



# SINGER AND PARENT HANDBOOK

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2018



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# *Central Coast Children's Choir*

Welcome to the Central Coast Children's Choir (CCCC). Founded in 1994, CCCC is committed to bringing the highest level of artistic training to the youth of San Luis Obispo County, and dedicates itself to presenting world-class music and artistry in every performance. Our organization provides children with the exceptional opportunity of experiencing the joy of singing in rehearsals and concerts, while they receive a high-quality music education.

Comprised of over 60 boys and girls from seven to eighteen years of age, Central Coast Children's Choir singers are divided into five choruses: Debut Choir, Apprentice Choir, Young Men's Ensemble, Concert Choir, and Advanced Vocal Ensemble. The rehearsals are scheduled during after-school hours, and include musicianship training plus vocal coaching to assist in developing healthy singing habits. Repertoire is selected to fit each choir's skill level, and includes established classical works, folk songs from around the world, as well as more contemporary styles, always striving to suit the children's voices. Choristers develop self-discipline and confidence as they meet musical challenges and achieve artistic excellence under the direction of dedicated music professionals.

Over the last 23 years, CCCC has seen amazing growth in artistic quality and has become a highly respected and valuable asset in SLO County. The CCCC collaborates with premier performing groups in the community, such as the San Luis Obispo Vocal Arts Ensemble, Cuesta Master Chorale, SLO Symphony, OperaSLO, Canzona Women's Ensemble, and Cal Poly Choirs and Orchestra. CCCC performed several world premiere pieces, including "Your Voice Within" with jazz extraordinaire Inga Swearingen, and "Barter" by Meredith Brammeier, commissioned for CCCC's 20th Anniversary. The choir also performs for senior care facilities as well as local non-profits, benefiting organizations such as the SLO Children's Museum, Hospice, and C.A.S.A. Over the years, our singers have been chosen to represent California in National and Western Division Honor Choirs in numerous cities nationwide. During the summer of 2014, our singers grades 7-12 traveled to England to perform in the International Children's Choir Festival, singing at Canterbury Cathedral and in London, England. In the summer of 2016, they participated in the Pacific International Choral Festival in Eugene, Oregon.

As we continue our 24th season, we are excited that you will be joining us as we continue to build on our tradition of musical excellence!

# *Welcome to the CCCC Community!*

## **♪ CCCC Leadership and Administration**

All Central Coast Children's Choir activities and decisions are guided by a collaborative process within the CCCC staff. CCCC decisions are overseen by the CCCC Board of Directors, comprised of CCCC parents and private sector individuals who have a strong interest or career in the artistic and educational communities.

### *2018 Staff*

Artistic Directors	Melody Svennungsen & JoAnne Stoddard
Advanced Vocal Ensemble/Concert Choir Director	Melody Svennungsen
Young Men's Ensemble Director	JoAnne Stoddard
Apprentice Choir Directors	JoAnne Stoddard & Eden Bywater
Debut Choir Director	Eden Bywater
AVE/Concert Choir Accompanist	Debbie Lagomarsino
YME/Apprentice/Debut Choir Accompanist	Jean Wilt
Administrative Manager	Crista Stanley
Financial Manager	Nikki Clark
Onsite Manager	Erin Zvada

### *2018 Board of Directors*

President	Miller Newlon
Past President	Christin Newlon
Treasurer	Chris Delaney
Secretary	Karen Rainbolt
Member	Kelly Hagerman
Member	Steinar Svennungsen

### *Mission Statement*

*The Central Coast Children's Choir is devoted to creating choral excellence, instilling values of self-discipline and commitment, and building lasting friendships while inspiring the artist within each child through the power of music.*

## ♪Our Choirs

The Central Coast Children's Choir seeks to provide an exciting and stimulating place for children and youth to explore the highest level of choral artistry.

The Debut Choir is a beginning level chorus of boys and girls, grades 2-3. They perform at the major concerts and at events within the county. Children learn basic techniques of healthy singing and build vocal skills. Musicianship is taught through a variety of musical games and activities. No audition is required. Debut students should be able to follow directions, work cooperatively in a group setting, and show a strong interest in singing. Every informal community concert will include ALL Debut singers, but the opportunity to perform in the choir's seasonal concerts will depend on each singer's ability to demonstrate appropriate focus, stage presence, and non-disruptive behavior.

The Apprentice Choir is a beginning/intermediate level chorus for singers in grades 4-6 who perform at the major concerts, including the Performing Arts Center, SLO. Apprentice singers also have other opportunities to perform in community events and occasional travel to choral festivals within the state. Children learn techniques of healthy singing, build vocal skills and develop part-singing, along with musicianship instruction. No audition required.

The Young Men's Ensemble is designed for young men grades 6-12, and has been designed for both changed and unchanged voices. No audition is required; regular voice checks will be a part of rehearsal. YME will join Concert Choir on selected songs. This is the place for men to find their voice!

Singers in Concert Choir (grades 7-12) perform advanced treble music from the choral repertoire and receive instruction in musicianship, sight singing, and theory. Concert Choir members have the opportunity to participate in Opera productions, and are often called upon to appear at community events with local adult groups. In addition to performing in major concerts and events, they may tour or participate in choral festivals. The Concert Choir singer needs to show vocal independence and flexibility, and is expected to have maturity to be responsible for their music part. An audition is required.

The Advanced Vocal Ensemble is an auditioned choir that is open to Concert Choir students. AVE serves as CCCC's ambassadors to our community and are leaders within the CC.

## ♪The Artistic Experience

CCCC focuses on the whole artist. The music that we study and perform includes a broad depth of repertoire spanning the different historical eras of music from Renaissance to modern-day, as well as different styles such as Gospel, Jazz, art song literature and folk music from many countries. An emphasis is given to the connection of words to music and how they express human emotion and ideas.

Training the young singer to use a healthy vocal production is at the heart of CCCC instruction. Learning to produce a consistent core sound filled with resonance, projection, and beautiful tone and supported by strong breath management is our goal.

## 🎵 Commitment

Our choir year is divided into two semesters: August/September - December, and January-May. Members are expected to complete the semester, but preferably to commit to the entire year. New members are accepted each semester.

## 🎵 Singer Expectations

### Attendance

Students are allowed two absences per semester. More than two absences per concert season can result in a singer not being allowed to perform at the next concert. CCCC trains their students to be young professionals, so one must be prompt. Students who arrive late cause disruption to the entire group. Being on time is more than a courtesy, it is an *expectation*. Two tardies will be counted as one absence. \*BE ON TIME = BE EARLY!\* Super Saturdays are important rehearsals - we are able to combine classes and work on joint music. Often a special guest or activity takes place at these rehearsals.

We request that parents always call (805-464-0443) or email the CCCC office (info@CentralCoastChildrensChoir.org) when their child will miss a rehearsal so the absence can be properly recorded. Leaving a message does not excuse an absence, but it is a courtesy that we appreciate, as we worry about your child's whereabouts during rehearsal. If a child cannot sing, but is not infectious, we ask them to attend rehearsal so they can observe the lesson and remain caught up with the music instruction.

### **Concert Rehearsals are considered mandatory.**

It is generally the only time the singers have the opportunity to rehearse lining up, entering and exiting the stage, and learning all the performance cues for the concert.

### Dismissal

If a singer is disruptive to the choir rehearsal, shows disrespect to others, or the maturity level doesn't show a developmental readiness for performing, the Director has the option of asking the singer not to perform in the upcoming concert or dismissing the singer from the choir. The Artistic Directors will be available for discussion if necessary.

### Rehearsal Standards

Punctuality and faithful attendance is required. In order to maintain the highest possible standards of singing, choir members are expected to:

- Arrive **ten** minutes early
- Bring all music / musicianship book(s) in the CCCC book bag.
- Bring 2 sharpened pencils with erasers.
- Put music in rehearsal order *before* rehearsal begins.
- Help clean-up at the end of rehearsal if needed (chairs, music, etc).
- **The CCCC is not responsible for singers until fifteen minutes prior to rehearsal time and ten minutes after the end of rehearsal.**

## **Standards of Behavior & Excellence**

- No talking during rehearsals
- Maintain focus
- Show respect for the directors/parents/fellow singers
- Represent CCCC in a polite and professional manner
- Sing and stand with correct posture
- Have fun!

## **Rehearsal/Performance Facilities**

We are guests at many beautiful facilities. Be respectful by following these guidelines:

- Children may not run or play in the buildings or in surrounding areas.
- Stay in designated areas with parent helpers or directors.
- Water bottles with secured tops are allowed in rehearsal areas.
- Snacks are to be eaten only in designated areas at designated times.
- Use polite voices inside and out.
- Children must be dropped off and picked up promptly.
- Children in Debut Choir must have a parent/adult pick them up in the room where their choir is held.
- Children in Apprentice Choir must wait in the lobby for a parent/adult to pick them up after choir.

## **Care of Music**

Music is very expensive and difficult to replace. Choristers must assume the responsibility of looking after it carefully and returning it in good condition. Music should be kept neatly in the music folder and choir book bag. Music is to be returned at the semester's end.

Music should be marked clearly and legibly ***in pencil only*** with such notations as the Director instructs during rehearsal. No drawings on music are permitted. Replacement charges for lost materials are as follows:

- Music: \$ 5.00 per piece of music that is damaged or not returned
- Choir Bag: \$ 10.00

## **Attendance at Concerts**

***Singer attendance at final rehearsals and concerts is required and a condition of membership.***

Call times indicate the time the child is expected to be in place and ready to sing. If a child is late for call time, she/he may jeopardize their privilege to sing in that performance.

Permission for absence from a concert for a reason other than illness must be requested in writing to the Director at least one month before the concert date.

Occasional weekday concerts for older singers may require absences from school. These will be kept to a minimum and will be announced in the calendar well in advance. Letters to the school explaining the reason for the absence, along with an explanation of the educational benefits of CCCC, are available from the Artistic Directors.

Children should have one hour of rest the day of performances in order to present an energetic, high-quality program. Children should eat a healthy meal or snack one hour before call time.

## **♪Tours/Trips**

Our upper-level choirs participate in tours and out-of-town choral festivals. The decision to undertake a tour or trip is made by the Board of Directors and parents. In general, only the Concert Choir may take a tour, and the Concert Choir and Young Men's Ensemble may be invited to out-of-state and international festivals. The choirs may participate in a choral festival locally or in a nearby county. Tours and trips allow children to sing for different audiences, to meet singers from like choirs, work with other directors/guest artists, and help broaden each child's understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

Tour and trip standards and guidelines, as well as chaperone information, will be reviewed with parents and children prior to a tour. If expenses are involved in a tour or trip, parents will receive commitment information well in advance. Though we lower the cost as much as possible through fundraising, tour expenses remain the responsibility of the choir member and their family. CCCC strives to include all members of the selected choir in tours, regardless of financial situations.

## **♪Financial Matters**

### **Tuition**

The Board of Directors determines annual tuition. Tuition costs help to pay for rental of rehearsal space and concert venues, staff salaries, insurance, music purchases, office supplies, and other business-related matters. Tuition is due on the first day of rehearsal, and then subsequent payments are due according to the payment plan you select. Any payment received after the due dates will be assessed a late payment fee of \$5.00. Payment in arrears can result in the singer being dismissed from the program. Please contact the Board Treasurer or President if financial difficulties present themselves.

Any family with unpaid tuition from a previous semester will be asked to fulfill that obligation prior to participating in the next semester. They may be asked to pay the semester's full tuition rather than use the payment plan.

### **Refunds**

Should it become necessary for your child to leave the choir before the end of a semester, please send written notification to the CCCC office. A prorated adjustment may be arranged.

### **Financial Aid**

Families are eligible to apply for scholarships within the first two weeks of each semester. CCCC scholarships are based on need and apply to tuition only. Scholarship request forms may be obtained by calling the CCCC office. Since finances are a private issue, please be assured that only the Board President, Board Treasurer and Finance Manager will be involved in financial discussions. If financial difficulties should present themselves, please speak with the President,

Treasurer, or Finance Manager to work out a satisfactory payment plan. The Board does not wish for anyone to feel the need to drop from the program over finances.

Financial aid may be withdrawn if payment of remaining tuition and/or other fees are not kept current, or if the child exceeds the number of permitted absences per semester. Students on scholarship are expected to have exemplary behavior and work ethic. Parents of those children receiving a scholarship are expected to exceed the minimum of ten volunteer hours per year to at least twenty hours or to head a committee.

## **Concerts**

Each family is encouraged to sell 4 tickets to each of the Holiday and Spring concerts and any Benefit events. Our singers deserve a full house! We also ask that families help promote our events by posting flyers in their hometown, discussion on social media, and by word of mouth. Professional audio and video recordings of the concerts will be available for purchase, so we ask that there be no private recordings. No flash photography or video recording is allowed.

## **♪ Family Involvement**

The success of CCCC, as in all volunteer organizations, is **dependent on family involvement**. CCCC will provide a parent volunteer sign-up form at the beginning of the season to allow families to select 5 areas in which to volunteer. Each family is required to contribute 10 hours per year (7 hours if joining in January). If a singer chooses to participate in Opera, 3 additional hours will be required. Volunteering can be done by service, donation of snacks, or by cash donation, including a \$150 “in lieu of” contribution (\$100 if joining in January). Each hour is roughly equivalent to \$15.00.

Parents/guardians are also responsible for the following:

- Making sure singers arrive and are picked up at rehearsals/performances on time.
- Provide/arrange transportation to and from all rehearsals and events.
- Maintain upkeep of required uniform.
- Give your singer encouragement.
- Inquire about assignments/ask for newsletters and flyers.
- Listen to your singer practice at home.

It is expected that one parent/representative attend parent meetings. These meetings are scheduled as needed and are essential to provide communication and information regarding planning, events, the budget, individual choir information, etc. Check the calendar and newsletters for dates and times. Back-To-Choir Night occurs in September to kick off the season.

## **Visiting Rehearsals**

Visitor seating is sometimes limited, therefore parents, grandparents or other relatives and children may come and observe all or part of a rehearsal if prearranged with the Director. We request that infants and very young children not attend due to the distractions they may cause the singers and directors.



## **Program Ads & Sponsorships**

Program ads and sponsorships are essential to the success of CCCC. Please help by soliciting businesses and individuals in your field of influence. A personalized message in one of our concert programs is always appreciated by singers. The program ad and sponsor forms are available to download from our website ([www.CentralCoastChildrensChoir.org/support.php](http://www.CentralCoastChildrensChoir.org/support.php)).

## **Tax Deductions**

CCCC is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization. Please save all your receipts for any donations as they may be considered tax deductible (consult your tax professional). In addition, many employers have matching funds programs and we appreciate any help that you can offer in support of our non-profit organization.

## **Website**

CCCC is fortunate to have an extensive website that provides information about our wonderful choral program at [www.CentralCoastChildrensChoir.org](http://www.CentralCoastChildrensChoir.org). Families can access many documents from the website, such as our registration forms, season calendars, sponsor forms, and info on advertising in our concert programs. You can also find upcoming events, choir and director information, reviews, and a photo gallery.

## **Online Communication**

Throughout the year, the CCCC will be sending weekly e-mails and newsletters, and will utilize the CCCC website for updates to the calendar and other essential information. We also regularly post information and updates to our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/CCChildrensChoir](http://www.facebook.com/CCChildrensChoir). Please notify us if you do not have reliable access to the internet.

## **Publicity**

Privacy and security are important to the CCCC. We ask on our registration form if we may use a singer's picture in publicity for our concerts or in digital media, such as our website. We never include a child's name or address with the picture and carefully protect our singers' identities. Let the Board know if you have any questions regarding this policy.

## **Questions**

If you have any questions, contact our CCCC office at [info@CentralCoastChildrensChoir.org](mailto:info@CentralCoastChildrensChoir.org), your Choir Director, or a Board Member. Please keep us informed of anything that you think may influence your child's behavior. This helps us to better serve our singers and families. All information will be kept in confidence.

## **♪Uniforms**

Just as the ensemble's sound is important, so is the ensemble's appearance. A well-groomed, neatly uniformed ensemble is essential for a truly professional and artistic experience. Good personal hygiene is a must for all singers. The formal uniform is loaned to each choir member for the choir year. The uniform must be returned in the same condition as it was received. Lost or damaged items will be billed to the singer. Uniforms should be washed and hung neatly between performances and should not be worn to other events.

**Debut Choir Girls:**

Burgundy Blouse (Fall) / Royal Blue Blouse (Winter/Spring), Short Black Skirt  
(please supply black closed-toe shoes and full-length black tights)

**Apprentice Choir Girls:**

Burgundy Blouse (Fall) / Navy Blue Blouse (Winter/Spring), Short Black Skirt  
(please supply black closed-toe shoes and full-length black tights)

**Debut & Apprentice Choir Boys:**

White Shirt, Black Ties, Black Suspenders  
(please supply black dress pants, black socks, black shoes)

**Young Men's Ensemble:**

Shirt and tie to be assigned.  
(please supply black dress pants, black socks, black shoes)

**Concert Choir / Advanced Vocal Ensemble:**

Long Black Dress, Necklace provided by CCCC  
(please supply black closed-toe shoes and full-length black tights or black nylons)  
Advanced Vocal Ensemble also needs to provide a knee-length dress of their choosing, under the approval of their director.

**Hair** should be clean, combed, and groomed away from the face. No large hair ties, bows or adornments. Make-up cannot be worn by Debut or Apprentice level singers, and must be worn discreetly by the singers in the advanced choirs. Accessories, watches, or any coloring in the hair are not permitted. Stud earrings are permissible.

**The Informal Uniform** is as follows:

Choir polo (provided for all new and returning members), casual closed-toe shoes, nice blue or black jeans/pants are acceptable in Debut and Apprentice choirs. Black pants are required for AVE, Concert Choir, and Young Men's Ensemble.

Children are encouraged to wear their blue CCCC logo polos to school and other public places. They are great publicity for the Choir.

## **🎵 Contact Information**

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We thank you in advance for entrusting your child to us. We appreciate each of our singers!

**Music can, and does, change lives!**