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## **NEW STUDY FINDS POSITIVE BENEFITS OF CHORUSES AND CHORAL SINGING FOR CHILDREN, ADULTS, AND COMMUNITIES**

Washington, D.C.—If you enjoy singing with your neighbors, congregation, or classmates, you're taking an increasingly popular path to a successful life. According to a new study by Chorus America, an estimated 32.5 million adults regularly sing in choruses today, up from 23.5 million estimated in 2003. And when children are included, there are 42.6 million Americans singing in choruses in 2009. More than 1 in 5 households have at least one singing family member, making choral singing the most popular form of participation in the performing arts for both adults and children.

That's good news because singing in one of the 270,000 choruses in the U.S., such as a community chorus or a school or church choir, is strongly correlated with qualities that are associated with success throughout life, the study finds. Greater civic involvement, discipline, and teamwork are just a few of the attributes fostered by singing with a choral ensemble.

Chorus America first evaluated the benefits of choral singing and its impact on communities in a 2003 study. The results from this latest research support and advance earlier findings that choral singers exhibit increased social skills, civic involvement, volunteerism, philanthropy, and support of other art forms, when compared with non-singers.

“The prototype of a choral singer is how Americans aspire to see themselves today: as active, involved citizens with a broad range of creative interests and concerns for their communities,” says Ann Meier Baker, the President and CEO of Chorus America.

### Adults who sing are remarkably good citizens.

A few of the current study's major findings for adult singers include:

- Choral participation remains strong in America with 32.5 million adults regularly singing in at least one of 270,000 choruses nationwide.
- Choral singers exhibit higher levels of civic involvement, with choristers almost 3 times more likely to be officers or committee members of local community organizations such as the PTA.
- Seventy-eight percent of choral singers indicated they “at least sometimes” volunteer their time in their community, while only 50% of the general public say the same.
- Seventy-four percent of choral singers agree or strongly agree that singing in a chorus has helped them become better team leaders or team participants in other areas of their lives; nearly two-thirds agree or strongly agree that being in a chorus has helped them socialize better in other areas of their lives.
- Choral singers donate 2.5 times more money to philanthropic organizations than the general public.
- Ninety-six percent of choral singers surveyed who are eligible voters said they vote regularly in national and local elections; only 70% of the general public cites the same level of participation.

- Civic engagement also extends to patronage of other art forms, with choral singers at least 2 times more likely to attend theater, opera, and orchestra performances as well as visit museums and art galleries.

The 2009 study included a new component that explicitly examined the effects choral singing has on childhood development. The results show children who sing in choirs display many of the enhanced social skills found in adult singers, substantiating earlier conclusions that singing in childhood is likely to have an enormous influence on the choices individuals make later in life. Additionally, both parents and educators attribute a significant proportion of a child's academic success to singing in a choir.

#### Children who sing in choruses have academic success and valuable life skills.

Several of the study's major findings for young singers include:

- There are approximately 10.1 million American children singing in choruses today.
- The majority of parents surveyed believe multiple skills increased after their child joined a chorus. Seventy-one percent say their child has become more self-confident, 70% say their child's self-discipline has improved, and 69% state their child's memory skills have improved.
- More than 80% of educators surveyed—across multiple academic disciplines—agree with parent assessments that choir participation can enhance numerous aspects of a child's social development and academic success. Educators also observe that children who sing are better participants in group activities, have better emotional expression, and exhibit better emotional management.
- Ninety percent of educators believe singing in a choir can keep some students engaged in school who might otherwise be lost—this is particularly true of educators (94%) who describe the ethnicity of their schools as diverse.
- Children who participate in a chorus get significantly better grades than children who have never sung in a choir. Forty-five percent of parents whose children sing state their child receives “all or mostly A's” in mathematics (vs. 38% of non-choir parents) and 54% get “all or mostly A's” in English and other language arts classes (vs. 43%).

#### The decline in choral singing opportunities for children is of concern.

While the 2009 study determined there are numerous academic and social benefits resulting from a child's participation in a chorus, it also pointed to an alarming trend suggesting that these opportunities are not available, or are being reduced or eliminated from schools across the country. More than one in four educators responded that there is no choir program in their schools. Additionally, more than one in five parents said that there were no choral singing opportunities for their children in their communities.

A conclusion of the 2003 study was that choral singing is an accessible entry point for arts exposure, with fewer barriers—economic, cultural, and educational—than posed by other art forms. This is still true today, suggesting that the decrease in choral singing opportunities in schools and communities is a missed opportunity for bolstering student achievement and engagement in their schools.

“The data in this report suggests that it would be a mistake not to leverage the benefits that choruses bring to children, adults, and the communities they serve,” observes Todd Estabrook, Chairman of Chorus America. “Simply put, if you’re searching for a group of talented, engaged, and generous community members, you would do well to start with a chorus.”

A large percentage of the American population appears to be drawn to choral singing and the desire to participate in the communal expression, creation, and performance of beautiful music. Whatever motivates choral singers to sing, the data indicates that choral singing is a thriving and growing form of artistic expression in America, and can be acknowledged not just for providing great musical performances, but for advancing many of the positive qualities associated with success in life both for children and adults.

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Chorus America's mission is to build a dynamic and inclusive choral community so that more people are transformed by the beauty and power of choral singing. Chorus America strengthens choral organizations and provides their leaders with information, research, leadership development, professional training, and advocacy to help them deliver the best possible contributions to their communities and to the choral art. Chorus America provides invaluable news, resources, and expertise delivered in myriad accessible ways, and its programs bring professionals and volunteers together to learn and collaborate in a friendly, supportive environment that promotes networking, information exchange, and shared goals.

Chorus America speaks with a strong and unified voice to increase recognition of choral singing as an essential part of society. More than 1,600 choruses, individuals, arts organizations, and businesses are members of Chorus America.

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The full report and an executive summary are available online at [www.chorusamerica.org](http://www.chorusamerica.org).