

Children's Chorus of Sussex County

for the love of singing



2009/2010 HANDBOOK

Deborah Mello, Artistic Director/Founder

973-300-4180

www.childrenschorusofsussexcounty.com

435 Ridge Road
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Welcome

We are so happy to have you as an important part of the Children's Chorus of Sussex County and are anxious to share a long and mutually rewarding relationship. A copy of this handbook has been provided to each family so that you will have a handy reference and will become familiar with CCSC rules and guidelines. Please read it carefully. We hope you will refer to it often and that it will answer most questions you might have. If you discover that there are any topics that are unclear or have not been included, please let us know. In spite of the high level of talent of our choristers, the success of our organization also depends on a commitment to the procedures outlined in this booklet.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, welcome to our '09-'10 concert season. We are thrilled that you have joined us, we look forward to working together, and we wish you a wonderful year!

Best wishes,
Joanny Vater, President

Introduction

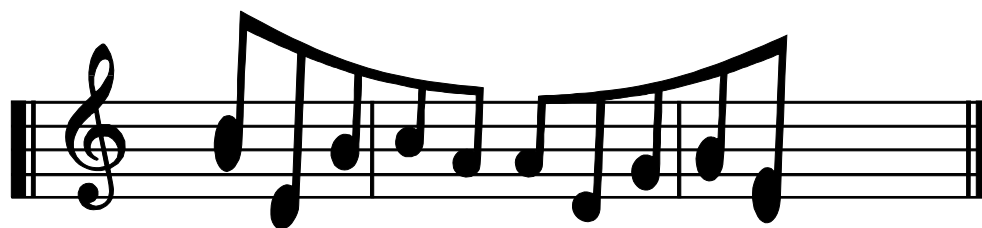
The Children's Chorus of Sussex County (CCSC) , founded by Deborah Mello, first performed in 1991. Choristers study and perform a wide variety of choral music and frequently collaborate with school and community choirs, instrumental groups and soloists. Originally a single ensemble of 25, CCSC is now comprised of nearly 100 young people, divided among various choir levels. CCSC shares its artistry through local concerts and community service programs, and performs in cities around the United States and the world.

Mission Statement

The Children's Chorus of Sussex County provides a unique opportunity for young people to embrace their love of singing, foster a commitment to excellence, and deepen their sense of community through the choral art.

Membership

Children with unchanged voices from first grade through high school are eligible to audition for Bel Canto, Bella Voce, or the Concert Choir. Membership lasts for an entire season, from September to June, and everyone is expected to make an active commitment to the directors and his/her fellow choristers by attending all rehearsals and scheduled events. Current members receive information about re-enrollment or auditions for the next level in June. Prospective choristers are recruited throughout the year. We welcome inquiries about joining CCSC at any time, either by e-mail, through our website (www.childrenschorusofsussexcounty.com) or by phone at 973.300.4180.



Tuition / Fees

Tuition is \$450 for Concert Choir and \$400 for Bel Canto/Bella Voce and is to be paid in full at the start of the season in September. We depend on your timely payment so that we can pay our own bills promptly. Tuition covers musical instruction and vocal training, mailings, insurance, rental fees for rehearsal and concert space, and music. Additional expenses include uniforms, folders, trips, and concert tickets for family members and friends.

Checks can be mailed to:
CCSC
435 Ridge Road
Newton, NJ 07860

If you prefer, you can place your check in a white envelope with your name and the word 'Tuition' on it and deposit it in the designated box when you come to rehearsal. Tuition cannot be paid through the proceeds in your fundraising account.

Tuition Payment Schedule

Each chorister's place in the Chorus will be reserved by a non-refundable deposit of \$100 that is due on June 1st for returning choristers or upon acceptance for new members. The Chorus prepares and budgets for each season based upon the number of children accepting the invitation to join the Chorus. The full tuition amount for the year is due and payable even if a child does not complete the season. There will be an additional fee of \$35 for returned checks.

The balance of tuition may be paid as follows:

Concert Choir:

One payment: \$350 due September 1st

Two payments: \$200 due September 1st and \$150 due November 1st

Bel Canto/Bella Voce:

One payment: \$300 due September 1st

Two payments: \$175 due September 1st and \$125 due November 1st

Sibling discount: A \$50 discount is available for each additional child enrolled in the CCSC.

Commitment to School Choral Groups

A great deal of our success depends on and reflects the talent of elementary, middle and high school choral directors throughout our area. We expect that the members of CCSC will assume active leadership roles in their school choral music programs.



Rehearsals and Attendance

The rehearsal schedules for our choirs are:

Bel Canto/Bella Voce: Wednesday afternoons from 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm.

Concert Choir: Wednesday and Sunday from 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm.

Our success depends on reliable and punctual attendance. Please arrive five minutes prior to the start of rehearsal so that you can be in your seat and be ready to begin on time. Choristers are expected to stay for the full length of rehearsal. If you are late, please make a point of taking your place with as little disruption as possible.

Membership in CCSC requires a commitment. Our calendar and rehearsal schedules are published at the beginning of each season. Choristers are expected to adhere to the schedule. Should a chorister be ill or otherwise unable to attend a rehearsal, please notify your director in advance by calling the CCSC office at 973.300.4180 or his/her cell phone. If a cold or cough impedes singing, rehearsals should still be attended and audited by the chorister. Missing rehearsal because of conflicting activities other than school music programs is not acceptable. Poor attendance can lead to dismissal from the choir.

Choristers are responsible for bringing their music, a sharpened pencil, and a bottle of water (optional) to each rehearsal and taking home any handouts that are distributed. Uniforms are not required for regular or 'dress' rehearsals. Attendance at dress rehearsals and pre-performance rehearsals is mandatory and participation in the concert depends on it. Pre-performance rehearsals are closed to the audience, including families. Only designated chaperones will be allowed in the rehearsal area prior to a concert.

Should a rehearsal be cancelled due to inclement weather, we will post an announcement on <http://www.cancellations.com>. Please register at the website to receive e-mail and text alerts regarding cancellations. (see instructions) In the event the weather is worse at your home than it might be in Newton, please use your judgment about traveling. As important as it is to have complete attendance for a worthwhile rehearsal, your safety is most important. If you are unable to drive, please leave a message at 973.300.4180.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Parents should escort their children into the rehearsal space and return promptly for pick up. Please do not cross Route 206 under any circumstances. Parking is available behind the church and on Church Street.

Cell Phones

Cell phones must be turned off when choristers arrive for rehearsal and must stay off until dismissal. Choristers are welcome to check for messages that might have come from parents after the end of rehearsal and before leaving the building. We also require that phones be turned off during concerts. We expect strict adherence to this policy.



Curriculum

Our ensembles sing a varied and age-appropriate repertoire, which ranges from simple folk songs to challenging masterpieces of classical and jazz genres. We perform with accompaniment as well as a capella; in English and in a variety of foreign languages. On a number of occasions, our choirs have performed contemporary works in collaboration with the composers.

The process of learning the music includes becoming familiar with the concepts of melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics and style as well as sight reading. Rehearsals begin with good posture and warm-up exercises.

Folders and Music

Folders are purchased by each chorister upon acceptance into CCSC. This folder will be used throughout the years that you are a member. Music is provided by CCSC and must be returned in good condition at the end of the season. It is each chorister's responsibility to take good care of the music and to bring his/her folder to every rehearsal and performance. Music must never be rolled nor folded and any marks made on it must be done lightly and in pencil.

Performances

The choirs perform locally in a combined concert every winter and late spring. Participation is mandatory. All choirs have additional opportunities to perform in the local community. Anticipated absences for these events must be discussed in advance with the director. The older choristers are offered the chance to travel further from home as invitations become available. The Concert Choir normally travels abroad every few years. While not mandatory, participation in these tours is highly encouraged and expenses can be covered in part or in full through fundraising.

Concert Etiquette

Please reward your child's hard work and dedication to choral music by giving them the gift of your silence and attention during performances. Remember to refrain from talking, whispering and rustling papers during concerts. In addition to distracting choristers and the audience, it interferes with the capture of a quality recording of the performance. The acoustics of our performance spaces magnify even the slightest noises. For this reason, we also encourage you to take advantage of the free babysitting that is provided during concerts.

Part of your child's music education includes proper behavior on stage. Please do not try to attract the attention of your child by waving from the audience. They have been instructed to maintain proper posture and behavior on stage and these actions will only confuse and distract them.

Uniform

A professional image is of the utmost importance to us and uniform concert dress is required for all CCSC performances. Most items are ordered through CCSC and can be paid for through fundraising. In addition to the uniform, a neat, well-groomed appearance is mandatory. This includes shirts being tucked in, hair combed and away from the face, small earrings and bracelets, and only subtle make-up.

New choristers will be measured for uniforms at the start of the year in September. On occasion, a used uniform at a reduced price may be available in a particular size and choristers will be notified. Vests and skirts for the youngest choristers can be rented from CCSC, but boys must provide their own slacks.

The formal uniforms for each choir are as follows:

Bel Canto

Girls: White long-sleeved button-down **oxford** cloth shirt, blue vest, black skirt, black tights/stockings and shoes (black dress shoes, low-heel, closed heel and toe)

Boys: White long-sleeved button-down oxford cloth shirt, blue vest, black dress slacks, socks, and black dress shoes

Bella Voce

Girls: Royal blue/black concert dress, pearls, black hosiery (knee highs or stockings), black Capezio 550 or 551 Jr. Footlight shoes**

Boys: White tuxedo shirt with black button covers, black vest, dress slacks, socks, and shoes (black dress shoes, closed heel and toe)

Concert Choir

Girls: Black concert dress, pearls, black hosiery (knee highs or stockings), black Capezio 550 or 551 Jr. Footlight shoes**

Boys: Black tuxedo shirt with black button covers, black dress slacks, socks, and shoes (black dress shoes, closed heel and toe)

**** Please check the CCSC website for stores that carry these shoes.**

The **informal concert uniform** consists of the appropriate CCSC shirt (ordered through the choir) and khaki slacks or shorts as specified by the director for that performance. Jeans are worn occasionally.

Bel Canto – Royal blue CCSC T-Shirt

Bella Voce – Royal blue CCSC Golf Shirt

Concert Choir – Light blue CCSC Golf Shirt

Fundraising

A variety of fundraising opportunities is offered each year and participation is voluntary but strongly encouraged. Tuition is exempt from fundraising. A fundraising account is kept for each chorister and balances are reported several times a year. You will be notified if a fundraiser is ever for the benefit of the organization as a whole. Every year, there are a few choristers who pay for almost all of their expenses through their fundraising efforts. Should you resign from CCSC, the money in your fundraising account is contributed to the organization's general fund.

Communication

We begin each season with a parent meeting, during which time we introduce the artistic staff and review the schedule, and basic 'housekeeping' information. Packets will be handed out which will include basic information, a calendar, and important forms to complete and sign. We post information about the program on our website, www.childrenschorusofsussexcounty.com, and we encourage you to check it frequently. We send out "Choir Notes" periodically and they will be available on the website, as well. Occasionally, other information will be handed out at rehearsal. It is the responsibility of the chorister to share that with his/her parents! Our CCSC phone number is 973.300.4180 and we can be reached via e-mail at info@childrenschorusofsussexcounty.com. Please feel free to contact us at any time about any concern. We will do the same!

Board meetings are held monthly, usually on the second Sunday, at 5:45 at Christ Church. Interested parents are welcome to attend. Meetings are listed on the calendar but sometimes the dates change after it is published due to schedule conflicts. It is a good idea to check the schedule with one of the board members in advance.

Resignation

It is our hope that we maintain a long and fruitful relationship with each of our choristers. It is our understanding that when you begin in September, you are making a commitment for the entire season.

Artistic Staff

Deborah A. Mello



Founder and artistic director of the Children's Chorus of Sussex County

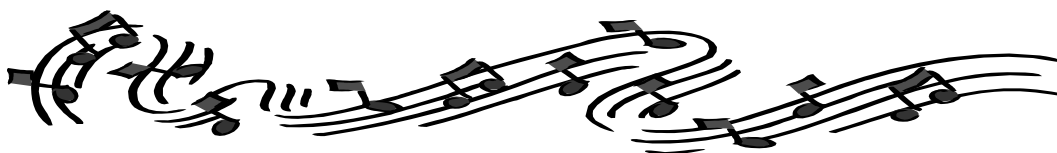
Deborah A. Mello is the recipient of the Master Teacher Award from the New Jersey Music Education Association, the New Jersey Governor's Award for Arts in Education, and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Master Teacher Collaborative Award, sponsored by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. In May 2007, Debbie was one of fifty music educators in the United States to receive the inaugural Distinguished Music Educator Award from Yale University.

As a member of the American Choral Directors Association, Debbie has served on the Repertoire & Standards Committee for Children's Choirs as New Jersey State Chair, Eastern Division Chair and National Chair. She is currently serving the ACDA Eastern Division Board as Chair of Repertoire & Standards for Children's Choirs. A recipient of the Artist Teacher certificate from the Choral Music Education courses founded by Doreen Rao, Deborah has been a Teaching Associate in the CME courses taught in the United States, Canada, and in Europe, including England, Sweden, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

She has conducted area, state, and regional honor choirs throughout the United States for children through mixed voice high school choirs. In addition to conducting, Deborah has presented numerous workshops on elementary music education, music curriculum, children's choirs, choral repertoire, and choral conducting for the New Jersey Music Educators, New York American Choral Directors Association, Massachusetts Choral Directors, Louisiana Choral Directors Association, Music Educators National Conference, National American Choral Directors Association and Oberlin Conservatory.

In collaboration with New Jersey composer, Jill Gallina, Debbie has written *All-American Sing-Along Songs*, a collection of patriotic songs and companion lesson plans, and *For the Boys*, a collection of songs that boys love to sing with background information and companion lesson plans. She has authored articles that have been published in the New Jersey Music Educators Journal, the Eastern Division American Choral Directors Newsletter, and The Choral Journal and most recently in a publication of the Music Educators National Conference.

After thirty-two years as a public school music educator-choral conductor, Deborah retired as Director of Choral Activities at Randolph High School in Randolph, New Jersey. Currently, she is teaching at Seton Hall University. In addition to teaching, Deborah serves as the Junior Choir Director at Christ Episcopal Church in Newton, New Jersey.



Linda DeGroat



Accompanist, Concert Choir

Linda is a music educator and choral director at Long Pond School in Andover Township. She also teaches piano, accompanies her church choir, and serves as an organist at Lafayette Federated Church. She directed the Sussex County Jr. Honors Choir in 2004 and accompanied this group in 2006. Linda has accompanied North Jersey Region Chorus several times and also has been Music Director at various musical theater productions in Sussex County. Linda has enjoyed knowing and working with Deborah Mello for many years since they were fellow music education majors at Glassboro State College, now known as Rowan University.

Janelle Heise



Accompanist, Bel Canto/Bella Voce

Janelle is a music educator and choral director at Pequannock Valley Middle School, Pompton, Plains, New Jersey. She also teaches privately and is a music consultant for Educational Testing Service. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Keyboard Area Performance from DePauw University and a Master of Music Education degree with conducting concentration from Westminster Choir College. Janelle has accompanied North Jersey Regions Chorus and currently manages the New Jersey Elementary Honor Choir. She resides in West Milford with her husband and has two children attending college.

Parent Organization

The success of CCSC depends on parent participation. We have an active group of volunteers and hope you will join in our efforts and let us know your specific area of expertise. Opportunities include concert management, event planning, publicity, photography, organizing fundraisers, website design, measuring and altering uniforms and administrative work. Your child(ren) will benefit by your participation and your own experience will be enhanced by the opportunity to meet other parents.

Chaperones

From time to time, parents will have the chance to volunteer as chaperones. Responsibilities include quieting the younger ensemble at a local performance, accompanying the group to a charitable event, and enforcing curfews on a tour abroad. As enjoyable as this role can be, it is an important job, one that is not always easy, and one which we expect to be taken very seriously. CCSC, as well as the other parents, count on chaperones to implement the organization's guidelines and to respond appropriately to any situation which arises during the course of a performance or a trip. Should you choose to volunteer your talents as a chaperone, you will be provided with a list of general expectations for that particular outing. Please review these prior to confirming your availability and feel free to discuss any questions or concerns with Mrs. Mello.

Thank you

We are excited to have you as a member of our organization. We wish you a wonderful experience and look forward to a busy year which we are certain you will find stimulating, challenging, but most of all, fun.

Board of Directors

Children's Chorus of Sussex County boasts an enthusiastic Board of Directors that serves as the organization's governing body. Five officers are joined by a loyal group of at-large members and they meet monthly at Christ Church. Meetings are open to all and the schedule is included on the rehearsal calendar that is provided to each family and posted on our website. Generally, meetings are the second Sunday of the month from September to June, and they run from 5:45 to 7 or 7:30 pm. The Board also meets several times during the summer months. If you are considering attending a board meeting, it is recommended that you contact one of the members beforehand to be sure the schedule hasn't changed. If you are interested in joining the Board on a regular basis, please let us know!

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