

Manassas Chorale

Strategic Plan 2022-2024

The Manassas Chorale was founded in 1994. The original group of about 25 singers grew into an auditioned choir of over 100 voices, although the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced our membership. The Chorale is the official choral group in residence (one of six Arts Partners) at the Hylton Performing Arts Center located on the campus of George Mason University in Prince William County, Virginia.

The Chorale has performed not only at the Hylton Performing Arts Center but also at various locations in Old Town Manassas, including the Loy Harris Pavilion, the Manassas Museum, and retirement homes, churches, and civic groups. The group has performed at the National Cathedral and Constitution Hall in Washington DC, and annually at Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg. Members of the Chorale have performed at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York City, and have performed in Germany, France, Ireland, England, and Austria.

This document is the Strategic Plan for a two-year period from July 2022 to June 2024 as the Chorale transitions from the pandemic years and returns to full and normal operations. The focus of the plan is to create a path for recovering and re-growing after the difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and to continue to lay out the ways in which the Chorale can serve the community.

Mission Statement of the Manassas Chorale

The mission of the Manassas Chorale shall be:

- To provide an opportunity for singers to maintain and improve their musical skills and to enjoy singing;
- To present for public entertainment and personal enrichment programs of high quality vocal music;
- To promote greater appreciation and enjoyment of good music, both classical and modern;
- To act as musical ambassadors representing the Northern Virginia area;

- To serve as a community asset by bringing people together to help meet essential social, educational, and cultural needs.

Goals of the Strategic Plan

1. Increase Manassas Chorale membership to 95 singers by the end of the 2023-2024 season.
2. Increase Greater Manassas Children's Choir (GMCC) membership to 50 singers by the end of the 2023-2024 season.
3. Increase attendance at Manassas Chorale concerts at the Hylton Performing Arts Center by 100% from the 2021-2022 season to an average of 500 attendees per concert in the 2023-2024 season.
4. Increase music education opportunities for Chorale singers and for singers in the community.
5. Develop opportunities for additional fundraising and have a specific, detailed, well-organized annual fundraising plan.
6. Work to encourage more diversity in Chorale membership, especially among younger age groups.
7. Participate in a major performance trip (for example, singing in Europe or in a major American city like New York) to enhance the musical experience of Chorale members and to promote interest among prospective Chorale singers.
8. Provide transportation options for senior adults to our concerts who might otherwise be unable to attend.

Action Steps and Assigned Duties

1. Goal 1 - Increase Chorale membership to at least 95 singers by the end of the 2023-2024 season.
 - Contact all recent former members of the Chorale and personally invite them back for the 2022-2023 season. The Executive Director, the President, and the Artistic Director, along with other volunteers, will be responsible.

- Develop an outreach program to members of choirs in the area's churches to encourage them to join the Chorale.
 - Plan a one-day event for local church choir members (and others) to encourage them to try the Chorale. Perhaps bring in a local clinician to attract interest. Market this event to local church choirs. A mixed leadership team of Board members and volunteers will share responsibility.
2. Goal 2 - Increase Greater Manassas Children's Choir (GMCC) membership to 50 singers by the end of the 2023-2024 season.
- Create a list of elementary and middle school music teachers who are most likely to recommend their students. The Artistic Director and professional leaders of GMCC are ideally suited to meet personally with music teachers to do this. Chorale members who are also music teachers will be encouraged to help in this effort.
 - Recruit former (and possibly current) members of GMCC to assist in making contact with these teachers to communicate the potential benefits of being in GMCC.
 - Provide contact information and publicity to these teachers to encourage them to invite their students to explore the possibility of joining GMCC. GMCC leadership should make personal contacts with these teachers and possibly provide a demonstration lesson for their students, during class time or after school.
3. Goal 3 - Increase attendance at Chorale concerts at the Hylton Performing Arts Center by 100% from the 2021-2022 season to an average of 500 attendees per concert in the 2023-2024 season.
- Create a team of Chorale members and interested community members with marketing expertise to review, design, and implement a Marketing Plan.
 - Review and improve our approach to using social media to reach out to prospective audience members. The Executive Director should lead this effort with support from Chorale members.
 - Work with the Hylton Center to get access to contact information for current audience members, so that we can encourage current audience members to return to future concerts. The Executive Director should lead this effort with support from Chorale members.
 - Consider new forms of media advertising such as radio advertising or creative use of print media. Distribute press releases for each significant Chorale event.

- Develop a specific plan for placement of posters and flyers for maximum effectiveness.
 - Develop a formal plan to improve word-of-mouth invitations to our concerts.
4. Goal 4 - Increase music education opportunities for Chorale singers and for singers in the community.
- Develop a team of Chorale members led by the Artistic Director and Accompanist to consider, design, and implement ways to increase Chorale music education opportunities.
 - Continue the Voices United Choir. Develop and implement a plan to more effectively invite church choir singers to participate in the Voices United Workshop and Concert. Develop and implement a plan to promote Voices United Concert ticket sales among various local churches.
 - Consider a short term “School of Music” to start each concert season, promoting this within the Chorale membership and also to the community to help improve singing and to prompt more interest in the Chorale.
5. Goal 5 - Develop opportunities for additional fundraising and have a specific, detailed, well-organized annual fundraising plan.
- Form a fundraising team of Chorale and Board members to design and implement this effort. This team would be led by the Chorale President.
 - Improve our processes for data collection about prospective patrons.
 - Create a list of current and potential donors. Devise and implement a plan to reach out to these people.
 - Develop and implement a plan to reach out to corporate donors.
 - Develop and implement a plan to increase the number of sponsorship ads in the Chorale concert programs.
6. Goal 6 - Work to encourage more diversity in Chorale membership, especially among younger age groups.
- Create a list of which high schools and high school music teachers we are most likely to be successful approaching. Identify and begin to build relationships with local high school choir leaders with the goal of reaching upper-level high school students as potential Chorale members. The Artistic Director, Accompanist, and President will be instrumental in leading this effort.

- Continue building relationships with community college choruses to attract students to sing with the Chorale. Offer college credit to students who join and participate with the Chorale each semester.
 - Establish a focus group of younger singers to establish ways in which we might make the Chorale more attractive to younger students. Volunteers from the Chorale can form a team to do this.
 - Continue to invite top-level high school performing groups to join the Manassas Chorale concerts. This opportunity builds professional relationship, gives students performance experience in a high-level venue with a larger audience, and introduces students to singing with the Chorale and performing with an orchestra.
 - Pitch Chorale membership to the high school students. Emphasize the advantages of singing with the Chorale, including performing in music tours in the U.S. and the world, as well as continuing to develop musical skills.
 - Develop and fund a scholarship program to make it easier for students to join the Chorale.
 - Develop and fund a college scholarship program (only for students who are active members of the Chorale) to encourage more students to join the Chorale.
7. Goal 7 - Participate in a major performance trip (for example, singing in Europe or in a major American city like New York) to enhance the musical experience of Chorale members and to promote interest among prospective Chorale singers.
- Establish a Trip Committee of Chorale members to explore and recommend possible trips in the 2023-2024 timeframe. The Chorale's Executive Director will chair this committee.
 - Once a trip has been selected, market it to Chorale membership and also make significant contacts with prospective members, including students.
 - To encourage students, establish a scholarship fund to help them defray the costs of such a trip.
8. Goal 8 - Provide transportation options for senior adults to our concerts who might otherwise be unable to attend.
- Identify senior adult communities and centers for whom transportation of their residents might make it possible for them to attend our concerts.
 - Establish a working relationship with the events coordinators at these locations to develop a transportation plan for their residents.

- Develop and implement this plan.
- A Transportation Committee of Chorale members will explore these actions.

Benchmarks

This section lays out intermediate goals to ensure we are making progress towards achieving the final goals of the strategic plan.

1. Increase Chorale membership to 75 by the end of the 2022-2023 season.
2. Increase GMCC membership to 38 by the end of the 2022-2023 season.
3. Using the 2021-2022 season as a baseline, in the 2022-2023 season increase attendance at each Chorale concert by 50 above the corresponding 2021-2022 concert (i.e., we will compare the October 2022 concert to the October 2021 concert, etc.).
4. Establish and recruit members for the committees and teams identified in the Strategic Plan. These committees and teams should be in place by September 2023. They include a:
 - GMCC Recruiting Team
 - Marketing Team
 - Music Education Development Committee
 - Fundraising Committee
 - Youth Focus Group Committee
 - Major Trip Committee
 - Senior Adult Transportation Team
5. Establish and begin funding a scholarship fund with the goal of raising \$2,000 by December 2023.

Resources Needed

Personnel Resources

1. A committee of current music teachers and former GMCC members to recruit students for the Greater Manassas Children's Choir (GMCC).
2. A marketing team of 3-5 people who are knowledgeable in marketing techniques and use of media.
3. A music education leadership team led by the Artistic Director and Accompanist and possibly other music teachers.
4. A fundraising team of 4-5 people to design and implement fundraising programs. This team might also be responsible for managing the scholarship fund.
5. A focus group team of younger Chorale members to meet with high school and college students to discuss how to make the Chorale more attractive to younger members.
6. A trip committee, led by the Executive Director and consisting of 4-5 people to choose and publicize a major Chorale trip.
7. A senior adult transportation committee to reach out to senior adult communities and implement a transportation plan.

Financial Resources

1. Funding to implement a more extensive marketing strategy.
2. Funding to support the music education plans.
3. Scholarship funding for outreach to high school and college students who may need financial support to join the Chorale.
4. Funding for the senior adult transportation plan.