

One Good idea spawned another...read on

Ontario Youth A Cappella Chorus to be known as the O YA CHORUS

Over the past few years, there have been attempts to involve younger singers in programs that did not require the singers to be registered barbershoppers. In some cases these were formed as a result of the new Youth Festival incentive put forward by the Barbershop Harmony Society. Until recently there had been no Canadian group participation by any of the previously formed groups at the BHS Youth Festival for whatever reason. In January of 2010 the first ever Canadian Chorus did us proud at the Barbershop Harmony Society International Youth Festival.

The largest contingent of the Cross Canada Chorus for 2010 came from Ontario. Forty young men between the ages of 15 and 30 participated ... you have all read the reports of the success of the chorus and the program but.....What's next?

The Ontario District Board has resolved that an ongoing youth program in the form of a province wide youth chorus is a worthwhile endeavour and have sanctioned the formation of the ONTARIO YOUTH A CAPPELLA CHORUS to be known as the O YA CHORUS!!!

The chorus is made up of current barbershoppers who fit the age requirement (14-30), and a large number of young men who are being exposed to barbershopping for perhaps the first time, but with no ulterior motive to sign them to chapters.

This note is going out to all Barbershop Chapters in Ontario District to encourage you to promote and invite all self motivated young men that like to sing, in Ontario, to become members of the O YA CHORUS. If you have a Youth program going in your chapter or area, perfect, let us know and let the young men know so that they can have access to the music that the O YA CHORUS is learning. The O YA CHORUS meets several times a year in various locations in the province for scheduled rehearsals and performances, dates are announced well ahead of time. If you have a meeting hall in your area with risers preferably that we can have access to for an entire Saturday or Sunday, we would love to hear from you. All of you are the best ambassadors of the program. Feel free to tell music teachers and any other choir and chorus leaders in your area about the Ontario Youth A Cappella Chorus. We will be happy to meet with anyone who needs more information. We welcome any and all suggestions that you may wish to contribute. The O YA CHORUS does not preclude the formation of local youth choruses in fact we encourage you to seek out and form groups in your own areas of the province for localized practices, if you have a director or leader great! Otherwise let us know and we will assist you in trying to find one. Hopefully individuals directing these smaller groups would work with the Ontario Youth A Cappella Chorus music team to plan music learning. Repertoire for the Ontario Youth A Capella Chorus will be controlled by the Chorus Director and his music team, but does not preclude other local groups having additional/different repertoire. It would be hoped however that the local groups would include the Ontario Youth A cappella Chorus repertoire in their repertoire and would provide rehearsal time on the Ontario Youth A Cappella Chorus material to assist the performance level of the Ontario Youth A Cappella Chorus.

The O YA CHORUS is available to perform on chapter shows as of September 2010. All monies earned in performances will be put into the O YA CHORUS fund to assist this chorus to be self sufficient.

Finances for the Ontario Youth A cappella Chorus will be managed administratively by the Ontario District. Donations to the Ontario Youth A Cappella Chorus for future participation in Youth Festivals (as part of a Cross Canada Chorus or as an independent group) are maintained by the Ontario District Finance Officer, in an Ontario Youth Chorus account under the direction of a committee made up of the District VP for Youth Activities, the District Executive Vice President, the Ontario Youth Chorus Director, and the Ontario Youth Chorus Coordinator(s). Donations for the youth initiatives can be made directly to Ontario District O YA Chorus or to Sing Canada Harmony and tax receipts will be given.

The O YA CHORUS website is available to the public with a members own page

If you are Prospective member or Director of a Prospective local Group...please follow the link to access the information you will require starting at <http://OyaChorus.com>.

VERY IMPORTANT

The O YA CHORUS current repertoire with learning tracks will be on the website as well as a couple of others that we will choose for the chorus in the near future. Please remember because we are governed by copyright laws that downloaded copies of the music and learning tracks are strictly for the number of members that we have purchased the access rights for. For the above reason there is a registration form that must be filled out to allow auditioned and accepted members of the O YA CHORUS access to the member's only part of the website and the repertoire.

While we hope that at some time in their lives these young men will see their way to join and become active barbershoppers, their mere exposure moves the knowledge of barbershopping up and if they do not become members they are our audiences of the future and could influence others to join.

The future of barbershopping rests with involving young people in experiencing barbershop harmony. The ONTARIO YOUTH A CAPPELLA Chorus will provide such an opportunity.

Feel free to contact us for further information.
Barry and Sharon Towner Co-ordinators

Sharon Towner
ssbtowner@aol.com