Building a Dementia-Friendly Chorus

Music and Dementia Research

- For many people, areas of the brain involved with music activity and memories of music, lyrics, and associated internal images may be preserved even in the later stages of the disease.
- In 2010, a randomized controlled trial at the University of Helsinki evaluated benefits of music leisure activities for people in early dementia and their caregivers. Regular singing or music listening can support cognitive functioning, enhance episodic memory and alleviate depression in people with dementia. Särkämö, et al. (2010), International Journal of Clinical Neurology. Vanstone & Cuddy (2009), Annals of the New York Academy of Science. 13
Design of a Chorus for those with Alzheimer's/Dementia

- Community choir designed for those with dementia and care partners who are living in their homes or chosen community
- No singing experience required
- Weekly rehearsals – morning, accessible and acoustic positive space
- Public performance – provides goal, purpose and a forum
- Specially trained music director
- Wide music selection – familiar & challenging, adapted as needed, i.e. personalized music books & practice CDs
- Social time for singers and care partners – must include food
- Dementia-friendly trained volunteers to assist

PROGRAM DIRECTOR – SINGING HILLS CHORUS

Sandi Lubrant

Sandi is the team lead of the Mankato & North Mankato ACT on Alzheimer's Action Team. She is a graduate of Mankato State University. She serves on three Alzheimer's Association MN-ND Chapter committees and on the Board of Directors with the Minnesota Elder Justice Center.

Overview: Giving Voice Toolkit
Singing Hills Chorus Experience

- How did the Giving Voice Toolkit serve as a guide?
- Did you depart from the Toolkit? Why?
- What is a key take-away from the Toolkit?

Assess Your Community

- Get the right people on board
- Measure community need/interest
- Identify the right host organization
- Evaluate available resources
- Plan the chorus program

Community Response to Singing Hills

- How did the community respond to the program?
- Who is driving the bus?
- What were the important pieces in marketing Singing Hills?
- How did you create awareness? What would you do differently?
Consider program/staffing needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Paid or Volunteer</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music Director</td>
<td>Paid preferred - 4-6 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accompanist</td>
<td>Paid preferred - 4-6 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Administrator</td>
<td>Paid or volunteer - 10 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>Paid or volunteer - 5 hours per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer Coordinator</td>
<td>Volunteer - 4-6 hours per week</td>
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</tbody>
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* Volunteer roles:
  * Singer/Helper: Dementia-Friendly
  * Operations - Marketing, Production
  * Hospitality - Weekly food and connection

* Singing Hills Example:

Finances & Fundraising

- Expect $25-35,000 of costs in year 1
- Seek a balance of donations, earned revenue, and in-kind support
- Sources of funding: Community foundations

Singing Hills Experience:
- Cost per singer...
- Snacks/Scarves

Key Lessons

- Preview a GVC Rehearsal
- Music
- Push and Pause throughout
- Dementia-Friendly training for volunteers
- Community Conversations
In here we are all singers!

• There is no wrong in this room!
• Make it easy for people to contribute to the chorus
• Take lots of pictures

givingvoicechorus.org/start-chorus/

“Love Never Forgets”

GVI Inspired Choruses

- Mankato, MN
- Granite Falls, MN
- Winona, MN
- Medina, OH
- Eau Claire, WI
- Canberra, Australia
- La Crosse, WI
- Victoria, British Columbia

- Vancouver, British Columbia
- West Des Moines, IA
- Chicago, IL
- Poughkeepsie, NY
- Arlington, TX
- Houston, TX
- Mechanicsburg, VA
- Manassas, VA

Singing Hills Chorus

Questions & Answers

“The only thing better than singing is more singing.”

- ELLA FITZGERALD