THE BENEFIT TO CHILDREN OF STUDYING MUSIC
AND THE USE OF A SUMMER VOCAL CAMP
TO INTRODUCE CHILDREN TO MUSIC EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Chorus America, a non-profit organization that boasts over 1,600 members who are involved in the music industry, provides news, resources, and expertise to bring the music community together. In 2009, they conducted a survey of the current trends in choral singing. According to this survey, there are over 270,000 choirs in the United States, including community, school, and church choirs (Chorus America, “How Children”). An estimated 32.5 million adults sing in choruses and when children are added to this number, it becomes 42.6 million Americans singing in choirs in 2009 (Ibid). This averages to more than one in five households with at least one singing member. Being in a choir is a long standing tradition. As Colin Durrant points out in his book Choral Directing: Philosophies and Practices: “Collective singing—choral singing if you like—has been a human phenomenon since ancient civilizations” (Durrant, 51). For example: “choral singing was considered important in ancient Greece as part of its civilian, cultural, and educational life” (Ibid).

Statement of Problem

The same survey mentioned above identifies an “alarming trend suggesting that these opportunities are not available, are being reduced or eliminated from schools across the country” (Chorus America “Impact Study”). 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 (Ibid). Coincidentally, this is the “same proportion who said they would be ‘extremely’ or ‘very’ interested if a new choir for children started in their area” (Ibid).

While it can be difficult for people to locate a local choir to enroll themselves or their children in, it can also be difficult for existing choirs to recruit new singers in the community. Because of this, some choirs may decide to add a summer vocal camp to the normal yearly schedule in the hopes of attracting new singers.

**Importance of Project**

The value of music education is a long known fact. Anne E. Pierce explores this subject in her book *Teaching Music in the Elementary School* when writing about the Music Supervisors National Conference. The belief that all American children should have the benefit of a music education was voiced in 1919 by then-president of the Music Supervisors National Conference Osbourne McConathy when he said: “Every child should be educated in music according to his natural capacities, at public expense, and his studies should function in the life of the community” (Pierce, 2). The Conference later adopted this statement into the slogan: “Music for every child, every child for music” (Ibid).

In 1950, the Music Supervisors National Conference issued “The Child’s Bill of Rights in Music,” a document that stressed the importance of children being involved with music. Some highlights of this include:

- to help develop in boys and girls a desire for an understanding of music
• to teach them to sing, play, listen, create and read music according to the individual interests and abilities
• to discover and train pupils of special talent
• to furnish opportunities for individual and group development of all boys and girls so that music may prove a pleasurable and worthy occupation of leisure time
• to further an understanding of the contribution of music to the civilizations of the world (Ibid)

Although this Bill of Rights was issued over sixty years ago, its core values still hold true today. It asserts that every child should have the opportunity to experience music and be able to benefit from such exposure. Summer vocal camps put on by choral organizations are a way for children who are not currently in a choir (as well as those who are) to experience music. They are able to learn musical skills, grow in appreciation of music, and learn a new talent in a fun and creative way. Currently, little research is available on the benefits of summer vocal camps as distinct from the normal choral curriculum, and the connection between attending these camps and the benefits of learning music in general.

Possible Applications of Research

This research aims to make suggestions regarding hosting a summer vocal camp to choirs to help maximize impact in the community, enrollment in their program, and the benefits to current members. As Don L. Collins discusses in his book Teaching Choral Music, there are many benefits to participating in music. These include the following:
[It] enables all students to discover their level of musical talent, enables all students to develop their musical talent and musicianship to the highest possible level, provides all students with the opportunity to develop resources for a rewarding personal life and for positive social interaction, provides a means to the development of self-confidence, [and] provides a focus for disciplined effort. (Collins, 59)

More benefits, plentiful and multi-faceted, will be outlined later in this paper. It is the goal of every music organization to try to expose as many people as possible to music and its benefits and this project will attempt to show some of the hows and whys associated with this.

**Project Outline**

In June 2010, I participated in an internship with the Summit Choral Society of Akron, Ohio which involved helping to prepare for their annual Summer Vocal Camp for children and assisting with the actual camp which ran from June 14-18. Though participants being together for a relatively short time period makes it difficult to create a lasting impression on the child, children with a love of singing benefit from the camp because they get to interact with others children with the same passion; they mature musically; and they receive an introduction to the Summit Choral Society through the camp that may result in a lasting positive relationship. This thesis will examine the benefits to children to of being involved with a choir by exploring studies done to find a correlation between music education and improvements in school and home life, to look at how vocal camps can be beneficial to children, and to present a comparative look between several other choral organizations’ summer vocal camps.
The following chapters of this project will be committed to the benefits of a music education, the implementation of a summer vocal camp, Summit Choral Society’s Summer Vocal Camp, and comparisons to several other summer vocal camps across the nation. The findings of this research will serve as a persuasive guide for choral organizations who are looking for a way to attract new members and create a fun and educational environment in which to give attendees of a summer vocal camp a valuable musical experience.
CHAPTER II
THE VALUE TO CHILDREN OF LEARNING MUSIC

The value of music is different to different people. For some people, music is simply entertainment. For others, it is about performing, self-expression, or a way to worship. It has been used as a means of ritual, of communication, and of belonging. In his book Teaching Children to Sing, Kenneth H. Phillips states:

A student who sings learns about life. The transmission of cultural heritages, traditions, and beliefs are all part of the singing experience. In addition, the study of singing helps to reveal relationships to other and to our environment. To study singing it to study the world. Every student has a right to develop this skill; it is basic for an educated people who desire that each succeeding generation be led to develop a high degree of musical understanding. (Phillips, 106)

Music education is immensely important and plays a role in the emotional and educational development of children. Harriet Nordholm in Singing in the Elementary Schools talks about the significance of teaching music to children when she says: “It is well to remember that each child is potentially musical” and that “believing that, it becomes the dedicated responsibility of the teacher to help the child find his [or her] music niche so that music may become an important facet of his [or her] life” (Nordholm, ix). The children must be the most important aspect of the music education. “Singing for
the sake of music or performance alone has little lasting value,” says Linda Swears in her book *Teaching the Elementary School Chorus* (Swears, 4).

Robyn Lana and Kelly Ann Westgate discuss in their 2008 article “Making Music with our Youngest Singers” some of the benefits of teaching music to young, new singers as opposed to experienced vocalists. “Children in early elementary schools have so much to offer as choral singers,” such as “a high level of enthusiasm and developing treble voices” (Lana and Westgate, 77). Untrained singers are also not entering the choir with any preconceived, hard-set notions that may be difficult to unlearn. There are many ways that children can benefit from belonging to a choir, but it must be a goal of the choral organizations for them to benefit. Linda Swears identifies several goals that any choral program should have. These goals include helping children to:

- develop a means of aesthetic expression and appreciation
- develop a varied repertoire of vocal literature including folk songs, art songs, sacred songs, songs of other cultures and songs of the current genre
- understand the importance of corporate as well as personal experience and identity
- experience the joy and satisfaction of performing well for themselves and others
- develop skills and attitudes that will encourage them to use their singing voices as lifelong music instruments (Swears, 4)

Pertaining to the first goal listed, appreciation needs to first be gained by the chorister for music education to be effective.
In Louise Kifer Myers’ book *Teaching Children Music in the Elementary School*, she writes about ways that music can be taught to children that will promote appreciation. Myers suggests that there are two critical elements to be considered when designing a program dedicated to bringing about an enjoyment and understanding of music. First is that “each experience with music makes its contribution toward appreciation, whether it be a positive or negative contribution” (Myers, 21) Second is that “the procedure when teaching for appreciation differs from the method used when teaching facts” (Ibid).

This second idea deals with the reality that one can teach a child the words of a song and how to sing it correctly, but one cannot make that child “love” that song by teaching him or her these facts. Myers states that “people learn what they want to, what attracts them and what interests them” and that “for that reason, teachers should bring children and music together gently and artfully” (Ibid). Some things that could help children to continue their interest in music once they have been exposed to it include: positive reinforcement by the choir teacher to keep morale up in rehearsals, an effort to teach music in a fun and upbeat way instead of simply teaching the words and notes, and emphasizing how each member is an important and contributing part of the whole choir.

Donald W. Roach, former Professor of Music Education at Western Illinois University, is the author of the 1989 book *Complete Secondary Choral Music Guide*. According to him, the values of choral music study and performance in the junior and high schools are many and include:

1. Choral participation provides for the development of aesthetic sensitivity and the expressive values of music. Students’ lives may
be enriched and refined by contact, study, and performance of choral music.

2. Choral music has significant content to be mastered academically. In addition to vocal and sight singing skills, knowledge of styles, composers, theory, and general musicianship are stressed.

3. Choral singing also serves as a wholesome outlet and expression of individual emotions. Music serves as an emotional outlet for self-expression and can help to release tension and frustration so common in today’s society.

4. Choral participation can help develop a sense of discipline and responsibility in students. Effective choral singing requires cooperation to achieve a common end.

5. Choral organizations provide a social vehicle whereby students may fulfill their need to belong to a group. Adolescents’ natural desire to belong to a group results in satisfaction and acceptance by peers.

6. Choral participation may well promote a vocational interest in music. A small percentage of school choral singers will elect music as a career area in performing, teaching, or related fields (Roach, 4)

Robert L. Garretson also discusses benefits of music education in his book Conducting Choral Music, including that “participation in musical activities may serve as a means through which individual musical tastes may be improved (Garretson, 13) and
that “all individuals need to engage in activities that promote physical development and that feeling of well-being that is characteristic of good mental health” (Ibid, 2). Also, belonging to a choir can instill a sense of belonging in the singers. There is a sense of responsibility, that what one member does impacts the whole. The concepts of self-growth, self-expression, and belonging being benefits of a music education will be examined further later in this paper.

**Johnson and Memmott Study**

The Johnson and Memmott Study was conducted by Dr. Christopher Johnson and Jenny Memmott of the University of Kansas and appeared in the *Journal for Research in Music Education* in 2007. David Gadberry discusses this study as well as the Chorus America study in his article “Music Participation and Academic Success.” This study “investigated the relationship between music programs and standardized test scores, perceived to show academic achievement” (Gadberry, 13). This study did not look simply at the benefits involved with belonging to a choir versus not belonging to a choir. It added the new variable of the quality of the music program, which was determined by “university faculty who were familiar with the programs” (Ibid). The study involved 4,739 elementary and middle school students in four U.S. regions and revealed a “strong relationship between elementary (third- or fourth-grade) and middle school (eighth- or ninth-grade) students’ academic achievement and their participation in school music programs that differed based on quality” (Ibid).

In the elementary schools, students in music programs identified as having superior quality music programs scored 22% better in English and 20% better in mathematics than students in music programs considered to be lacking in quality. In the
middle schools, students at schools with excellent music programs had higher English and math test scores across the country than students in schools with low-quality music programs, and “students in all regions with lower-quality instrumental programs scored higher in English and mathematics than students who had no music at all” (Ibid). In general, students who participated in the lower-quality music programs scored the lowest. Dr. Johnson stated that “It is crucial to note that this project has revealed a relationship between quality music instruction and heightened academic performance and, clearly, music supports academic performance, and quality music programs are related to higher test scores” (“New Study Reveals”).

There are several issues with this study. Too little information is given of what exactly constitutes a top-quality music program or a lower-quality music program. The information is interesting but is of little use if we do not understand the parameters in which the study was conducted. Instead of heralding the benefit of simply belonging to a music program, it pits the programs against each other to see which come out on top. However, if one looks at how the music programs did as a whole, according to the study the children that were in music programs performed better in different academic areas than children that were not. Gadberry reminds readers of this study “that these relationships do not imply causation, they can only be considered relationships” (Gadberry, 13). It may not be possible to identify a direct result but trends emerge from collected material.

Gadberry goes on to warn that “advocating music’s ability to improve test scores could have potentially dangerous side effects, and seeing music only as a means to improve test scores diminishes the professionalism and the importance of the profession”
(Ibid). That being said, it is doubtful that anyone would join a choir with the intention of improving grades in some academic discipline as opposed to joining because they simply has a desire to sing.

**Chorus America Study**

The Chorus America study in 2009 involved 2,053 choral singers in an online study. Participants were chosen from Chorus America’s own lists of choirs and choir members and the results were weighted by ethnicity and region (Chorus America, “Impact Study”). Five hundred members of the general public were interviewed and these results were weighted by age, gender, education, race, and region. Five hundred parents of children six to seventeen of age were interviewed and the results were weighted by age of the child, age of the parent, income, and race. Also, 300 K-12 educators of a wide variety of academic disciplines were recruited “via a high-quality, nationally representative panel” (Ibid). The results of interviews for this population were not weighted because there is no standard census-based demographic profile for K-12 teachers. As to why the study was conducted as an online survey, Chorus America states that:

With large percentages of Americans online, it is relatively easy to draw demographically representative samples, while phone surveys are experiencing increasing difficulties reaching key segments such as those Americans who use only cell phones or those who use caller ID to screen out survey houses and other forms of solicitation. (Ibid)
Also, the online survey format allows for more detailed and in-depth answers. Quite possibly, the feeling of anonymity from participating in an online study as opposed to a face-to-face study may lead to more open and direct responses.

According to this study, there are approximately 10.1 million American children singing in choruses today. They attest that singing in one of “270,000 choruses in the U.S. […] is strongly correlated with qualities that are associated with success throughout life” (Ibid). These qualities can include academic success, a more active lifestyle, and improved overall mental health. The study discovered the following trends in academic success in relation to belonging to a choir: parents reported children who were involved in choir had higher instances of a grade of A (54% of participants versus 43% of nonparticipants), over half of the parents responding noted that their child had improved academically since joining the chorus (64% in language arts, 57% in math, and 61% academically overall) (Ibid).

Barbara A. Brinson speaks further of benefits of a music education in her book *Choral Music Methods and Materials: Developing Successful Choral Programs*. She states that “several nonmusical benefits of music instruction in the public schools include the development of responsibility, cooperation, punctuality, and dependability” (Brinson, 8). The Chorus America study discovered several of these benefits in the answers it received from the online survey. Educators surveyed “agree with parent assessments that choir participation can enhance numerous aspects of a child’s social development and academic success” and also observed that “children who sing are better participants in group activities, have better emotional expression, and exhibit better emotional management” (Chorus America, “Impact Study”). In addition, “the majority of parents
surveyed believe multiple skills increased after their child joined a chorus. 71% 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” (Ibid). A higher proclivity for choristers joining other extracurricular activities was also a trend seen by the survey. As discussed in Chapter One, a troubling trend identified by the Chorus America study is the growing lack of availability of choir programs to children. Parents may feel that because opportunities are increasingly unavailable for their children in the traditional school curriculum, it becomes increasingly important for choral organizations to reach out and let people know what alternative options are available. This can be done with marketing and the use of special events such as hosting a summer vocal camp.

It should be kept in mind that while this survey reached just over 2,000 choral singers, that number represents only a small percentage of the 10.1 million American children that Chorus America stated are currently in a choir. Also, “the results were compiled from self-reports of parents and educators rather than quantitative sources such as test scores or school grades” (Gadberry, 13). The grades and the social maturation reported are subjective evaluations and may have been exaggerated or inflated by proud parents. The survey methodology does not specify how survey subjects were chosen, stating only that the survey was “drawn from an existing, well-respecting online panel” (Ibid). In spite of an apparent lack of rigor, the results presented demonstrate at least a perceived correlation between being in a chorus and improvements in other parts of children’s lives.
Self-Growth and Self-Expression

In his book *Music in Childhood Education*, Robert L. Garretson discusses how belonging to a choral organization may improve the self-image of children. He explains:

Each individual needs to achieve self-understanding to create a self-image. Each person is in the process of developing into something, and what one ultimately becomes depends upon the possibilities one envisions and the choices one makes among them. The more opportunities one has for self-expression and exploration of possibilities, the greater his or her potential for self-development. (Garreston, *Music*, 3)

Belonging to a choir may be one such opportunity for self-expression for children who seek to participate in singing.

Working hard at a skill and making progress can certainly improve self-confidence. Adolescence is an awkward time and “young students are sensitive, wish to do well, and take pride in their accomplishments” (Garretson, *Conducting*, 138). They want to feel that they are good at something and also that others recognize that talent. Colin Durrant discussed how confidence may be improved by success in music when he says that “the fact that people’s self-esteem is enhanced when challenges are met suggests that taking part in musical activity and accepting musical challenges, as with a host of other activities and challenges, is a significant dimension of the human psyche” (Durrant, 46). It may be necessary for these challenges to be met and new ones to be faced for singers to feel an increase in their pride in themselves and also in the choral group they belong to as that group succeeds in reaching a higher level of performance. In choral groups, people want to develop skills and knowledge and make music to as high a
standard as they are capable of achieving. They want and need to get better at it. This view is supported by David Elliott in his book *Music Matters* where he acknowledges that taking part in music making is “inherently valuable, worth doing for itself and for the sake of self-growth and self-knowledge” (Ibid).

Children may find that it is easier to express themselves with song than by other means. Myers points out that:

One of the reasons singing is so satisfying is that it is an excellent means of self-expression, for emotional release, for identifying one’s self with people, places, things, and ideas. All of us do not have the ability to record our emotions in music, but certain songs of others seem to crystallize our own feelings. As we sing them we have feelings of satisfaction. (Myers, 26)

Children may not have the words to clearly and accurately state how they are feeling, but singing and association with song meanings may help them to express how they feel.

**Belonging and Responsibility**

Music is socializing and allows oneself to express not only how one feels, but also how a group that they are a part of feels. Being involved in a music organization also allows children to realize how others in a group see them. For example, “collective singing activity might help people to perceive and understand how they appear to others (both musically as a singer in the group and personally as a member of the particular social group)” (Durrant, 47). Also, in her book *Music in the Education of Children*, Bessie R. Swanson goes on to say that music can be helpful in understanding personal identities because “they find in it a means of identifying themselves as individuals and as
members of various groups” (Swanson, 6). Belonging to a choir inspires feelings of pride and of being accepted by group. If the choir is successful, it will inspire children who belong to it. Barbara A. Brinson expands on this theory by saying that “if students sing a variety of quality music and sing it well, are happy to be in choir, and have positive comments to say to their friends, teachers, and family, a major portion is solved” (Brinson, 20). For example:

If the choral program is perceived as an attractive activity in which to be involved, prospective singers will always want to join, and once they join, they will want to continue their participation. The opposite is also true. If the choral program is perceived as an activity that is not fun, or if the teacher is difficult to get along with or is unfair, students will not want to participate. (Ibid)

A 1996 study done in Sweden by Ingemar Henningsson, former Dean of the School of Music at the Göteborg International Organ Academy, outlined his conclusions that choirs have social functions as well as music functions. In this study, he examined information questionnaires which were completed by 480 choir singers between ages fourteen to eighty-three across Sweden. According to Colin Durrant who writes about the survey in his book Choral Conduction: Philosophy and Practices, “significant points in the report were that choirs act as a forum for: social groups, social training and activities, personal development, and musical experience” (Durrant, 46). He continues, stating that in choirs, people with common interests, regardless of background, can come together and relate to one another through music. Durrant writes that “within these groups or social structures, people derive satisfaction from social approval and acceptance as well
as from the singing itself; they can feel socially safe. (Ibid, 45) Belonging to a choir can instill a sense of belonging in the singers, as well as a sense of responsibility as their participation has the potential to impact the entire group. When one member does not do his or her part, the whole suffers. Likewise, when every member fulfills their roles, the whole prospers.
CHAPTER III
THE VALUE OF ATTENDING A SUMMER VOCAL CAMP

Alvin H. Reiss discusses in his book *Arts Management: A Guide to Finding Funds and Winning Audience* different tactics that nonprofit organizations may practice to increase their membership and/or audience. He points out that “for organizations that are constantly trying to attract new audiences, a special event can give them an opportunity to demonstrate a creative touch” (Reiss, 124). A vocal camp could be one such special event which may bring more people into contact with the choral organization.

Kenneth L. Neidig and John W. Jennings talk specifically about the role of a summer camp for choral organization in their book *Choral Director’s Guide*. According to the authors, several names exist for the variety of summertime music sessions around the country. “Three terms—camp, clinic, and workshop—sometimes used almost interchangeably, seem to have certain specific connotation” (Neidig and Jennings, 190). They proceed to describe connotations of the different terms, stating that the term summer camp brings to mind being outdoors and recreational activities; the term clinic usually suggests a “shorter session of correctional, or at least instructional nature, designed to solve current problems”; and workshop usually suggests a “cooperative effort of people actively participating in the pursuit of some specific goal” (Ibid). The use of the term summer camp may be beneficial to a summer vocal camp venture because it may
present more of a sense of having fun than hearing the terms “clinic” or “workshop,” which may not sound as appealing to children. Jan-Marie Peterson, author of “Recruitment Strategies for Children’s Chorus” from Voice of Chorus America, describes several of the challenges facing choirs attempting to recruit new members. Recruitment is a challenge that all choral directors and administrators face. Peterson suggests that “children’s choruses, in particular, are up against additional challenges when filling their rosters because of growing demand on students’ time, turnover rates due to age restrictions, and even demographic changes within communities” (Peterson, 33).

Summer vocal music programs can be organized in many ways, several of which have been proposed by Kenneth E. Miller in his book Vocal Music Education: Teaching in the Secondary School. Among those which have been used most successfully in the author’s opinion are to organize a summer music camp, either one or two weeks in length, and invite other established vocal music teachers from the area to conduct sessions in areas of their greatest strength. According to Miller, this will “help maintain some continuity in a music education program over the summer months, and when the ideas are used properly they will help to build interest in, and the quality of, the winter program (Miller, 52). The camp has the possibility to be a significant way to meet new potential members and reach a broad range of music enthusiasts.

Benefits to the Organization

What makes a summer vocal camp different from one set during the school year is that children do not have the added pressure, time requirements, and other extracurricular activities distracting the choristers from music opportunities. The benefit to holding an
event such as a camp in the summer is that it may “help you reach children at a time when they are more available than during the school year” (Ibid, 34). The summer vocal camp gives them the opportunity to have a music experience during this downtime.

Summer vocal camps can be an advantageous event for music organizations to hold. In his book Cash In! Funding and Promoting the Arts, Alvin H. Reiss states that:

Arts groups should indeed be looking at their potential for boosting earned income to supplement their other revenue sources, and they should look first at what they already do. Most groups have learned that the best income-producing ventures come out of activities in which they are already involved. (Reiss, 198)

It may be advantageous for choral organizations to hold a vocal camp because it is related to the organization’s mission. Music organizations are more than familiar with teaching music to children and it is also an activity that they presumably have been successful at. This success can only carry over into a special event in the summer such as a vocal camp.

Benefits to the Campers

Being apart from their parents can be an important part a child’s camp experience. At the Summer Vocal Camp, after the parents dropped children, some of the children initially were not sure how to act or interact around so many new people. Over time, most of these children seemed to gain the confidence to join in the fun with others. While some children immediately started interacting socially, possibly due to a more outgoing nature, others took a little while to feel comfortable apart from their parents to open up to others. The structure of the camp was beneficial to this socialization. Music teachers and
those in charge were perceived as authority figures, not really substitutes for the parents, but nonetheless people that the children could look to for guidance.

Some goals of the vocal camp may include: interaction with others, a fun experience, an introduction to music, a continuation of the yearly program, and a different type of experience for the child. “A choral ensemble experience provides a great opportunity for rewarding students who excel at singing in their general music classes and show enthusiasm for the art” (Lana and Westgate, 77). If carried out successfully, the summer vocal camp can be beneficial to both the child and the organization.
CHAPTER IV
SUMMIT CHORAL SOCIETY’S SUMMER VOCAL CAMP

The Summit Choral Society was founded by Dr. Frank C. Jacobs in 1990, featuring the Masterworks Chorale, the adult choir, who presented a four-concert series in different venues around Akron. The Summit Children’s Choir was added in 1991 and grew over the years to include two separate parts—Training and Performance. At the time the camp was held, there were four levels of Training—T1, T2, T3, T4—and the Performance part includes the Concert Choir and the Touring Choir. The Touring Choir has performed internationally in locations such as China, Germany, Malta, and Italy. In 2011, The Summit Children’s Choir program has a membership of over 250 singers in grades 2-12 from almost 100 area schools (summitchoralsociety.org).

Summer Vocal Camp is a yearly event held by Summit Choral Society and is a “place for children who love to sing” who are finishing first through eighth grade (Ibid). In 2010, the camp ran from Monday, June 14 to Friday, June 18 at a local school. Karen L. Bruno in her article “Keep America’s Youth Singing” discusses benefits of a relationship between community choirs and public schools. She says that: “community children’s choirs can build bridges to the public schools by holding rehearsals in school facilities, accepting every student who wishes to sing, and assisting with financial needs so that students of modest or low income can participate” (Bruno, 57). Summit Choral Society not only utilizes schools for rehearsals during its regular Fall-Spring classes,
but also used a local elementary school for its summer camp. By going out into the community with the camp, the organization brings the program to the local children instead of waiting for them to take an interest in the program.

The children at the host school received a special discount if they attended the camp, and there were also discount deadlines for all of the campers as an incentive to attend. All children who signed up for the Summer Vocal Camp were accepted into the camp without the need for an audition; however, children were given the opportunity to be auditioned privately at camp by a Summit Choral Society music teacher and they were given information as to what training level they would be placed into for the 2010-2011 season if they chose to sign up. Though financial aid and scholarships are offered for the August-May season, they are not available to children attending the camp. However, the school hosting the camp paid for two of its students to attend the camp.

Preparing for Summer Vocal Camp

In her book *Handbook of Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations*, Siri N. Espy discusses how nonprofit and for-profit organizations have different goals by marketing may help both kinds of organizations. She says:

Money cannot be discounted as an important factor in nonprofit management. Without sufficient funds to operate, you will be unable to benefit anyone. It is perfectly legitimate for a nonprofit organization to see its marketing function as a means to increase revenue over expenses in order to improve its capacity to operate and grow. (Espy, 58)

Without money, choral organizations would not be able to benefit anyone. Holding an event such as a summer vocal camp requires money for location rental, music teachers,
supplies, and food. Jamie Grady, author of *A Simple Statement: A Guide to Nonprofit Arts Management and Leadership*, discusses how marketing can help a nonprofit long-term. “Marketing for the performing arts goes beyond the idea of selling goods and services to a target market. Communicating the values and belief of the organization to a potential audience is essential to a long-term marketing strategy” (Grady, 46).

A type of advertising that the Summit Choral Society’s camp relied on was the much less manageable word-of-mouth marketing. Current singer families are advocates to potential members as they talk about their experience with the organization to others. Word-of-mouth marketing can be invaluable. Espy states:

> This type of marketing cannot be underestimated as a tool for gaining consumers for your services. A real advantage is that it is a low-cost means of developing pathways for attracting those with a need for or interest in your services. Because of good relationships with other organizations, you can be funneled a number of referrals. (Espy, 75)

Word-of-mouth is an especially important marketing tool for an organization such as Summit Choral Society that works with families. Parents depend on the recommendation of those they find trustworthy when making decisions that affect the safety of their children, especially when it means putting that safety in someone else’s hands.

It is essential to be in tune with what organizations must do to reach their target group. Philip Kotler and Joanne Scheff provide in their book *Standing Room Only* a wide range of marketing tactics for nonprofit organizations, as well as directing nonprofit administrators on how to define the organization’s mission, perform strategic thinking, and improve public relations. They assert that nonprofit organizations that have a
customer orientation “must systematically study customers’ needs and wants, perceptions and attitudes, preferences and satisfactions” (Kotler and Scheff, 33). They also stress that marketing should be viewed as “a means for achieving the organization’s goals, and using marketing and being customer-centered should never be thought of as the goal in itself” (Ibid, 44). The information gathered by these methods may be used to benefit both the organization and their customers.

Branding is an important tool in marketing an organization. There is a conscious effort to differentiate the Summer Vocal Camp brand from the brand of Summit Choral Society. The brand of Summer Vocal Camp reflects its fun and relaxed atmosphere through the use of bold and excited language and informal pictures of previous campers singing and involved in a variety of activities. Though the Summit Choral Society’s program also features pictures of the singers performing or posing for the camera together, these photographs generally show the organization to be a distinguished choral organization which takes pride in performing classical choral music.

Marketing was an important aspect of planning for the camp. Ads were printed in local newspapers, boasting large print, active pictures of singers, as well as essential information such as dates and times of the camp, location, who the camp was for, the fee, registration deadline, the date of the final concert, and how to sign up. Siri N. Espy emphasizes the need for providing potential customers with comprehensive information. She says:

Letting people know that you’re there allows them to make informed choices on their options. No one will seek your services and programs in the absence of adequate information. Unless you operate by invitation
only, you will need to be seen and known in order to do what you want to do.” (Espy, 61)

Regular tuition was $195 for the camp and this fee covered the cost of lunch, a camp t-shirt, harmonica, and the music teachers. Much more planning went into preparing for camp, such as collecting emergency medical forms, media releases, contact information, and creating handouts, music copies, name tags, ticket order forms, packages for new families, etc. More information on the preparation for camp can be seen in Appendices A and B.

Execution of Summer Vocal Camp

Campers were split into four groups depending on their age and music experience. They attended the following four different classes everyday: Singing, Dance, Orff Instruments, and Music in Your Pocket (a combination of harmonica and singing). There are a couple of reasons to include activities other than singing in a vocal camp. Harriet Noldholm states that singing should not be completely removed from other musical activities because “moving, listening, playing, creating, and singing each interweave with one another into a fused totality” (Nordholm, 1). She proceeds to warn that because singing is such a large part of the music curriculum, music teachers should be prepared to teach it in conjunction with these other activities (Ibid).

At the beginning of each day, the campers met in the great hall to collect name tags and harmonicas, to hear announcements, and to practice as a group. They practiced their harmonicas and songs being led by the music teachers and at these gatherings parents were able to see some of what their children were learning. A guest musical duet performed at the camp at the beginning of a camp day and parents were welcome to stay
and watch as well. The campers also convened in the hall at the end of the day as they waited for their parents who were welcome to arrive a little early to watch the children practice together again. Friday night there was a concert which was held at a different school where the campers were able to demonstrate to their families what they had learned over the week. Seeing them involved in the camp during the week as well as at the end of camp performance made the parents proud of what their child was able to do, hopefully connecting this good feeling to the choral organization.

Results of Summer Vocal Camp

A total of eighty-one children attended Summer Vocal Camp 2010, up from sixty-seven children from the year before. Plus, nine of the fifty new singers who attended the Summer Vocal Camp 2010 signed up for the 2010-2011 season (18%). Also, seventeen out of the thirty-one current singers who attended the camp signed up for the Summer Children’s Choir’s following season (55%). From these numbers, it is clear that the camp has been a valuable way of encouraging current singers involved with the organization to sign up for the next season. Also, new singers trying out the camp may find that they enjoy the class structure and environment and have a desire to sign up for the next season as well.

Within two weeks of the completion of camp, a survey was sent out through Constant Contact, an online company that provides email marketing tools. The survey was sent to all the parents of children who had attended the 2010 camp, asking them about their experience and their thoughts. Twenty-eight parents responded to the survey and provided information regarding what they did and did not like. Most of the questions involved clicking on an option in response to the question (indicating a rating of “very
important, somewhat important, neutral, not very important, and not important”) for various elements of the camp. They were also given the option to give lengthier feedback. For example, when asked how much their child enjoyed the Summer Vocal Camp, the scale was 1-5, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 being the highest rating, and the result was an average of 4.6. Several of the comments indicated that their child enjoyed the camp and wanted to return, but one parent thought that it seemed geared towards a younger crowd and that the older campers did not have enough to do appropriate to their age level. Although the children were split by age level as well as known musical ability (i.e. involvement with Summit Choral Society), it is understandable that some children may pick up things quicker than others and may feel they are not being challenged adequately.

When asked how much their children enjoyed different activities, singing rated highest while harmonica playing rated lowest, though one parent commented that “it was the activity [harmonica playing] that made the camp fun and allowed the children to learn in a creative way” (Summit Choral Society “Satisfaction Survey”). Asked about their child’s enjoyment of performing in the Friday night concert, the overall average was a 3.9 on a scale of one to four. A narrative response to this question indicated that the children were “proud to showcase what they learned” (Ibid). On the opposite end, the parents were asked about their own enjoyment about watching the Friday night concert and the average was a 3.7 (with the same range as the prior question). Comments indicated that some felt speeches by current choir members were too long, the auditorium was too warm, and a couple sections of performance were too long.
Near the end of the survey, the parents were asked if they had any suggestions for improving the Summer Vocal Camp program. Comments were sometimes contradictory. For instance, one parent saying it should start earlier, and another saying it should be a shorter day. They suggested keeping the camp at the same location (2010 was the first year it was held at that particular school and the comments indicate the parents liked the new locale). In terms of marketing, parents were asked where they had heard about the camp. Twenty-four parents responded to that particular question, and five said a flyer (they were given out at nearby schools), three stated it was from friends/family (word of mouth), three said the internet, two said they had heard from their child’s school music teacher, one said the newspaper, and eleven said “other,” which included information heard during the orientation of the program the year before and having attended a prior performance by Summit Choral Society.

The information gathered by the survey provided general information, but did not yield any information indicating a need for specific change. However, harmonicas will not be used at the subsequent camp as they were ranked as the least popular activity. They will be replaced by a different musical instrument. Summer Vocal Camp is not only a place for children who are very talented but also for children who simply have a love of singing and want to make it a larger part of their life. The process of hosting a camp can be done in multiple ways which will be demonstrated in the following chapter as four vocal camps from around the country are compared against the Summit Choral Society’s Summer Vocal Camp.
CHAPTER V
COMPARISON TO OTHER VOCAL CAMPS

In considering developing the best format for a music camp experience, it is useful to look at other models provided by other successful camps. This chapter will present four examples chosen because of their varying locations around the country, the different age groups chosen for each camp, and the wide range in camp tuition will may subsequently limit the attendees to certain income levels. These different examples of camps will also be compared against the Summit Choral Society’s Summer Vocal Camp so that it may be observed in a more extensive range of summer vocal programs.

ChildrenSong

ChildrenSong is a choral music education and performance program based in New Jersey which includes children between the ages of eight and eighteen. The organization’s mission is to “provide quality music instruction with the goal of attaining the highest level of artistic excellence in choral music performance” (ChildrenSong of New Jersey). ChildrenSong strives to reach children from all religious, economic, and racial background for their program. Like the Summit Children’s Choir, ChildrenSong’s program is divided into different levels: Prelude Choir, a beginning training level for ages ranging eight to eleven; Allegro Choir, an intermediate training level for ages ranging ten to thirteen; and Concert Choir, an advanced performing ensemble for ages ranging twelve to eighteen.
2010 marked the eleventh year for ChildrenSong whose members have performed throughout the United States and overseas. They endeavor to give back to the community by hosting education events for teachers and students such as Children’s Songfest, which is a all-day music and singing celebration is for area children in grades four-ten, and teacher workshops. According to their website, “ChildrenSong fosters the personal and social growth of its members and promotes their sense of self-esteem; it gives children a feeling of accomplishment and pride and exposes them to the values and benefits of other societies through multicultural music” (Ibid). Like Summit Choral Society, ChildrenSong of New Jersey’s program is rooted in classic children’s chorus traditions.

ChildrenSong’s 2010 summer vocal camp ran daily August 23-27 and was held at an area school. The campers learned vocal techniques and music reading skills as the campers at Summer Vocal Camp did. The camp was split into two separate camps determined by age. Camp for grades three-five was from 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. while the camp for grades six-nine was from 8:00 a.m.-11 a.m., twice as long as the younger children’s camp day (“ChildrenSong Announces Summer Vocal Camp”). The tuition for both of the camps are less than that of Summer Vocal Camp; however, Summer Vocal Camp was from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m., much longer than the hours for these camps.

Something that ChildrenSong does that is very different from Summit Choral Society is that is makes the attendance of their summer vocal camp mandatory for all current singers. This stipulation brings to mind Kenneth L. Neidig and John W. Jennings description of a “clinic,” making the camp an obligatory event that is a part of the program for current members instead of a fun summer event. Also different, participation in the camp for grades six-nine is by audition only instead of being open to anyone who
would like to attend. Involvement with the camp is also open to those who are not already members of the program with the incentive to join the program afterwards that their entire camp tuition would be deducted from the regular program’s tuition fees upon registration (Ibid). Both camps cumulate in an end-of-camp performance to demonstrate their hard work.

**Phoenix Children’s Chorus**

Phoenix Children’s Choir (P.C.C.) of Phoenix, Arizona is sponsored by the Phoenix Center Arts Association which was established in 1992 and obtained non-profit status in 1999 (Phoenix Children’s Choir). The organization boasts members ranging from those entering second grade to those entering their senior year of high school. The mission of the P.C.C. is to foster “excellence in youth by facilitating artistic, musical, and cultural development through choral education and performance” (Ibid). Like Summit Children’s Choir, their program is divided up into levels. Prep and Cadet levels learn basic vocal techniques and musicianship skills, while Concert, Bravo, and Encore choirs work to refine and develop their choral singing.

P.C.C. encourages its members to also be involved with their schools’ music programs, stating that “the Phoenix Children's Chorus is not intended to replace a child's participation in his or her school music program; rather it should enhance and add to his or her enjoyment of music” (Ibid). The program’s goals are similar to those held by Summit Choral Society, including a desire to: provide a classical choral education, create a sense of being a part of a team, and promote self-discipline and self-esteem in a positive learning environment.
P.C.C. holds a yearly summer vocal camp which was held in 2010 from August 13-14. Like ChildrenSong of New Jersey, P.C.C.’s camp is required for all of the current members of their program. On the choir’s website, P.C.C. reasons that that camp is mandatory “with the goal to get to know each other better, become more comfortable singing in an ensemble, be introduced to music for the upcoming season, form friendships, learn musicianship, and establish procedures important for the upcoming season” (Ibid). It does not appear that the camp is open to any children at all who are not current members of the program, which may be advantageous in that they may feel like outcasts with the rest of the campers already acquainted with each other and learning music for the upcoming season that non-members will not be performing. Similar to ChildrenSong’s camp, P.C.C.’s summer vocal camp may approach the “clinic” definition of this kind of experience with specific goals related to the performance-oriented chorus. Phoenix Children’s Chorus’ site warns that if singers who do not participate in camp will start out the year with a disadvantage, saying “please ensure your choristers attend mandatory Choral Camp” (Ibid). It is not specified whether this three-day camp is a day camp or an overnight camp.

Some of the goals of P.C.C.’s summer vocal camp are different from that of Summit Choral Society’s camp. The P.C.C. camp is an extension of their yearly program, designed to: familiarize the choristers with the P.C.C. staff to create a professional rapport to improve upcoming rehearsals, introduce singers to the music that they will be learning for upcoming concerts (Phoenix Children’s Chorus, “Summer”). The P.C.C. website does not mention an end-of-camp performance. However, both camps also share goals. These include the desire to create confidence in the children to not only sing
publicly, but to sing as a group. The children learn basic vocal technique and music reading at both camps as well as the importance of teamwork to reach common goals. Also, P.C.C. states that “it is the intent of the staff to create excitement among the choristers and the parents about the upcoming season,” which is also what Summit Choral Society strives to do at Summer Vocal Camp (Ibid).

**Signature Music Camp**

Signature Music Camp (S.M.C.) celebrated its eighteenth year as an organization in 2010 and is held on the campus of Ithaca College in New York. The S.M.C. website states that it is its mission is to create an affirming and non-competitive musical community that nurtures the individual and collective contributors of all members” (Signature Syracuse). Unlike the two previous camps, S.M.C. is not linked with a year-round program. S.M.C. differs from Summer Vocal Camp in that it has two camps each designed for a different age group. The 2010 Teen Camp (for youth through age twelve) ran for two weeks from June 27-July 10 and consisted of band, choir, jazz ensembles, and show choirs. The 2010 Youth Camp (for youth entering grades seven through nine) ran for one week from July 4-10 and consisted of the same programs as Teen Camp. Over one hundred musicians participate in each session of the S.M.C., according to the organization’s site (Ibid).

The S.M.C. is like Summer Vocal Camp in that they both strive to help campers “develop independence, friendships, and musical talent” by use of offering “a variety of activities that unlock a student’s potential and open doors to new possibilities” (Ibid). S.M.C. claims to aim to provide a noncompetitive and supportive experience as Summer Vocal Camp does; however, the process to become a part of S.M.C. by audition-only.
Applicants to S.M.C. must submit two letters of recommendation from a music teacher, classroom teacher, a principal and/or a school counselor. This is most likely to assure the level of talent and commitment.

The activities at S.M.C. are of a wider variety than Summer Vocal Camp, though not all campers may participate in all that is offered. Instead of participating in all aspects offered by the camp, campers choose a ‘track’ (band/choir, vocal/piano, or jazz). Youth campers may only choose between the first two tracks. Because there is so much that can be done at camp, S.M.C. endeavors to create a balance for the campers between time in camp activities and “downtime.” From 8 a.m. until 3 p.m., the campers are in classes. Afterwards, there are recreational options, such as swimming or games to be played on the lawn on campus. After dinner, there is also time for activities such as skit night, scavenger hunts and carnival hunts (Ibid). Being an overnight camp, the S.M.C. tuition is understandably much more than Summer Vocal Camp, a day camp. Tuition includes housing, meals, camp shirt, CD of the final concert, and camp photo. Youth Camp tuition is $1,100 for one week, and Teen Camp is $2,200 for two weeks. This tuition is very high and may prevent low-income families from being able to attend.

S.M.C. is an overnight camp and is also “the only resident camp in New York state to offer a music and camp-life program tailored for specific age groups” (Ibid). Campers live in the Ithaca College dormitories for the camp session. This has the possibility of being a liability for the choir organization. Being a daily camp has its own set of difficulties, but being an overnight may prove to be more complicated. Not to mention that dealing with campers who are in high school is much more challenging than working with younger children due to high hormones and the probability of a rebellious
nature. It is most likely due to the concerns that arise from this situation that S.M.C. mentions several places on their website about the supervision that will be available, stating that that staff-to-camper ratio is high, the staff reside in the dorms to provide guidance during downtime, and that parents can appreciate the fact that the campers are in staff-supervised activities (Ibid).

Wichita State University

The Wichita State University College of Fine Arts Institute in Kansas has offered the Kodály Children’s Choir Camp (K.C.C.C.) every summer since its beginning in 2006 for children ages eleven through sixteen. The camp is held in partnership with Kodály Music Educators of Kansas. As with Signature Music Camp, the K.C.C.C. is a stand-alone camp, not a part of a choral organization yearly program. Wichita State University’s 2010 WSU Kodály Children’s Summer Choir Camp was held on June 6-11. In this one-week camp, talented young singers had the opportunity to improve their vocal skills, learn Kodály choral techniques, and meet other student musicians. Campers studied with Artistic Director Ms. Elaine Quilichini, worked with teachers in the WSU Kodály Program and learned quality choral music, with a final concert at the end of the week (Wichita State University).

The K.C.C.C. site states that they are not responsible for pre-teaching music to campers, most likely meaning that they will not reveal what is being sung at camp until the camp itself. This is possibly done to ensure an equal footing for all campers. Through the week, campers were involved in musicianship and rehearsals as well as daily leisure activities. K.C.C.C. differs from Summer Vocal Camp in that it is offered to both resident and day campers with resident campers being housed in Wichita State University’s
dormitories. As discussed with previous overnight camps, the decision to make camp an overnight event for a group of teenagers may result in issues. The tuition for K.C.C.C.’s day campers is higher than Summer Vocal Camp’s tuition with K.C.C.C. day campers paying $250 which includes tuition, shirt, activities, lunch, and snacks. The resident campers pay $425 which includes tuition, shirt, activities, all meals and snacks, and housing.

Also different is that all the children who wish to attend are not accepted. Children are chosen based on their teacher’s/choir director’s recommendation. The teacher/choir director must describe the singer’s vocal ability in detail on the application, expressing the singer’s “rhythm accuracy, pitch accuracy, musical independence, tone quality, ability to blend vocally, attentiveness, and general attitude” (Ibid). Hopeful campers must fill out an application and send a $50 non-refundable deposit as well as a picture of themselves. The age group for campers is older than found in previous and that, combined with the requirement of a recommendation for admission, signifies a desire to have campers that are experienced as well as talented.

Conclusions from Comparisons

These camps show different methods used in holding a summer vocal camp. Whether it is staying overnight in a university dorm room, sending in “head shots,” being mandatory for all current singers or being selective, this brief look at this small sample of the nation’s offerings of summer vocal camps shows how varied these camps are executed. Different tactics used can change how the children benefit from the camp, either positively or negatively. However, while the methods may differ, the underlying goal for all of the camps is still the same: to bring music to children.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

I hope the information presented in this paper has given the reader a worthwhile learning experience. However, there is a difference between learning and applying the information. There is a particular type of experience and knowledge that can’t be learned by reading, but by real-world experience as an arts administrator. This research aims to make the suggestion of hosting a summer vocal camp to choirs by providing them with the research behind the idea of a summer vocal camp and the model of Summit Choral Society’s camp, as well as a look at four other camps from different regions. The camp has possibility to help maximize impact in the community, enrollment in their program, and the benefits to current members.

Children with a love of singing will benefit from the Summer Vocal Camp because introduction to the Summit Choral Society through the camp can possibly result in a lasting relationship. The possible benefits to children involved with a choir are plentiful. Even if the campers do not enroll in the year-round program after the camp, they may still gain a very beneficial educational and cultural experience that they might not have had they not attended. The experience could cause a greater for the arts, possibly influencing to be patrons of the arts when they become older. As Ann Meier Baker, the President and CEO of Chorus America said: “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” (Chorus America).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

SUMMIT CHORAL SOCIETY SUMMER VOCAL CAMP – CHECKLIST

Develop/Update
1. Camper lists by group (4 copies – music teacher, choir manager, front
desk, misc.)
2. Name tags- blank
3. Name tags for teachers/staff
4. Volunteer sign-up forms (ushers)
5. Signs 8.5” x 11” (for classrooms)
6. Time sheets for music teachers
7. VHS or DVD of prior SCC events (play for new singers)
8. T-shirts
9. Tickets SVC- for concert
10. Duplicate tickets for concert
11. Seating chart for concert
12. T-shirt list- organized by group and last name
13. Coolers
14. Emergency Medical Forms- blank
15. Emergency Medical Forms- completed
16. Keyboards
17. Craft supplies

Handouts – To Each Student
1. Music – copies for each student
2. Name tags for singers with hang strings- create
3. Parent survey
4. Concert info for 1st scheduled concert
5. Ticket order forms
6. 10 Most Asked Questions
7. Menu
8. Map to end of camp concert site
9. Harmonicas
10. Program books for prior season for new families
11. Season brochures
12. T-shirt order forms
13. Prizes
14. Food
15. Camp program for the week – newsletter package

Office Supplies
1. Cell phone and charger
2. Cash box
3. Change money
4. Envelopes (plain)
5. Paper clips
6. Stapler
7. Ink pens, permanent markers, pencils, crayons
8. Scotch tape, masking tape
9. Tablecloth for information table
10. First Aid kit
11. Sunscreen
12. Trash bags
13. Large Summit Children’s Choir banner sign
14. Large poster and easel
SUMMIT CHORAL SOCIETY SUMMER VOCAL CAMP – CONCERT CHECKLIST

Ticket Related
1. Calculator
2. Pens/pencils
3. Tickets for Concert
4. Ticket order form
5. Cash box
6. Credit card sheet in cash box
7. Ticket baskets and stands
8. Ticket envelopes
9. Order forms bundled, alphabetically by last name
10. Duplicate tickets
11. Seating chart
12. Change money

Miscellaneous
1. Cough drops
2. Table cloths
3. Lapel flowers
4. Pins
5. Water
6. Signs (Tickets, But, Will Call, etc.)
7. Tape
8. Stapler
9. Paperclips
10. Hand sanitizer

Merchandise
1. Logo t-shirts for sale
2. Prior concert t-shirts for sale

Singer Related
1. Student list (for attendance)