

# BOSTON CHILDREN'S CHORUS



ANNUAL REPORT 09

THESE ARE  
OUR STORIES



## OUR MISSION

The Boston Children's Chorus harnesses the power and joy of music to unite our city's diverse communities and inspire social change. Our singers transcend social barriers in a celebration of shared humanity and love of music. Through intensive choral training and high-profile public performance experiences (locally, throughout the U.S. and around the world), they learn discipline, develop leadership skills, and proudly represent the city of Boston as ambassadors of harmony here and around the world.

DAVID C. HOWSE  
Executive Director

ANTHONY TRECEK-KING  
Artistic Director

HUBIE JONES  
Founder and President

## OUR VALUES

Boston Children's Chorus was started in 2003 as a means of unifying the diverse communities of Boston. Since then, we have taken our message of community and commonality around the world. As we celebrate our sixth anniversary, we hold to the core values of youth development and community building as a way to bring about wider social change.

**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:** Boston Children's Chorus gives children – especially those at risk or underserved – opportunities for an intensive music education and performance experience, teaching them the analytical, creative, communication, leadership and teamwork skills needed to excel in all of life's endeavors.

**COMMUNITY BUILDING:** The BCC empowers children from every urban and suburban neighborhood to serve as ambassadors for Boston at important local events and on national and international tours.

**SOCIAL CHANGE:** The BCC brings together children, families and community leaders from Boston's diverse racial, ethnic, socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds, to sing and celebrate, develop relationships and break down social barriers.

THE NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC IS OUR LEAD ARTISTIC PARTNER. BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MASSACHUSETTS IS OUR LEAD CORPORATE PARTNER.

# > A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



**David C. Howse**  
Executive Director

**Annette Rubin**  
Former Executive Director

*...these voices have continued to bring our communities together across differences, and have reminded us of the potential and opportunity of youth*

*Dear Friends,*

On weekday afternoons and Saturday mornings the beautiful sounds of young voices can be heard at BCC Central or in our neighborhood locations at Dorchester House, West End House in Allston-Brighton and in the Villa Victoria Cultural Center in Boston's South End. In a year of challenge, excitement and change at the Boston Children's Chorus, these voices have continued to bring our communities together across differences, and have reminded us of the potential and opportunity of youth.

This Fifth Anniversary Season has given us much cause for celebration. Now almost 300 singers strong, in nine choirs in four Boston locations, BCC has presented more than 50 performances this season, including the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. tribute concert. Broadcast live to thousands of viewers in New England for three consecutive years, our 2009 program on January 19 was syndicated and broadcast nationally for the first time!

It couldn't have been more fitting that the concert was held on the eve of the historic inauguration of President Barack Obama, as the voices of our singers were filled with the hope and change that helped sweep Mr. Obama into the White House.

The concert featured special guests Louis Gossett, Jr. and the Young People's Chorus of New York City and was presented in partnership with New England Conservatory, WCVB-TV Channel 5 (ABC) and National Presenting Season Sponsor, State Street Corporation.

The season, which was filled with high notes, culminated in our tour of Jordan at the invitation of His Majesty King Abdullah II. The planned cultural exchange was an opportunity-of-a-lifetime for many, if not all, of our singers in the Premier Choir and Young Men's Ensemble. It was also a chance to foster cross-cultural understanding between American and Middle Eastern youths and reinforced our mission of shaping global citizens.

The end of the season also brought a change in leadership, but not in continuity or commitment. The transition of Executive Directorship has been seamless, thanks to the strong foundation of organizational growth and development that BCC will build upon. We are both very proud that this changeover has gone so smoothly, and believe that it represents a model for effective leadership transition, and the support and promotion of young leaders.

Our deepest appreciation goes to every singer, parent, friend and supporter of the Boston Children's Chorus. We have achieved so much during this past year, but we have also raised the bar of what to expect from our young men and women. We look forward to tackling new challenges, creating better singers and citizens and celebrating the successes of the year to come with our entire BCC community.

In appreciation,

*David Annette*

# > A LETTER FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



**Anthony Trecek-King**  
Artistic Director

*We will continue to have high expectations and demand only the best from our singers.*

*Dear Friends,*

In order to have a great chorus, you have to have great singers. As an organization, we always want to become better, not just musically, but also socially and educationally. We are constantly striving for higher ground.

But how do we get better? One way would be to recruit better singers and replace the ones that we have. The other is to help the students who are currently in our program succeed to their highest level. While we are always looking for talent among our new recruits, our goal as a program is to provide an opportunity for all students to become the best they can. It is our job to create better singers by deepening our commitment, by pushing these kids to higher achievement, putting them in more challenging performance settings with tougher concert schedules, and by educating them and encouraging them to take on even more challenges. We will provide them with the opportunity to fail, but set them up with the skills to succeed.

We believe that helping our singers excel in their knowledge and maturity will lead to greater accessibility to the music. If they understand a culture, they will be able to perform its music on all its levels. When we are faced with something new, as a group we explore the topic. Once we talk it out, a new level of feeling and emotion — generated by understanding — comes through in the music. It allows them to experience things differently. This is one of the many reasons why we cannot ignore the social development of our singers and is also what sets our program apart from others.

With the rapid growth of the organization over the past few seasons, our nine choirs are at full capacity, and some have a waiting list. This puts us in a great position to further increase the quality of all programs at all levels, and most importantly, widens our impact in the community. We will continue to have high expectations and demand only the best from our singers.

In the coming years, we will continue to advance our educational goals for singers and further solidify the framework for each level. We will strive to have no less than a positive impact on arts education, our singers, their families, and the community. In doing so, we will approach the pinnacle of choral music both nationally and internationally, setting the tone and model for programs across the country, even the world.

We produce and perform many concerts across Boston and the state of Massachusetts with the goal of connecting and stimulating the community in our mission for social change. We are only able to achieve such profound goals through artistic excellence and solid music education. To that end, my goal is to establish, nurture and grow BCC's artistic credibility, which has already begun to resonate with choral music scholars and enthusiasts alike. In this our sixth season we will explore new and interesting collaborations such as with Opera Boston for the premier of *Madame White Snake*; a national radio program with NPR's "From the Top"; our annual Martin Luther King, Jr. tribute concert at Jordan Hall, and then performing in Philadelphia at the American Choral Directors Association Regional Convention.

In so many ways, we are at or above capacity. We are building on momentum and have new staff that is bringing a new energy to all of our choirs. It's going to be a very exciting year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Anthony Trecek-King".

# > THIS IS MY STORY



## Hubie Jones

FOUNDER, BOSTON CHILDREN'S CHORUS

I'll admit that when I was young, personally, I was not that big into music. There was no music instruction at my public school in the South Bronx. And though my sisters took private piano lessons from a wonderful teacher in our neighborhood, I wasn't interested in that 'girl stuff.'

What I did have in my life, at that time and into early adulthood, were some figures who made it clear to me it was important to be a leader. My father was a Pullman porter, and on his days off, he volunteered for his union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. He represented others in legal matters, defending porters in trouble. The union's president, A. Philip Randolph, was considered to be the dean of black leaders in the 1960s. My father referred to him as "The Chief", and as a high school student, I knew that Mr. Randolph was making change as a leader in the world.

*When I graduated from high school, I knew I wanted to be a leader of some kind. I had no idea how that would be, but I embraced the concept of being a leader, of bringing people together, of fighting for the civil rights of all people.*

It became clearer at the City College of New York. My professor for Introduction to Psychology, Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, was the head of the social science team working with NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall, who was getting ready to present *Brown v. Board of Education* to the Supreme Court. The court had never accepted a social science brief, but Dr. Clark showed it to us and said 'What do you think?' It was pretty heady stuff. And the brief was quoted in the court's decision – 'Racial segregation is psychologically harmful to black children.'

Dr. Clark showed me that a person in academia could use his intelligence and scholarship to forge social change and secure civil rights, and this became the model of my time as an educator and my commitment to turning to young people to erase social barriers.

I still didn't get it, though, until about 10 years ago, when it finally occurred to me that the best way to bring children together is through the arts.

Boston Children's Chorus is a music education organization — helping young people sing at levels of excellence, as well as using music to create social change in the city and the region if not the world.

I see the way these kids develop their potential and seek to be leaders and it makes me feel proud. Our singers are very empowered. They are thinking all the time about how they can make a difference. As one research evaluator found out, they are put off by pointless adult pre-occupations with the effect of race and ethnicity on social interactions. They assess their peers on maturity — showing up on time, knowing their music, reaching out to those in need.

To see the social integration of our singers across social barriers, for me that's extraordinarily important and rewarding.

*Hubie*

# > THESE ARE OUR PROGRAMS



## PREMIER CHOIR

Advanced singers ages 12-18. Our premier performing group offers a stimulating, comprehensive and demanding choral repertoire requiring an advanced level of musical skill. The Premier Choir participates in local, national and international tours.



## YOUNG MEN'S ENSEMBLE

A special program to meet the unique needs of boys ages 10-18 with changed and changing voices.

## CONCERT CHOIR

Singers ages 10-16 with advanced musical skills receive intensive training in music theory, music history and foreign languages. Performances include regional tours.

## LYRIC CHOIR

Intermediate singers ages 10-14 with treble voices. This level requires individual attentiveness, vocal skills and theory comprehension, while offering expanded repertoire and performance experiences.

## WEST END HOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD CHOIR

A neighborhood-based beginner level choir for singers ages 7-12 established in collaboration with the West End House in Allston-Brighton.

## VILLA VICTORIA NEIGHBORHOOD CHOIR

A neighborhood-based choir for beginner level singers ages 7-12 established in collaboration with Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción (IBA) in Boston's South End community.

## DORCHESTER HOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD I

A neighborhood-based choir for beginner level singers ages 7-12 established in collaboration with Dorchester House in Fields Corner.

## DORCHESTER HOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD II

Intermediate level neighborhood-based choir established in partnership with Dorchester House in Fields Corner.

## TREBLE CHOIR

Beginning singers ages 7-12. This program develops music basics such as theory, interval training, rhythm and sight reading techniques. Attention span and concentration are points of focus.

All choirs emphasize note reading, vocal training and performance skills.



# > THESE ARE OUR STORIES



*Robert Seifert*

BCC Donor

My company has a foundation of sorts — a donor advised fund — and we are empowered and entrusted to decide how funding to local charities will be made. The Boston Children's Chorus won us over with the work they do that goes beyond the obvious, beyond the music. They are creating opportunities for these young men and women to put forth their best selves.

On a personal level, my wife and I fell in love with the group and the mission and that has continued over the years. For instance, we reacted after we saw their concert on the Esplanade; we reacted when the Jordan trip came up and not everyone was going to be able to afford to go. And some of the favor has been returned. They helped us baptize our new office space in October 2008. The Young Men's Ensemble came and sang and talked with our guests. I believe it was incredibly uplifting to our clients at a time that was incredibly hectic as the stock markets were being especially hard hit. It was the highlight of our year.

Recently, I started talking with the chorus leadership to see if some of my energies could be used as well as my dollars. As a part of the Finance Committee, I'm glad my skill set can be used to further the mission. What we need to do is make clear that we are not just trying to survive the year, but are part of the very fabric of Boston. Donors, like me, who are lucky enough to have discovered the BCC will be rewarded again and again for many years to come.

*Naomi Zingher, 15*

Chorus Member

The trip to Jordan really opened my eyes. It was different than I expected and the people were so sweet and wonderful. Before the trip, I had these stereotypes built in. Because I'm Jewish, I was always hearing negative things about how the Palestinians were causing all the problems. It hit close to home for me. I was born in Israel and I have family there.

But once I got to Jordan and starting meeting these people, it made me feel guilty. I had only been seeing things from one side. Jordan is beautiful and the people were so kind and so welcoming. I had always just gone along with what I heard others say. I felt like I had been following one point of view my whole life. But there are others.

It's like with the BCC. I have so many friends I wouldn't normally have. They would be in their own little cliques. But now, thanks to the chorus, they're my friends.

The Jordan trip also made me realize that I took too literally what people had said. When they said bad things about Palestinians who do the bombings, they're talking about the actual people involved, not an entire race. Just because a small group of individuals commits these acts, you can't blame the whole race. I probably never would have learned this lesson if it wasn't for the chorus. I'm so glad I did take this trip. It turned out to be better than I imagined.



# > THIS IS ABOUT OUR SOCIAL PROGRAMMING



*The singers of the Boston Children's Chorus are not just learning to be ambassadors of harmony, but also to be global citizens.*



Through key partnerships and collaborations with community-based organizations, schools, arts organizations and many different religious institutions, the singers are deeply involved with their surrounding communities. These hands-on experiences allow them to see firsthand how they are creating a lasting social and cultural legacy in and around greater Boston and how they are influencing and inspiring others to do the same.

During the 2008-09 season, singers from the Premier Choir, Young Men's Ensemble, Concert Choir and Lyric Choir brought their music and their energy to such diverse locales as the Pine Street Inn, Fox Hill Village Continuing Care Center, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Mel King Institute for Community Building Kickoff, the Rose Kennedy Greenway opening ceremonies, local charter and primary schools and the Massachusetts Statehouse for an event honoring the king of Rwanda.



Throughout the year, BCC participated in forums and workshops that included Samariteens, which provided training in healthy living and how to be supportive of friends and loved ones going through difficult times or grieving a loss; Life of a Musician, with graduate students from the New England Conservatory and performers from Opera Boston; and Arts Leadership Training with "From The Top" that involved 20 singers learning to connect to the power of music, understanding leadership roles, and identifying the leadership style that each singer represents.



The biggest and most challenging event of the year, however, is always the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. tribute concert. The nationally broadcast concert is only a snapshot of the intense preparation that goes into the event. Not only are there extra rehearsals, but also panel discussions about Rev. King, his legacy and how it applies to the students' lives today.

Many of the endeavors the choirs undertake also involve group discussions and talking through issues and events to gain a greater understanding of their world and their roles and responsibilities in that world.



# > THESE ARE OUR STORIES

## Jean Kanarian

Parent and Donor



My 10-year-old daughter Nazeli (pronounced Nazza-LEE) has been in treble choir for two years and will be in the Lyric Choir. Early on, around the age of seven, she really exhibited a love of music, and we had a piano teacher who recommended BCC.

Nazeli is a shy kid, not a very confident child, and very reserved. At the end of the first year in the choir, I saw a spark in her. Then throughout her whole second year, her confidence just bloomed and blossomed. BCC sets her apart from what the other kids at school are doing. She also had to try out. That she was accepted into the choir was a huge boost for her.

But credit also has to go to Assistant Artistic Director Michele Adams. She was critical to bringing Nazeli out of her shell and made her a leader among the group. Michele saw her strengths and encouraged her. She saw that she had some talent and has helped her develop that. The treble chorus is a large group, probably 20-30 kids, and Nazeli had to feel her way to be a part of it. Now, she's one of the first to volunteer to sing a solo in front of a group. It's mostly due to Michele pulling that leadership piece out of her, recognizing it and encouraging it.

Nazeli is a much more confident child. She expresses herself, and is able to say what she likes. It gives her such joy, and gives me happiness to see her this way.



## Terrell James, 17

Chorus Member

When I joined Boston Children's Chorus was when I actually started to take music seriously. I had been in choirs and singing since about third grade, but I was more interested in other things, like basketball. I joined BCC in eighth grade, and the end of the first year, that was when it hit me. From then on, all of my focus was on music.

Besides being a senior at Chelsea High, I go to the High School Academy at Berklee College of Music twice a week. I also earned a full scholarship for the 2009 Summer Performance Program, which was five weeks and 13 classes. I got in for voice, studied jazz and learned some new artists I had never heard of before. I learned about background vocals and about different ways to use my voice. I also auditioned and applied to Berklee and earned a four-year scholarship.

Everything we do at BCC, the ear training, learning to sight-read music, solfege, learning rhythms, call and response, auditioning. That all prepped me for this. When I started, I didn't know the program would do all this. But when I was at Berklee, I was way ahead of the game. A lot of the other students had to learn these things, but I already knew it. It's the reason I got a scholarship to the school I wanted to go to. BCC is everything for me.

# > THIS IS OUR FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

June 30, 2009

Total Assets	670,314
Total Liabilities	234,312
Total Net Assets	436,002
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	670,314

## CONDENSED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the Year Ended June 30, 2009

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
Total Revenue & Support	1,424,164	74,899	1,499,063
Total Expenses	1,904,859		1,904,859
Change in Net Assets	(480,695)	74,899	(405,796)
Net Assets Beginning of Year	701,748	140,050	841,798
Net Assets, End of Year	221,053	214,949	436,002

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Our 2009 financial position remains strong with cash balances of nearly \$200,000 at year end, representing approximately two months of working capital needs. At year end, BCC's current ratio is just about 2:1, an indicator of a stable liquidity. Our total debt to equity ratio is approximately 5:1, suggesting a low-leveraged organization.

BCC always strives to be prudent with the dollars received from outside sources, including grants and contributions from private and public sources.

During 2009, BCC's unrestricted decrease in net assets was nearly \$490,000 while the receipt of temporarily restricted grants, earned in one period and spent in another, resulted in a total net asset increase of \$75,000.

The overall decrease in net assets was primarily a factor of the challenging economic climate for nonprofit organizations. BCC has implemented a prudent financial strategy in FY10, including conservative revenue goals, and a reduction in expenses of over \$350,000.

*The full audited financial statements are available for review upon request.*

# > OUR AMAZING TRIP TO JORDAN

This summer's tour to Jordan proved to be a life altering experience both individually and collectively. Our singers performed extremely well under a variety of circumstances, and were exemplary Ambassadors of Harmony.

U.S. Ambassador to Jordan, R. Stephen Beecroft noted that our person-to-person cultural diplomacy played a significant role towards Jordanians' understanding and affection for the U.S.

This was a truly unforgettable experience for everyone who participated.

*David*



*Governor Patrick sends us off in high style*



*Holy Dead Sea exfoliation!*



*Chilling out on Day Eight*



*Petra. One of the seven wonders of the world! High expectations exceeded!*



*What an awesome country!*



*Cultural diplomacy - achieved!*



*Jordanian youth perform a rap for us!*



*Group photo with our new Jordanian friends*

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