

Upbeat

The Newsletter of the Trenton Children's Chorus

Trenton
Children's
Chorus

Making Music
Making Friends
Making a Difference

Mission Statement

To give young people the chance to sing a wide range of choral literature, especially children who might not otherwise have an opportunity to do so; and to provide a way for children and youth from different backgrounds to get to know one another through artistic endeavor.

Maria L. Newman,
Program Manager
Sue Ellen Page,
Founding Director

Staff

Desiree Melegrito,
Preparatory Choir Director
Constance W. Hurtt,
Training Choir Director
Gloria Bethea, Choir Manager
Jo-Ann Rubay Sciarrotta and
Vanyah Harrigan, Accompanists
Emily Sensenbach-Gopal,
Music Enrichment
Anne Home, Volunteer Coordinator

Advisory Board

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Judith Guder, Secretary
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Toni Jackson Higgs
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Linda Wyatt Simpson
Clarice Taylor

In Memoriam

Harold F. Clark, Jr.
Ruth Wyatt

Honorary Member

Rev. Darrell L. Armstrong

TCC Sings Rush Holt into Office and Gets "Capitol" Treatment



Photo by Maria Newman

Proud to be singing for their Congressman--Happy choristers with Rep. Rush Holt

Members of the Trenton Children's Chorus played a role in our nation's history this January as participants in the swearing in of U.S. Representative Rush Holt for his sixth term of office. Fifth grader Melissa Simmons sang as a solo the first verse of Rep. Holt's favorite patriotic song, *America the Beautiful*. The Chorus then joined in for the remaining verses. Later in the ceremony the Chorus performed the Trenton version of New Jersey's unofficial state song, *I'm From New Jersey*. [See box on page 2.]

Choir Manager Gloria Bethea was effusive about her Congressman. "What really stood out was how Congressman Holt rolled out the red carpet for us," she said. "He took time to connect with the children individually, making sure to speak to them. He was called away several times on official business but repeatedly returned to the children, had lunch with them, accompanied them on their tour of the Capitol and explained the exhibits."

Rep. Holt wore something special for the event that was a real kid-pleaser—a tie covered with replicas of the signatures on the Declaration of Independence.

The oath of office was symbolically administered by Representative John Lewis of Georgia. (Later, Rep. Holt was officially sworn in on the floor of the House of Representatives). A national leader in the struggle for civil rights, Rep. Lewis was a Freedom Rider and the youngest speaker at the March on Washington in 1963. Rep. Holt later told the children, "Go back and ask your teacher about John Lewis, and if they don't know who he is, school them."

For young Maaziah Bethea, meeting Rep. Lewis was the best part of the trip. "When I got home I looked up an old speech that John Lewis gave at the March on Washington with Martin Luther King," he said. "I was impressed at how he spoke out. He said

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TCC Sings Rush Holt into Office and Gets “Capitol” Treatment

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Photo by Gloria Bethea

Shawntaya Hightower examines Rep. Holt's Declaration of Independence tie.

things other people wouldn't. At the time of the march he was only 23.”

It was Sidney Simmons' first time in the nation's capital. “I never saw it before. I loved all the history. The thing I liked best was the dome because it was really colorful.” Sidney was also impressed with Rep. Lewis. “He helped Martin Luther King and gave him the inspiration not to use violence,” she said.

Ziare Bellamy also liked the dome. “There were lots of historical pictures like George Washington, Christopher Columbus and the signing of the Declaration of Independence,” he said. “We got to go into the House of Representatives. That was really good.”

At the end of the day Rep. Holt returned one last time to see the children off as they boarded the bus, tired but happy.

I'm From New Jersey, Trenton version
Words and music by Red Mascara

*I'm from New Jersey and I'm proud about it,
Trenton is my home town;
I come from Trenton and I want to shout it,
To every one around.
All of the other towns throughout the nation,
May mean a lot to some;
But I wouldn't want another,
Trenton is like no other,
I'm glad that's where I'm from.*

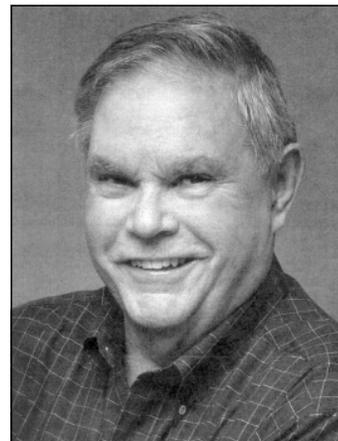
TCC Receives Excellence Award

The New Jersey Center for Non-Profits selected the Trenton Children's Chorus as one of two recipients of the 2008 New Jersey Nonprofit Excellence Award. Chosen in the smaller non-profit division for organizations with budgets of less than \$500,000, the Chorus was recognized at the Center for Non-profits' 25th anniversary reception and conference in December and received a cash prize of \$7,500.

“We are absolutely thrilled to have been selected for this award,” said Board President Tanice Fitzpatrick. “As it is usually the artistic and charitable aspects of our work that get attention, we are particularly gratified to be recognized for our management practices.”

The award was launched and designed to highlight and reward nonprofits that demonstrate exemplary achievements in impact of programming; sound, ethical management and governance; and innovation and resourcefulness. In selecting the Trenton Children's Chorus, the judges called attention to its leveraging of partners and resources beyond Mercer County; strong board involvement in the organization; commitment to evaluation and results; and utilization of its strategic plan to aid the expansion of the organization. The award was presented in partnership with Becton, Dickinson and Company and the *Star-Ledger*.

In Memoriam ~ Harold F. Clark, Jr.



Beloved Advisory Board member Harold F. Clark, Jr. died in February following a brief illness. Harry possessed formidable skills that were invaluable to the Chorus during a time of transition and growth. He was in constant demand for his wise council and ability to get to the heart of the matter. Harry inspired others to be the best they could be. He was warm and funny. Although few children knew Harry, he knew them and loved them and worked tirelessly on their behalf. He will be greatly missed. The family requests that memorial donations be made to The Trenton Children's Chorus.

TCC Gears Up for Summer Camp

Each summer, with the help of friends like you, deserving Chorus members attend sleepover programs at Camp Albemarle at the American Boychoir School, Middle School and High School Vocal Camps at Westminster Choir College, and traditional in-the-woods camp at Camp Johnsonburg.

Last summer TCC launched its very own week-long day camp in Trenton, the Summer Choral Academy, and plans are well underway for this summer's program. TCC also supports



Photo by Juanell Boyd

Devon Key, winner of the 2008 Princeton Friends of Opera Scholarship to attend Vocal Institute at Westminster Choir College, overjoyed to learn she had been chosen. Devon will attend Nyack College this fall as a music education major.

younger members to attend day camp at Stuart Country Day School for a month of academic enrichment and fun.

Camp is transformative. Camp means an opportunity to acquire leadership skills, expand musical knowledge, make new friends and to just be a kid and have fun. At

summer's end children return to the Chorus more competent, more confident and full of gratitude for the experience you have given them.

For many years the American Boychoir School has given a full scholarship to Camp Albemarle. Likewise, each year Westminster Choir College provides camp opportunities at a reduced cost, as does Camp Johnsonburg. Since 2000, the Hopewell Valley Chorus has hosted Spring into Song, a community concert that has raised 15 full scholarships to Camp Albemarle.

Donors like you do the rest. You can make a significant difference in the life of a child. This year-- especially this year-- please give generously and send a child to camp. Remember to write "campership" in the memo section of your check.



Photo by Thomas O'Neill

TCC's youngest members, the Preparatory Choir, perform at Spring into Song, a community concert sponsored by the Hopewell Valley Chorus.

TCC thanks *Spring into Song* participants:

Hopewell Valley Chorus

Mountain View

Kingston Women's Chorus

Jersey Transit

Community Fellowship Choir

Chivalry

Parents and friends of the Trenton Children's Chorus

and the entire Spring Into Song Community

for their generous support and sponsorship of three children to attend Camp Albemarle at the American Boychoir School.

Corporations Honor Black History Month with TCC Performances

In February the Chorus was delighted to be able to perform for employees of the Colgate-Palmolive Company in celebration of Black History Month. In return, employees spoke with choristers about their chosen career paths and fielded questions as they enjoyed lunch together. Since 2003 Colgate-Palmolive has provided generous ongoing support for TCC with an annual Inner City Education Fund Grant.

The Chorus also performed for employees at the Lawrenceville campus of Bristol-Myers Squibb. Minority employees with advanced degrees encouraged the children to think seriously about their own career goals and advised them to prepare themselves with diligence. Many younger choristers benefit from Summer Stars, an academic enrichment day camp held at Stuart Country Day School, and the Environmental Day Camp at the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Reserve-- both generously funded by Bristol-Myers Squibb.

Help Us Change Even More Lives

You probably already know...

- That through hard work and performance TCC changes a child's sense of what is possible

But did you know...

- That TCC brings together young people from diverse racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds?
- That it's not uncommon for children to stay in the program for four, seven, even ten years?
- That TCC plugs its members into opportunities they might not seek on their own or even know about, like camps, academic enrichment, leadership training and private secondary schools?
- That TCC helps students every step of the way with college admissions and provides financial assistance to qualified members?
- That since 1989 TCC has relied heavily on volunteer and part-time leadership?
- That despite all the good work that TCC has created, and all the lives that TCC has touched, **there are so many more children we could be reaching?**

And that's why...

We need your help. Please give generously by using the return envelope provided with this newsletter.



Trinity Williams, Shawntaya Hightower and Tennisha Burrell relax after performing.

The Trenton Children's Chorus is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization under the auspices of Princeton Outreach Projects, Inc.

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TRENTON CHILDREN'S CHORUS

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