

BOSTON CHILDREN'S CHORUS

*Proposal for Michael and Linda Frieze
for the purpose of establishing the*

Ambassadors of Harmony Tuition Fund



“Our family values cultural diversity, but our rural neighborhood offers limited opportunities for our children to meet other kids with different family stories.

I am so pleased to see my daughter flourishing in this unique environment, with the common language of music, and I am grateful to you and your staff for providing her with this rare opportunity for growth.”

-The mother of Tori, a second-year student in the Dorchester House Training Choir

Submitted by: David C. Howse, Executive Director, Boston Children's Chorus

Giving Opportunity

The Boston Children's Chorus (BCC) respectfully requests your consideration of a gift to help establish the ***Ambassadors of Harmony Tuition Fund***, which will support the tuition gap for the 500 youth to be served by the BCC in our 10th Anniversary season beginning in September 2012. With a unique emphasis on transforming the lives of our singers through the power of music, BCC – in its brief nine-year history – has already been recognized as a key player locally and nationally by the Social Innovation Forum, Chorus America and the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Established by social activist Hubie Jones in 2002, the BCC has distinguished itself for its diversity, artistic excellence and commitment to nurturing underserved youth as musicians, responsible citizens and future leaders. **Through the Tuition Fund, you can help the BCC enhance its impact on the lives of children from Greater Boston.**

The BCC is a tuition-based program. To ensure broad participation, especially by those from low-income households, we keep tuition affordable, on a ten-point sliding scale based on household income, and we also provide additional support when needed.

Because BCC significantly subsidizes tuition over and beyond the sliding scale (average cost-per-child last year was \$5,000, and tuition ranges from \$48- \$1,000), we must fill the average annual gap of \$4,421 per student primarily with contributed revenue. We will never turn away a child, no matter what their financial circumstances. Over 43% of our children come from households with income levels \$65,000 or less: 16% < \$25K; 8.3% = \$25K-\$35K; 7.4% = \$35K-\$45K; 5.4% = \$45K-\$55K; 6% = \$55K-\$65K.

While conducting a longitudinal study of the lives of youth in low-income neighborhoods, education researcher Milbrey McLaughlin found that those who participated in arts programs were more likely to be high academic achievers, be elected to class office, and participate in a math or science fair. (McLaughlin, 2000)

Overview of Boston Children's Chorus

The Boston Children's Chorus is an innovative arts education organization that purposefully unites area children ages 7-18 across differences of race, religion and socioeconomic status to participate in intensive choral and musicianship training, youth/leadership development and mentoring, and once-in-a-lifetime performing experiences locally, nationally and around the world.

The mission of the BCC is to harness the power and joy of music to unite our city's diverse communities and inspire social change.

Through our programs, BCC enhances the 21st century education and social development of these youth as musicians, confident future leaders and productive citizens. Our underserved young people are the "unassumed" leaders who need the most help in finding their voices. BCC is a proven, life-changing outlet for their voices to be empowered and heard.

Beginning in 2003 with only 20 children in a pilot training program, today the BCC serves nearly 450 singers in eleven choirs at four levels in five Boston locations – our central location on Shawmut Avenue in Boston and our neighborhood-based locations in Dorchester, Allston-Brighton, South Boston and the South End's Villa Victoria community. We anticipate an expansion to 500 students next season.



The Boston Globe dubbed BCC “Ambassadors of Harmony”, and we have taken that mantle seriously, whether we are singing locally for the residents of the Pine Street Inn or for royalty half-way around the world.

BCC is infused with an enormous vision for Boston. We have an unwavering commitment to initiate strategic collaborations and an unstoppable determination to create a lasting social and cultural legacy for our children and the city.

BCC purposefully unites children across differences of race, religion and socioeconomic status to create community and break down social and racial barriers.

More than half of our singers live in an inner-city neighborhood, and we are especially proud to serve a growing number of adolescent young men of color in our Young Men’s Ensemble. Expectations for this particular demographic are often low and they are one of the most difficult to attract in after-school programs. At BCC, our Young Men’s Ensemble is thriving, and we are encouraged that **100% of our singers, including our young men, graduate high school and are accepted to college.** In Boston, the overall 2007-08 graduation rate for Black males was only 47%, compared with 60% for White males. (The 2010 Schott 50 State Report on Black Males in Public Education)

There are four core programs of the Boston Children’s Chorus:

- a) Choral Activities/Music Education – choirs for children ages 7-18 at four progressively advanced levels that meet for rehearsals and our sequential curriculum providing sustained learning opportunities in music theory, sight-singing and ear-training. Youth sing in 50 varied performances across Boston, and advanced groups sing in the signature Martin Luther King Tribute Concert at Jordan Hall.
- b) Visiting Artists & Scholars Program – BCC builds relationships with renowned artists and scholars in the field of music and music education; these leaders interact and partner with BCC singers and the community providing meaningful experiences through residencies, workshops and performances.
- c) Tours & Excursions – Advanced groups tour domestically or internationally annually, with opportunities to represent Boston, spread the BCC mission of social healing, learn about foreign cultures and their histories, and form friendships across global boundaries.
- d) Youth/Leadership Development: BCC empowers youth to take ownership of their participation, assisting their development as independent and responsible learners, thinkers, musicians and citizens.



Outcomes

Based on our experience, we feel confident that this opportunity will give the following to our singers:

- 100% of singers graduate high school and are accepted to college.
- A global perspective, a disciplined work ethic, as well as personal, social and creative skills, that prepare our singers to be 21st century leaders.
- An orientation for leadership, community service and social justice.
- Vocal, ensemble and music theory/literacy skills that create technically excellent and confident performers, setting them up for success in whatever career they choose to pursue.

Isabelle is a mature, poised 17 year old young person who has developed her voice at BCC – both musically and personally. Her reflection on BCC's appearance at the 9/11 Commemorative Concert at the Hatch Shell speaks volumes about her growth and understanding of BCC's social mission:

"In my 9 years of participating in BCC, I have heard our mission statement hundreds of times. It is important to me to try to take meaning from it - on Sunday, I felt that our mission was accomplished...Through song, we exemplified compassion, understanding, unity, and humility, and even if this message was only internalized by one audience member, it was worth it. BCC was a shoulder for Bostonians to lean on, and if that isn't social change, I don't know what is."

BCC is clearly helping our singers of all backgrounds discover their potential, as confident, successful young adults. One of our young singers, Precious, who happens to be blind, had this to say:

"I want to thank you for everything; for believing in me. Simply knowing that you knew I was no different even when others didn't was enough for me to stand up and sing my heart out without holding back."



We are proud that renowned education experts, arts leaders and researchers in the US and abroad who work with our singers remark with awe and excitement that **BCC is demonstrating something that few attempt or think is possible – that a children’s music program can be both demographically diverse, operate at a very high level of artistic excellence, and be socially relevant.** It is this duality of our mission – to create a world-class youth arts institution that also serves as a catalyst for community-building and social healing – that makes BCC unique. BCC intentionally unites youth across social and racial differences and also demonstrates diversity at all levels – including our board and staff. In addition, the diversity of our performances and audiences, and our emphasis on nurturing our youth as leaders, also set us apart from most arts groups.



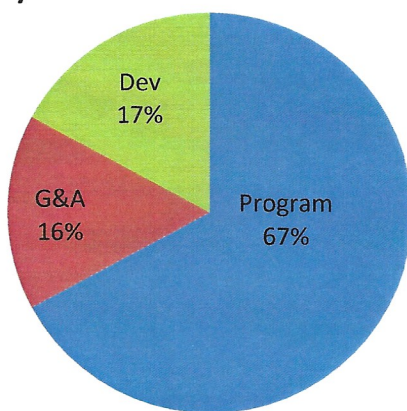
Financial Standing

BCC is in a strong financial position, ending the 2011 fiscal year with a surplus, thereby continuing to strengthen its overall net assets. Diversifying revenue is a high priority. BCC has built its financial stability based primarily on foundation support. Although the economic environment continues to be somewhat challenging, we will continue to be aggressive in securing grants, and we will significantly diversify donated revenue by building support from corporations (through season and individual concert sponsorships), individuals (major donor program development, annual fund infrastructure development, match opportunities and targeted parent fundraising), government (through support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Boston Cultural Council and the National Endowment for the Arts) and increased earned revenue (ticket sales, CD and other product sales, performance fees, tuition, and development of a business model for our music education program).

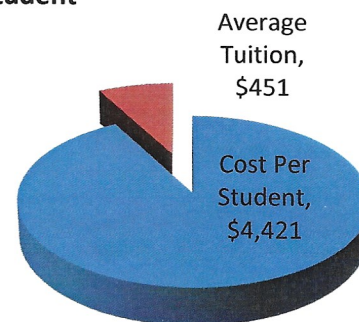
With a \$2 million budget, BCC is in good financial standing. Our commitment to serving all children – no matter their socio-economic status – presents a significant gap. To date, we have been obliged to cover the gap in revenue through general operating contributions. Filling the tuition gap is one of our greatest needs, and presents a unique fundraising challenge.

Budget

Expenses by Function



Cost Per Student



Your Role: Establishing the *Ambassadors of Harmony* Tuition Fund

As the Boston Children's Chorus moves into its tenth anniversary year, we take our place in Greater Boston's cultural landscape as an established institution with significant community impact. Our organizational goals now center on fostering **greater impact, visibility and sustainability**.

To that end, the Boston Children's Chorus respectfully requests your consideration of a gift in the range of \$25,000 - \$100,000 to establish the ***Ambassadors of Harmony* Tuition Fund**. At this level, we would be very pleased to discuss potential naming opportunities for your gift.

By investing in the BCC's youth development programs, you choose to supply the resources necessary to help ensure that this unique opportunity is available for all singers, regardless of socioeconomic status, for years to come.



Your investment would:

- Allow us to continue to expand the number of children served. Currently the BCC is able to educate 450 singers in 11 choirs across the city. A gift of \$100,000 would support the \$4,000 tuition gap for 25 singers-effectively underwriting an entire choir for a year!
- Reduce pressure on the annual operating budget, freeing up funds for special projects and opportunities, and increasing reserves.
- Support travel costs for lower-income students, providing access to the world and its cultures for more of our singers – preparing them to be engaged, 21st century leaders. The 2013 international tour is planned for Vietnam and Cambodia, where our students will interact with and perform with local youth, and learn about our mutual history of conflict and healing.
- Empower BCC to attract additional funding sources – specifically like-minded individuals. By providing the seed money to establish the **Ambassadors of Harmony Tuition Fund**, you will create the vehicle and provide the inspiration for other generous individuals to follow your lead, thereby building the BCC's financial stability into the coming decades.

In short, your generosity will have an enormous impact on both the current and future generations of area youth and their families through the work of the Boston Children's Chorus.

In our ten-year history, BCC has made remarkable progress and built a strong platform for even greater success. To move the organization forward to the next level we are seeking to mark our 10th Anniversary with the investment of enlightened individuals who care deeply about community, education, and social harmony.

The Boston Children's Chorus harnesses the power and joy of music to unite our city's diverse communities and inspire social change.

Our ability to live this mission shines through to all who come in contact with the BCC, as articulated by these two notable figures:

"The children who are touched by the magic that is the Boston Children's Chorus will leave it as changed people. They will have learned a discipline, a concept of excellence, and a capacity to work together in pursuit of a shared goal that few children will be fortunate enough to know. I myself was touched and inspired in a way that has happened rarely in my many years of artistic collaboration."

KEITH LOCKHART, CONDUCTOR, THE BOSTON POPS ORCHESTRA

"The Boston Children's Chorus is one of the finest examples of a youth arts organization I have encountered. The Chorus' achievements in a short amount of time are impressive and the children themselves take my breath away whenever I hear them. The future of Greater Boston's children is brighter because of the Boston Children's Chorus."

SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY

The Boston Children's Chorus anticipates an exciting future, changing the lives of thousands of young people and transforming them into Boston's ***Ambassadors of Harmony***.

We look forward to discussing with you your role in securing the future of the Boston Children's Chorus.

