

W. T. Woodson High School
Choral Boosters'
Handbook



2014 - 2015

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Congratulations!

Your son or daughter is a member of the W.T. Woodson High School Choral Program. The WTW Choral Program represents an exceptional award-winning combination of educational, artistic, and competitive choral activities, both curricular and extra-curricular, for the WTW students.

CURRICULAR CHORUS

Curricular choral groups, offered during the regularly scheduled school day, consist of:

- ☒ **Women's Concert Choir (WCC) (Women's Chorus & Intermediate Women's Chorus)**
- ☒ **Chorale (CH) - the women of the chorale meet separately from the men**
- ☒ **Men's Choir (MC) - also sing with the women of the chorale**
- ☒ **Select Men's Ensemble (SME) - also sing with the women of the chorale**
- ☒ **Select Women's Ensemble (SWE)**

The curricular choirs consistently receive Superior ratings at the District Choral Assessment. The Select Women's Ensemble has performed at the White House, the Virginia Music Educators Association Conference and several times performed with the Select Vocal Ensemble at various Fairfax County functions. The SWE has also performed for the American Choral Director's Association convention several times. The curricular choirs have participated in Music Festivals in Chicago, IL; Nashville, TN; Atlanta, GA; Orlando, FL; Gatlinburg, TN; Boston, MA; New York, NY; Toronto, CA and Williamsburg, VA. The ensembles continue to win many awards as well as outstanding choral program and grand championships.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR CHORUS AND OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Extra-curricular choral groups and activities take place outside the school day. Prerequisites include participation in a curricular chorus and an audition for the director. These choruses consist of:

- ☒ **Select Vocal Ensemble (SVE)**
- ☒ **Dessert on Broadway (DOB)**
- ☒ **District Chorus**

The Select Vocal Ensemble has travelled with the SWE to participate in musical exchange programs as well as programs with other schools. This ensemble also sings at many community, county, and Fairfax government events. In 1999 the SWE and SVE traveled to Austria to represent the Commonwealth of Virginia in the Strauss Centennial. The Ensembles also sang in Lucerne, Switzerland, and completed their tour by performing a concert at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Other tours have taken place in 2006, 2009, and 2012.

The next European tour is in July 2015.

Dessert on Broadway is a musical production put on by the students, featuring Broadway music in a nightclub setting. Dessert on Broadway continues to draw rave reviews from the community and consistently plays to standing room only audiences for over 25 years.

District Chorus is an event that takes place every February for 2 1/2 days. Students in grades 9 - 12 from our district, which includes 10 high schools, are eligible to audition the previous November.

Other extra-curricular activities include All-State Chorus open to juniors and seniors only and Honors Chorus for seniors only. The Virginia Music Educators Association in conjunction with the Virginia Choral Directors Association sponsors the district, all-state and honors events.

THE ROLE OF THE W.T. WOODSON CHORAL BOOSTERS

The W.T. Woodson Choral Boosters is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing the volunteer, financial, and moral support required to achieve a choral program of this caliber and excellence. The Choral Boosters is a group of creative, dedicated parents, who:

- ☒ Chair and staff various boards and committees of the Choral Booster organization
- ☒ Organize and participate in fund-raising activities for trips, uniforms, buses, competition fees and other operating expenses. The largest fund-raising activity is the annual Tag Day in October.
- ☒ Chaperone concerts and trips
- ☒ Provide labor, as needed, for musical events
- ☒ Engage in community outreach
- ☒ Represent the choral program's interests to other groups, including school administrators and civic programs
- ☒ Applaud and cheer for our students and their accomplishments

MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

All parents of both curricular and extra-curricular choral students are automatically members of the W.T. Woodson Choral Booster family. There are no dues collected to be a member of the choral booster organization. Fund raising and volunteering are essential to the success of the choral program. **WE NEED THE SUPPORT OF EVERY FAMILY!**

CHORAL BOOSTERS BOARD

The W.T. Woodson Choral Booster Board consists of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Trip Treasurer, At-Large Members, and Recording and Communication Secretaries. A complete list of the current board members and their contact information is included in your Welcome Package.

BOOSTER MEETINGS

General membership meetings are usually held the first or second Monday of each month in the chorus room. Your participation in these meetings is greatly appreciated. It is a great way to receive important information and stay updated on your student's choral program. Meetings usually begin at 7:15pm and last for approximately 1 hour or less. The advertised time commitment for the meetings is strictly followed. Arrive a few minutes early to socialize and purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win great prizes. If it is necessary to change a meeting date, every attempt is made to notify the membership through email, CHARMS, and social media. Students earn one merit point for each Booster meeting attended by his/her parent.

BUDGET - PROGRAM COSTS

The W.T. Woodson Choral Boosters play a vital role in funding major elements of the Woodson High School Chorus Program. Because Fairfax County does not fully fund the choral program, the Chorus and the Choral Boosters organization annually raise money to continue the outstanding program for which W. T. Woodson High School is known. Funds raised through Tag Day have been used to purchase such items as a new portable stage for the annual Dessert on Broadway production, posture chairs for the chorus room, a large portable dry erase board for teaching music skills, portable hanging wardrobes to transport chorus uniforms, and a copier for the entire music department. Some of the events sponsored include Dessert on Broadway and the Choral Awards Banquet. Additional funds are needed on a year-to-year basis to:

- ☒ Purchase, maintain, and replace uniforms and performance attire
- ☒ Assist with travel and associated fees for special competitions
- ☒ Provide assistance for students with financial needs
- ☒ Provide scholarships for students chosen for the Virginia Music Educators Association Honors Choirs
- ☒ Fund guest accompanist and instrumentalists for choral performances
- ☒ Provide student awards

The Choral students typically compete in one spring program and, at times, participate in other choral programs at remote sites requiring an overnight stay. An account is set up by the Trip Treasurer of the W.T. Woodson Choral Boosters for each of the choral students. Fund-raisers are held throughout the fall and winter months to help defray some or all of the expenses of the trip. Scrip purchases can also be applied towards your student's account. Trip Fund statements are available on the CHARMS website. You will be provided with a trip payment schedule at the beginning of the school year. If you would like to discuss special financial arrangements, please contact the Trip Treasurer of the Choral Boosters early in the school year.

Many parents wonder why the Choral Program seems to be so financially demanding. Fairfax County provides very little of the necessary funds needed to support the quality choral program in our school. The only discretionary funding provided is for music and supplies and for some school buses.

The Woodson Choral Department enrolled 35 students in 1988. Last year, the chorus now stands at 275 students. Obviously, as the enrollment grows, so do the needs and the budget. However, the Fairfax County school budget does not grow and the allocations for the arts department dwindle.

Consequently, the W.T. Woodson Choral Boosters play a very important role in funding major elements of the choral program. The Choral Boosters rely on the active participation of ALL choral parents and students from all choruses to keep the burden of fund raising to a minimum.

DIRECTOR'S PHILOSOPHY OF CHORAL EXPERIENCES

Sets of achievable goals are necessary for a successful choral program. Some specific goals for the Woodson Choral Program are outlined below. The accomplishment of these goals requires the hard work and dedication of everyone involved in the program. Trips and other special musical experiences are integral to attaining these goals.

GOALS:

- ☒ An annual fall tour for the select ensembles (if the schedule permits)
- ☒ An annual spring trip to a national level festival for the entire choral department
- ☒ Performance at the annual VMEA District Choral Assessment (this is our SOL)
- ☒ Earning superior/excellent ratings at all festivals attended
- ☒ Performance at the Virginia Music Educators Convention (once every 3 - 4 years)
- ☒ Performance at the regional or national American Choral Directors Association (once every 4 - 6 years)
- ☒ European Tour every 3 years (if the schedule permits)
- ☒ Commissioning a musical composition
- ☒ Clinics and guest performances by noted soloists, conductors and clinicians
- ☒ Hosting guest choirs and sharing a performance at Woodson
- ☒ Expanding the choral library
- ☒ Performances throughout the community to include retirement and nursing homes
- ☒ Reaching out to the Woodson residential and business community to involve them in the choral program
- ☒ Continued education and outreach to the Woodson student body
- ☒ Continued involvement of the Woodson administration, faculty and staff

Successful performance at major adjudicated festivals and other musical events improves the opportunities of the Woodson choirs being invited to the prestigious clinics and conventions listed above. Therefore, any trip taken by the individual choirs, or the entire department, needs to be selected with the following in mind.

Adjudicated festivals must have qualified judges for the choirs participating. In addition, the choral department will only participate if there is sufficient voicing of each selection to allow the choirs to be at their best. Membership in the choral program at Woodson carries with it an expectation that students participate in every musical event. Non-adjudicated events, such as clinics, workshops, and concerts are also pursued because of the opportunities to improve the quality of the individual student and the choir. Cultural or entertainment benefits of any trip are advantageous, but secondary to the musical purpose of the trip. Although the spring trip is not mandatory, the benefits to the student and the department are invaluable.

During the trips, students learn effective teamwork behaviors. They must co-exist for 3-4 days, doing what is best for the department and not the individual. The students learn how to compromise. They also learn that being flexible and accepting of small changes is not always cause for angst! They have the opportunity to see ensembles from different parts of the country. This gives them a great chance to see different ideas regarding music, behavior and attire. They learn that no matter what their opinion may be, it is always best to be positive and respectful.

I believe they learn lessons through these experiences that they can carry with them throughout their school career and life.

HILIGHTS OF THE CHORAL DEPARTMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

We consistently have strong representation at the District Chorus, All-State Chorus, and Honors Choir. Many students distinguish themselves as soloists within the choral department and outside the department. The Woodson Choral Department has garnered an outstanding reputation throughout the state and the nation. The main focus of the department is for each student to achieve a strong education in music, including musical skills, sight reading, experiencing a variety of choral literature and attaining self confidence through performance. Regardless of what ensemble a student participates in, he or she is each considered an important and valued member of the W.T. Woodson High School Choral Department.

MERIT POINT SYSTEM

The merit and music point system is a way for students in the choral program to achieve awards at the end of the year. Different activities, which are not required, can help students to earn points toward the different award levels. The awards consist of a first year certificate, the second year letter, the third year choir pin, and the fourth year medal. This system has nothing to do with a student's grade. **Participation is completely voluntary and has no impact on the student's grade.** The students will receive a detailed sheet of the system in September.

CHORAL BOOSTER FUNDRAISING

GENERAL FUND RAISING

The Choral Boosters provide the financial support required for the continuation of the outstanding choral program your student will experience while at W. T. Woodson. Fairfax County provides little financial support which does not go far when divided between the various choral groups and the 275 members. Consequently, the following fundraisers support this effort:

Tag Day

- One-day event that is our major fundraiser and is required for all choral students
- A chairperson, plus large majority of parents for drivers, route monitors, fund accounting, food services and other jobs
- One complete Saturday in October (date to be determined by yearly calendar)

Car Washes

- Five hours on several Saturdays during the school year
- A chairperson, plus 10-12 volunteers per day

Dessert Fundraiser

- Each Fall, students have the option to sell desserts and other frozen goods to family and friends.
- Details of the Dessert Fundraiser will be detailed closer to the event.
- The profits from this fund-raiser go into the general fund to benefit the entire chorus.

Printer Cartridge Recycling

- The collection of large/small laser and inkjet printer cartridges for a return to the department of \$1/cartridge. Employer, place of worship, activity corporate sponsors can also participate.
- Students earn 1 merit point for every 10 cartridges recycled.

SPRING TRIP FUND RAISING

The cost of the Spring Trip can be greatly reduced by participating in any or all of the fundraisers. If you prefer to make the scheduled payments totally out-of-pocket that is your options. However, we offer a variety of fundraisers, listed on the following pages, to assist you in supplementing the cost. Each fundraiser is reported directly to the Trip Treasurer who posts it to the individual student accounts. The Trip Treasurer is responsible for keeping an individual record of fundraising earnings from each of your students. Balances can be found in CHARMS.

All first trip installment payments are required by each family regardless of your student's account balance. When the final trip payment is due, if you have "over-fund-raised", you will be written a refund check, have the balance applied to the following year spring trip or balance donated to the general Chorus fund according to your request as specified on the Spring Trip form.

Scrip Purchases

- Each family receives a percentage rebate for every dollar of scrip used to purchase products from various businesses.
- Percentages vary from (2% - 16%+)

Each year different fundraisers occur depending on interest and staffing. If you have an interest in coordinating, contact a Booster Board member.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Many opportunities exist for you to support the W.T. Woodson Choral Program and make it the best it can be for your son or daughter. All of these activities require volunteers at some point in time throughout the year. Co-chairs are encouraged in all cases, even though the number of volunteers required may be one or two. If you are interested in a particular activity, please contact a board member or the committee chair for that activity. The following is a brief description of each activity.

Car Wash

- Assist student leaders with organizing car washes and coordinate adult supervision

Chaperones, Door Monitors, Riser Setup/Takedown

- Chaperone choirs before and during concerts
- Open and close auditorium doors so audience can enter/exit only between songs. Pass out programs.
- Set up risers on auditorium stage before concerts. After concerts fold risers and store offstage.

Programs

- Design and produce concert and year-end programs in collaboration with the Choral Director
- Coordinate with printer to get programs printed and delivered to school

Dessert on Broadway

- Chairperson to coordinate with the Dessert on Broadway committee chairs in October and November and communicate needs to all Boosters for performances the end of January.
- Volunteers needed in all Dessert on Broadway committees. Examples include, sewing, chaperoning, assisting in constructing set, setting tables, ordering supplies, baking, serving, door monitors, etc.

Hospitality

- Obtain food and beverages for various events throughout the year.

Uniforms

- Ensure all students are properly attired
- Fit, order and distribute uniforms to all students
- Maintain inventory in the storage room