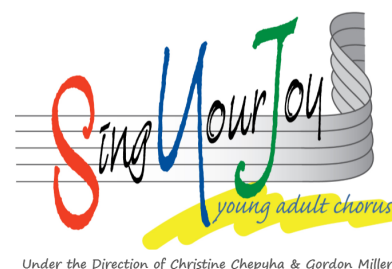


SingYourJoy Young Adult Chorus Co-Directors Annual Report "Belong and Believe" July 2018 to June 2019



Inviting young adults to belong to - and help build - a community that values diversity and expresses inclusiveness as a way of being, is the essence of SingYourJoy. We continued to live into that opportunity and belief in our model in this our 8th full season.

No longer a start-up or sophomore chorus, SingYourJoy (directors, board, singers and community) has gained substantial and significant experience working with this wonderful age group. This has allowed us to increase our capacity to deliver a program that has artistic merit, is true to SingYourJoy values and is increasingly held up as an example of what a successful, inclusive, diverse community could look like.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of the 2018 / 2019 season.



Superlatives don't do justice to how we feel about the support and encouragement we receive from our Board, Patrons, Audiences and Singers. As we wrap up "Belong and Believe", the shape of seasons to come are already in the works and we plan to grow with integrity, never losing sight of the vision that set us on this path.

With respect,

Christine Y. Chepyha
Gordon C. Miller
Co-Founders and Directors,
SingYourJoy Young Adult Chorus
Annual Report: Submitted October 2019

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2018/2019 - Belong & Believe

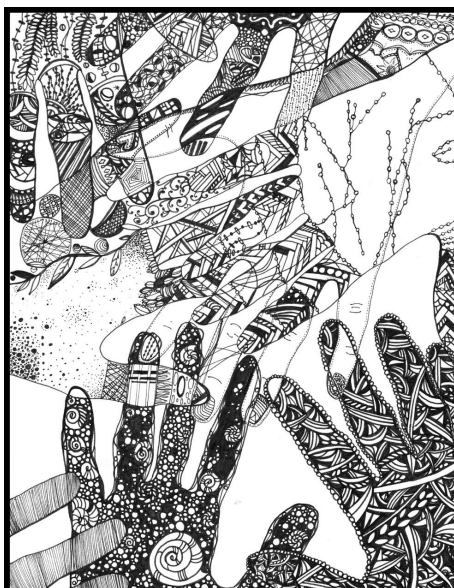
In our 8th year of SingYourJoy, we returned to our two season format, creating two separate concert experiences for our singers and audiences. The titles Belong and Believe were chosen to help singers and audience discover the depth of the SingYourJoy experience.

Our *Concert Guides* Tara de Goutiere (one of the early champions of our #mentalhealthmatters initiative) and Rose White (a local spoken word artist) were outstanding spokes-people for SingYourJoy. Their own truths were demonstrated as they articulated SingYourJoy's vision clearly to our audience, weaving our song selections together with skill and ease. We and they received significant praise for their work.



'I keep myself separate from the friendly faces in the choir because of my anxiety, but I feel safe and not judged.'

'Being accepted in SYJ for who I am. Feels like family :-).'



Original art by © Nicole Bottles, used with permission

#mentalhealthmatters
is an awareness initiative of the singers of
SingYourJoy.ca

'...Every song I learn with the group validates how I feel with what's going on in my life and being able to share in these feelings with everyone really makes me feel like I <<< BELONG >>>!'

At our fall team building dinner, singers were asked to comment on what the word 'Belong' meant for them in a SingYourJoy context. Some of their comments are featured throughout this report. This exercise served to help them connect with the seasons' concert themes and also strengthen their relationships in the chorus by hearing from others the common threads that bond them together.

In keeping with previous concert seasons, we made repertoire selections from our library and purchased new works specifically for this season. Popular culture often provides us with just the right opportunity, when a song like 'This Is Me'

from 'The Greatest Showman' is featured on the Academy Awards. We are grateful to our professional musicians who are part of our extended family. Kelby MacNayr, Bob Brown and Joey Smith helped us out this year and they regularly express their support and encouragement of our work. These (and other professional musicians) are genuinely thankful for the opportunity to work with SingYourJoy, appreciating the artistic merit and also the opportunity to *Belong* to the family.

#MentalHealthMatters, our singer-led community awareness initiative was renewed this season with new leadership, new art and new spoken 'testimonials' at our April concert.

Our 'Raising the Bar' 2017/2018 year had many challenges around the longer memorized program with increased emphasis on performance aesthetic. Returning to our two season model with fewer 'off-book' numbers made for a less stressful year for many of the singers.

Our concert nights could not happen without the guidance of our Event board member Suzanne Ashwell and her committed group of volunteers. Their smiles make our audiences feel like part of the SingYourJoy family from the moment they enter the venues. We are grateful for their assistance.

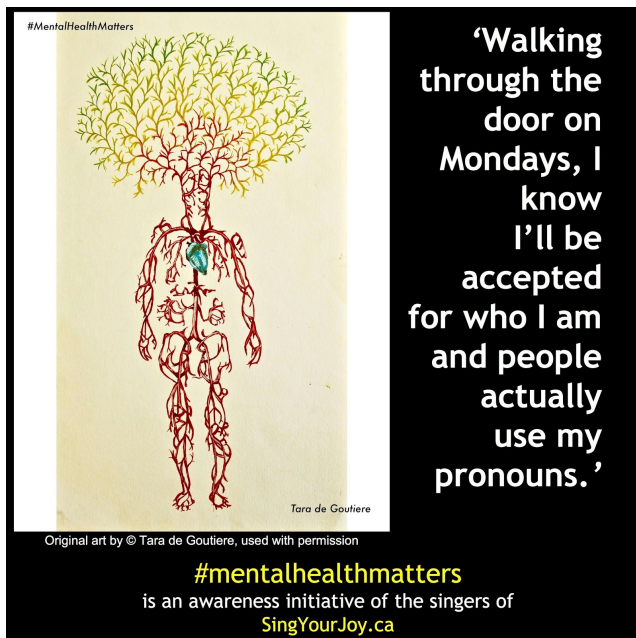


2018-2019 Registration Numbers

	Online Pre-Registration	New	Returning	At Concert
September	39	22	37	50 (46 on stage)
January	54	25	40	50 (48 on stage)

The online pre-registration continues to work well with this cohort - it also provides the co-directors with rough ideas on possible numbers for the season, as well as optional 'selfies' to help us connect with new singers more quickly. Total numbers for new, returning and singers on concert stage are consistent with previous years, and continue to reflect the dynamic nature of this age group. At this time there are no longer any 'original' singers left in the group.

Culture



In 2011, SingYourJoy created a 'code of conduct', outlining expectations of singers and leaders throughout the season. The document is re-examined each season to ensure that it remains valid and current. It is a physical reminder of the community that we continue to grow. From the friendly faces of singers at the door registering all comers, to the actions of directors during rehearsals, the SingYourJoy culture is one of inclusion for all.

'I want to say thank you for having me along this season and last, it's been a... Joy!?! I've worked in the community inclusion sector for 6+ years and I have to say, this choir is one of the most inclusive groups I've seen in that time. Very well done. All my very best, - Noah'

SingYourJoy created its first public advertisements - running in *Monday Magazine* and the Black Press papers (Oak Bay News, Victoria News, Saanich News) prior to the September 2018 intake. At least one new singer joined because of these, and their family and friends have commented on the welcoming nature of their experience from first entering the building to the final season concert.



This calendar year has seen four singers on the Board as Choral Representatives. Frankie Pryor, Jade Hill, Kira Mauriks and Liam Cline bring a diversity of SingYourJoy experience to the organization, and in the past year they have provided support by sharing announcements during weekly rehearsals, coordinating community building activities during our seasonal dinners, re-invigorating the #mentalhealthmatters campaign, and engaging singers to provide personal stories during concerts. Their work is invaluable and we are grateful for all they do.

In conjunction with a full complement of Choral Representatives, the weekly tasks of preparing rehearsal space before and after use has been shared with singers, allowing the Directors more time to work individually with chorus members. We discover unique talents within this pool of people, and a great sense of pride in discovering more effective and efficient ways to accomplish these jobs.

The SingYourJoy family includes people like Brad and Cici Edwards, whom we first met in 2015 as our concert photographers. Since then, they have continued to document our concerts and special events, providing historical evidence of the many faces who have been part of our chorus. Their delight and joy in our performances extends past those physical photos to online galleries of all our concerts, and continuing social media support throughout the year. View their galleries [here](#).

Funding Sources

SingYourJoy is unique for many reasons, and removing the barrier of participation fees requires ongoing searches for new and continued funding sources. Stephen Tyler, Board member responsible for fundraising, is an excellent resource and guide in creating grant applications and researching options for the chorus. This year he has been joined by SYJ alumna Sasha Gronsdaahl, who has assisted in the research for potential new grant providers.

Our original source of seed funding - the Victoria Presbytery of the United Church of Canada - has come to an end as the national body of the UCC restructures. We are grateful for their insightful support for SingYourJoy in its formative years. Joining Top Shelf Bookkeeping, we welcome Discovery Coffee to our funding family .

‘There is something about singing with other people that makes you feel truly connected and human.’



© Jade Hill

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#mentalhealthmatters
is an awareness initiative of the singers of
[SingYourJoy.ca](#)

Increased Private Donations

Private donations have continued to increase since the Chorus achieved Charitable Status with the Canada Revenue Agency.

	Online donations	Donations by Cheque	Monthly donations (online)	Total donations
2016-2017	\$795	\$7290	n/a	\$8,085
2017-2018	\$3098.30* * with charitable status our Canada Helps page provides a different level of donation data - these numbers reflect the Canada Helps fees taken from online donations	\$9590	Total for year = \$1138.74 1 in place from November 2017 (\$120.63 per month) 2 currently in place, for a monthly deposit of \$149.58 (from January 2018 on)	\$13,827.04
2018-2019	\$3308.60	\$9980	Total for year = \$1794.96 2 currently in place, for a monthly deposit of \$149.58.	\$15,083.56

Fundraising Ventures: BCCF Raffle

A benefit of membership in the BC Choral Federation is the ability to sell fundraising raffle tickets - each \$2 ticket sold returns \$1.20 to the choir selling the tickets. SingYourJoy joined the BCCF Raffle for a second time, committing to sell 1000 tickets for a return of \$1,200. These monies will be directed to general operating costs.

Our experience, having participated in the raffle two years in a row, is that there is insufficient return on investment for the volunteer output of time and energy to distribute, sell, recover and report on raffle ticket sales. The individual Chorus members do not appear to have the personal networks, time nor inclination to take on the important task of selling tickets. Unless we find an individual to champion this project and fully coordinate this, we recommend not participating in the coming year.

Growth beyond the core of SingYourJoy

James Bay Children's Chorus

This year, Christine and Gordon reached out to colleague and friend, Sandra Fletcher who is an experienced pianist with a passion and skill for children's choral instruction. The intention was to build bridges in the local choir community where like-minded approaches to choral singing could exist across different age groups. Sandra's choir, the [James Bay Children's Chorus](#) (JBCC) was starting their second year with a small and enthusiastic group of singers age 7 to 14 and positioned well to grow, based on their successful first season.



Like SingYourJoy, the JBCC offers participants a chance to be part of a choir without an audition or membership fees. They are receiving much needed high quality beginners choral instruction at a time when many elementary schools are having difficulty funding specialty program resources. Like SingYourJoy, a local United Church stepped forward to offer them rehearsal space at no cost. Sandra currently instructs and directs as a volunteer.

SingYourJoy has been helping the JBCC with social media support and collegial encouragement. In a very intentional way of forming deeper alliances we invited Sandra and her chorus to join SingYourJoy at our own year end concert at First Met in April 2019. This invitation to sing for a larger audience was significant as the children and their parents received first-hand experience of the excitement of singing to a packed house at a major cultural event.

In the coming months we will continue to seek ways where SingYourJoy and the James Bay Children's Chorus can work together to support each organization's vision. While formally coming together under one banner is not forecasted for this coming year, the three directors, Christine and Gordon and Sandra have been discussing what an expanded organization might look like and what benefits might be gained by greater collaboration.

As an important side note, SingYourJoy's singers were moved deeply by the inclusion of the young people at our concert and made gracious room for them in a very typical 'SingYourJoy' way. For the younger ones, we think they were inspired and amazed.

Westshore Expansion

Taking the SingYourJoy Chorus mandate beyond Victoria proper and UVic/Camosun catchments has been an expansion conversation with the SYJ Board for the past year. Some work has gone into imagining the components required to take the step of starting a satellite choir on the Westshore, including budget planning, seeking potential rehearsal locations, imagining joint concert scenarios and applying for program grants for this specific work.

We are ready to move ahead with next steps as soon as we find a grant or community partner willing to fund a major part of our first season. Active efforts are currently being made by our fundraising team to make this a reality.

New Board Members

We acknowledged the invaluable support of our outgoing Secretary/Treasurer, Maja Kaffanke, as she ended her term of office in July 2018. Maja's tenure saw the establishment of consistent reporting on meetings through timely minutes, and the use of bookkeeping software for the Chorus's financial reporting. As well, Maja was instrumental in the final successful application for Charitable Status through Revenue Canada's process.

We welcomed our new Treasurer Shelly Jian Kun Xia in July 2018. Shelly is new to the world of choral singing and non-profit organizations and brings a fresh focus and perspective to the SingYourJoy Board of Directors.

We also said farewell to our Concert/Event Coordinator Lori Downey as she ended her term in July 2018. Lori's contribution to the board included coordinating all concert venue arrangements, from ticket-taking to the ever popular post-concert receptions. Lori was also invaluable in researching and coordinating SingYourJoy performances in local seniors residences across the city.

We welcomed Suzanne Ashwell to the Concert/Event Coordinator position in September 2018. Having recently moved to Victoria, Suzanne is our latest SYJ parent on the board and we look forward to her new insights as we head towards our 10th anniversary.

Additionally, our Choral Representatives to the Board added two new faces: Jade Hill and Kira Mauriks were welcomed for their energy, enthusiasm and fresh ideas from the singers' perspective. This year we had a full complement of Choral Representatives to the board, thus changing our dynamic in a positive way. We appreciated and acted on their contributions.

In Remembrance



~ We dedicate tonight's concert in memory of Paul D. K. Fraser, Q.C., our SingYourJoy Young Adult Chorus Society Board Chair 2014 - 2017. Paul's guidance, support and encouragement was key during a transformative time for the chorus, and we are saddened by his loss. Our deepest condolences to Paul's family, especially Jacquie, a long-time member of SingYourJoy. ~
From the Believe concert program, April 2019

Singing in the community

Singer-led Initiative: after-party musical social

The coffee-house afternoon premiered in 2018 continued as a singer-driven post-concert wrap-up time. Singers, board members and alumni shared songs, poetry, spoken word and instrumental performances in a relaxed and supportive environment. This year's event was held in the community hall at Oak Bay United Church. Attended by about 25 choir members and some friends, the rich range of performances reflected the diverse nature of the SingYourJoy community in a beautiful way.



Christmas Lights Across Canada

SingYourJoy was thrilled to participate once more at the annual Christmas Lights Across Canada event at the BC Legislature in December. This year SingYourJoy was invited into the Upper Rotunda to entertain visitors.

Our Thanks!



We cannot exist without the help of many people and our heartfelt thanks goes out to:

Oak Bay United Church who generously gifts us with a warm and joy-filled rehearsal space each Monday evening and provides a community of supporters at our concerts.

Victoria Presbytery of the United Church of Canada (which came to a conclusion in December 2018) continued to offer financial support to the vision they helped start in 2011.

Ted and Helen Hughes, our Honourary Patrons

Patrons:

Anonymous (4) / Nicole & Sean Ebert / Barb Wellington Foster /
/ Robin and Paul Fraser / Ted and Helen Hughes /
/ Sherry Ridout / Maja and Richard Sloan /
/ Helen and Harvey Waddell / Scott Wall /

and:

- our individual donors, whose gifts provide financial stability to our organization
- our audiences, those who return every season and those just discovering us.
- SingYourJoy Young Adult Chorus Society Board of Directors
- our Alumni AND Our Singers

2018/2019 Concert Sponsors: Top Shelf Bookkeeping Ltd. and Discovery Coffee



We are grateful to these local businesses for their understanding of how important music can be in the life of a young person making their way.

2018 - 2019 Board of Directors

Chair: Peter Scales

Vice Chair: Logan Richards

Treasurer: Shelly Xia

Secretary: Coreen Mason

Fundraising: Stephen Tyler

Concert/Event Coordinator: Suzanne Ashwell

Choral Representatives:

Frankie Pryor, Jade Hill, Kira Mauriks, Liam Cline

Ex-Officio: Christine Chepyha (Co-Artistic Director)

Ex-Officio: Gordon Miller (Co-Artistic Director)



BELIEVE - SYJ in Concert First Met United Church Victoria BC April 2019

Pictures We Love



