



For Immediate Release

Boston Children's Chorus Expands Partnership With Boston Area Schools

BCC's year-long in-school choral offering is a collaboration with students, faculty, and administrators

Boston, MA (October 24, 2023) – Boston Children's Chorus (BCC) is proud to announce the expansion of their in-school partnerships with public and charter schools throughout the city of Boston to provide choral programming to more than 1,500 students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels across seven different school communities. The collaboration between BCC and Boston schools creates an accessible way to participate in the chorus by bringing it directly to students.

"We are thrilled to see the integration of BCC into the heart of our schools," said BCC Executive Director **Andrés Holder**. "Through the power of music, we are nurturing young talent, encouraging creativity, and fostering valuable connections between students, ultimately creating a positive environment for all those involved. Together, we are not only raising voices but also uplifting the spirits of our future generation, ensuring that, in close partnership with the school, each student has the necessary tools to unlock their artistic potential from within their own community."

The expansion to six schools follows a 2022 pilot program at the Ellison Parks Early Education School in Mattapan and the Chelsea Public Schools, which served over 1,000 students total over the course of the year. Participants performed in BCC's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute Concert at Symphony Hall in Boston and presented culminating community performances in their schools at the end of the year.

During the 2023-24 academic year, BCC's in-school program will provide dynamic choral programs where students will take part in weekly rehearsals during the school day for the duration of the academic year at Bradley Elementary School in East Boston, Gardner Pilot Academy in Allston, the Mildred Avenue K-8 School and Ellison Parks Early Education School in Mattapan, the Oliver Hazard Perry K - 6 School in South Boston, Chelsea Public Schools, and the Crispus Attucks Children's Center in Roxbury.

As part of the expansion, BCC has also hired **Robert McFletcher-Jones** to serve as the organization's first in-school program conductor. Mr. Robert, as he is known by his beloved students, is a recent MFA Vocal Pedagogy MT Graduate of Boston Conservatory at Berklee. He was born and raised in Battle Creek, Michigan, is the son of a teacher, and a product of both charter and public schools. McFletcher-Jones brings 10 years of experience as a professional performer, teaching culturally relevant workshops and developing choral programs to the BCC community.

"At BCC, we strive to empower all students to discover their voice through song," said McFletcher-Jones. "Through our in-school programming, our intention is to create a steady authentic space, where students feel seen, capable, and open to use their voice creatively with joy! Our in-school choral program connects culturally affirming texts, with culturally relevant repertoire while building wholistic music literacy."

In addition to the year-long offerings, the program also offers a six-week program, *Change Sings*, for elementary students to learn freedom songs while engaging in critically conscious discussions on current and past events surrounding the text; a six-week program for middle school students, *Rap & Choral*, which focuses on the synergy of rap and melodic vocal music; and a six-week program for high school students, *Ainna That Good News*, based on the masterworks of Kirk Franklin, Shekinah Glory and the deep-rooted traditions of the Black American spiritual.

"A successful partnership flourishes when both parties are willing to grow together. We are so grateful to have BCC return for a second year and lead Ellison Parks second and third graders in chorus," said

LaToya McGlothlin, director of access at Ellison Parks Early Education School. “Robert and the BCC team push our students to enjoy the art of music and express themselves through singing. Our students and staff are thrilled that this partnership continues to grow.”

“We are thrilled to have been able to build a partnership with the Boston's Children's Chorus and CPS,” said Officer of Innovation, Access, and Opportunity **Malik Howshan**, of Chelsea Public Schools. “It is truly wonderful for our elementary students to have an additional opportunity of after school enrichment with an organization that prides itself on excellence in supporting and connecting Greater Boston's local youth and diverse communities.”

“BCC has been a pleasure for our students and staff, bringing joy into students' everyday lived experience at school,” said **Manon Michel**, art teacher at Excel Academy Charter Schools. “Songs our students learned were heard throughout our hallways months after the program finished last year. We deeply appreciate this partnership with BCC, as it provides our students to find confidence through encouragement to new, uncomfortable, and rewarding experiences through group song.”

For more information on the program or how to get involved, please reach out to info@bostonchildrenschorus.org.

In-school programs are funded in part by annual donors to BCC's education and access programs, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Hestia Fund, and by Boston Public Schools (BPS) Arts Expansion, a multi-year effort focusing on access, equity, and quality arts learning for BPS students. The BPS Arts Expansion Fund, managed by EdVestors, is supported by the Barr Foundation, The Boston Foundation, Katie and Paul Buttenwieser, The Klarman Family Foundation, Linde Family Foundation, and other foundations and individuals. BPS Arts Expansion is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

About Boston Children's Chorus

Boston Children's Chorus (BCC) was founded in 2003 by Hubie Jones, a civic leader who has worked for six decades to address the social problems facing Boston's underserved children and communities. Named Boston's “Ambassadors of Harmony” by *The Boston Globe*, BCC harnesses the power of music to connect Boston's diverse communities, cultivate empathy, and inspire social inquiry. BCC choir programs include 10 choirs with singers from 110 different zip codes in and around Boston. Outside of their after-school programming, BCC is proud to partner with schools to develop in-school choral programs in Mattapan, Roxbury, South Boston, East Boston, Allston and the city of Chelsea. BCC presents over 50 performances per season in a wide range of public and private events. They have performed in venues from Boston Symphony Hall, and Royal Albert Hall in London, to Sydney Opera House, and the White House.

BCC is supported in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and in part by a grant from the Boston Cultural Council, a local agency which is funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, administered by the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture.

Media Contact:

Justin Auguste

jauguste@thecastlegrp.com

617.851.8211

###