



CHORUS IMPACT STUDY TOOL: TALKING POINTS

NEW STUDY FINDS POSITIVE BENEFITS OF CHORUSES AND CHORAL SINGING FOR CHILDREN, ADULTS, AND COMMUNITIES

On any given day, in towns both large and small, choruses across the country present hundreds of beautiful concerts. While audiences and choral singers alike have long understood the intrinsic value of choral music, the 2009 *Chorus Impact Study* commissioned by Chorus America also show us that choral participation cultivates positive attributes in singers, which in turn, benefits communities. Four primary findings emerged from the research:

1. First, an estimated 42.6 million people in the U.S. sing in more than 270,000 choruses today—that’s far more than participate in any other performing art. These numbers are up since Chorus America’s earlier research in 2003. These choruses perform music that provides a means of expressing something greater than each individual participant—whether in concert halls and churches, or pavilions and town squares. The data indicates that choral singing is a thriving and growing form of artistic expression in America, and, in addition to providing great musical performances, it can be acknowledged for advancing many of the positive qualities associated with success in life both for children and adults.

2. People who sing in choruses demonstrate characteristics that make them remarkably good citizens. For example, choral singers are much more likely to be generous by volunteering in their communities and contributing money to philanthropic causes. They’re far more likely to take on leadership roles, too, and participate in the political process. For instance, 96% of adult choral singers who are eligible voters vote in national and local elections—compared to 70% of the general public who are voters. And an overwhelming number of choral singers report that singing in a chorus has helped them become better team members in other areas of their lives.

3. The 2009 study also explicitly examined the effects that choral singing has on childhood development. The results show that children who sing in choruses have academic success and valuable life skills. Additionally, both parents and educators (from every discipline) attribute a significant part of a child's academic success to singing in a choir. For example, 70% of parents said their child has become more self-confident, more self-disciplined, and has developed better memory skills since joining a choir; 80% of educators surveyed agree with parent assessments that choir participation can enhance numerous aspects of a child's social development and academic success, including better grades. A full 90% of educators surveyed believe choir participation can keep some students engaged in school who might otherwise be lost. While data has previously been gathered on the value of instrumental music education, choral singing has often been overlooked by researchers—this data fills that research gap.

4. There is a troubling decline in choral singing opportunities for children. While the research determined there are numerous academic and social benefits resulting from a child's participation in a chorus, it also pointed to an alarming trend suggesting that these opportunities are not available, or are being reduced or eliminated from schools across the country. Even though choral singing is an accessible entry point for arts exposure with few barriers—economic, cultural, or educational—more than one in four educators surveyed said there is no choral program in their schools, and more than one in five parents said that there were no choir opportunities for their children in their communities. Advocating for more opportunities for choral singing locally and nationally could be an important way to address pressing social and educational problems.