inspired me to continue building a program younger students look forward to joining because of its proud tradition of excellence.

When I walk into my classroom and see all the past props and posters and pictures, I am reminded how honored I am to direct the North Muskegon Choirs and fortunate that so many people support us. Many of these memory-building events would not be possible without your generous contributions. Thank you again for helping give our children the very best because you know they deserve it. And an additional thank you for supporting the arts in North Muskegon.

With sincere gratitude,

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