# GRAND CITIES CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Handbook

# Table of Contents

About Us ..... 3

Our Choirs ..... 4

Grazioso Guidares (GGs) ..... 5

Tuition and Fees ..... 6

Uniforms ..... 7

Attendance & Rehearsals ..... 9

Performances ..... 12

Communication ..... 13

GCCC social media ..... 14

GCCC Directors ..... 15

# About Us

Founded in 2002, the Grand Cities Children's Choir (GCCC) is a performance-based, choral program whose mission is ***to offer young people of the Greater Grand Forks area the experience of musical artistry and excellence through choral singing in a youth-centered atmosphere.*** The GCCC program strives to create a spirit of community and understanding through the universal language of music; therefore, all students are encouraged to participate regardless of ethnic, social or economic background.

As the membership in our program continues to grow and change, GCCC has been comprised of different performing groups selected to highlight the talents of our singers. This year, our program will be operating with four performing choirs, each dedicated to excellence of musicianship by developing the skills available at varying levels of the students' musical learning. These choirs are Primo Voce, Accordo Voce, Canto Voce, and Poco Voce. Primo Voce will be performing as a large mixed ensemble of treble voices, tenors, and basses. Membership in the program is by audition and offered to children in grades three through nine. All of the choirs rehearse one evening a week during the academic school year.

# Our Choirs

**Primo Voce** (*Principal Voices)***.** Primo Voce is the name given to the mixed ensemble of the GCCC program. This ensemble is open to singers in grades 7-9 who demonstrate the ability to sing in tune with others, a basic knowledge of vocal technique, and self discipline. The choir performs 2, 3, and 4-part literature which covers a wide variety of musical styles and time periods. Rehearsals will focus on vocal skill development, ear training, sight singing, and performance preparation.

**Accordo Voce** (*Harmonizing Voices)***.** Accordo Voce is the name given to one of three treble-voiced ensembles of the GCCC program. This ensemble is open to children in grades 5-6 who demonstrate the ability to harmonize as well as sing independently of others. The choir performs 2 and 3-part treble literature which covers a wide variety of musical styles and time periods. Rehearsals focus on vocal skill development, ear training, sight singing, and performance preparation.

**Canto Voce** (*Singing Voices)***.** Canto Voce is the name given to one of three treble-voiced ensembles of the GCCC program. This ensemble is open to children in grades 4-6 who demonstrate the ability to sing with others by matching pitch and express a desire to develop their vocal potential. The choir performs unison and 2-part literature which covers a wide variety of musical styles and time periods. Rehearsals focus on vocal skill development, ear training, sight singing, and performance preparation.

**Poco Voce** (*Little Voices)***.** Poco Voce is the name given to the youngest ensemble of treble voices. This ensemble is open to children in grade 3 who demonstrate the ability to sing with others by matching pitch, express a desire to develop their vocal potential, and behave in a manner that enhances the development of the choral ensemble. The choir performs unison literature and will be introduced to part-singing through rounds, partner songs, and ostinatos. Rehearsals focus on vocal skill development, ear training, sight singing, and performance preparation.

# Grazioso Guidares (GGs)

Graduates of the Grand Cities Children's Choir program have the option to serve as mentors (GGs) during their Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years. *Grazioso Guidare* (GG) is Italian for the words "gracious guide." These students spend numerous hours volunteering their time and talents to each of the choirs. In return, the hours can be counted towards community service on their high school transcripts. There is no tuition fee for GG's.

The GGs developed the following mission statement:

> *"We seek to inspire, motivate, and guide individuals on a path of musical excellence, while encouraging them to bring out the best in themselves and each other."*

The goals of the mentor program are:

- To make one on one connections with all members of the GCCC program
- To act as musical and personal role models for the members of the GCCC program
- To assist with rehearsals musically as section leaders or vocal demonstrators
- To assist with rehearsals in business, organizational and social matters pertaining to rehearsals or concerts
- To motivate members of the GCCC program to "Strive for Excellence"
- To be exposed to possible careers in teaching, specifically music education

# Tuition and Fees

Tuition for participating in the Grand Cities Children's Choir is paid once for the year and is dependent upon the ensemble in which the singer is enrolled. Payment of tuition must be made in full on the date of our registration night. Payments can be made by cash, check or credit card. Tuition checks should be made payable to "Grand Cities Children's Choir". Tuition is non-refundable after the start of rehearsals.

The Children's Choir will never refuse participation in the Choir due to a family's financial hardship or the inability to pay tuition or uniform costs. If this is the case for your family, the Choir has limited scholarship funding available to help with these costs. Please see Greg Nelson on registration night for more information and to make these arrangements. The remaining tuition is due in full on registration night. If you are unable to attend registration, please email him at duhnelsons@gra.midco.net.

***Tuition Costs.*** Tuition costs are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Poco Voce | $200.00/year |
| Canto Voce | $200.00/year |
| Accordo Voce | $250.00/year |
| Primo Voce | $300.00/year |

***Uniform Costs.*** Each student must purchase performance uniforms appropriate to the choir in which they hold membership. Singers are able to re-use uniforms from previous singers, as long as they are in good condition. For Primo Voce, this includes one formal and one informal uniform. Payment for uniforms is due at registration night.

# Uniforms

Uniform attire is required for all GCCC performances. Attire consists of the following:

**POCO, CANTO, & ACCORDO VOCE:**

Option 1: GCCC colored polo shirt, black skirt (borrowed from GCCC), black waist-to-toe tights, and closed-toe plain black shoes. No flip flops, sandals, or boots.

Option 2: GCCC colored polo shirt, black pants provided by singer's family (classic cut chinos or Dockers), long black socks, and closed-toe plain black shoes. No flip flops, sandals or boots.

Polo shirts will be ordered through GCCC. Polos and skirts will be received and distributed by GCCC prior to our fall concert. More information will come from your director.

GCCC skirts will be collected after our Spring performance. In the event a singer resigns from the program during the season, the skirts can be turned into their director or returned to the information table. Families will be charged a fee if skirts are not returned.

**PRIMO VOCE:**

Formal concert attire (Two options):
Option 1: Green treble top and black pants, (no leggings or yoga pants), long black socks, and closed-toe plain black shoes. No flip flops, sandals, or boots.

Option 2: Black vest, black dress pants, (no leggings or yoga pants) white dress shirt, long black socks, closed-toe plain black shoes, and accompanying accessories. (Accessories are distributed and collected at performances.)

Informal concert attire:
GCCC black & white wind shirts, black jeans (no holes) or dress pants, (no leggings or yoga pants), socks and athletic shoes.

Measurements for concert attire will be taken during a rehearsal night. Green treble tops, black pants, black vests, white dress shirts & wind shirts will be ordered through GCCC. Items will be received and distributed prior to our fall concert. More information will come from your director.

Any alterations to the uniforms, including hemming of the pants, are the responsibility of the singer. If you have questions, please reach out to the GCCC Operations Director.

Singers are awarded a star pin at our Spring performance. Year one will be a large pin, with a smaller pin for each consecutive year. If a singer has misplaced a star, they are available for purchase. Large stars are $2.00 & smaller stars are $1.00. Please contact your singer's director and we will get one for you. Stars may be worn at any performance.

Each member is expected to keep their concert attire in excellent condition, i.e. pressed, cleaned, etc.

Formal concert attire is intended to be worn only for performances. Informal concert attire (such as wind shirts) may be worn outside of performances; however, you should remember that when wearing these articles, you represent GCCC and appropriate conduct is expected.

Good personal hygiene is a must for all singers. Shirts are tucked in, treble tops, and black pants should be pressed and wrinkle free. Hair should be groomed away from the face and may be fastened with a natural (matching hair color) barrette (no bows, ribbons, or colored barrettes). No obvious make-up, cosmetics, or perfume is permitted. Jewelry, earrings (only stud earrings will be allowed), accessories, watches, etc. should not be worn.

# Attendance & Rehearsals

Membership in the Grand Cities Children's Choir is a commitment to faithful, consistent and punctual attendance. It is expected that rehearsals and performances take a very high priority in your life. You are holding a valuable place in your choir. Listed below are the attendance requirements.

All rehearsals are **mandatory** unless otherwise indicated on the choir calendar. Students are required to attend at least 85% of all rehearsal times. Any absence beyond 15% may jeopardize the student's opportunity to perform. You are encouraged to maintain a perfect attendance schedule.

If a singer must be absent, parents/guardians must notify the choir director by phone, text, or email before 3:00 p.m. on rehearsal day. For planned absences, advance notice is appreciated whenever possible. If an absence will cause a singer to miss two or more consecutive weeks, we ask that parents/guardians meet with the director to discuss the absence and create an action plan.

Any absence beyond the allotted amount may require a conference with the director. Should an excessive number of absences occur, removal from the program will be considered.

***Exceptions to Attendance Policy.*** Exceptions to the attendance policy will be made in the following instances: major illness, death in the family, mandatory school performances, other youth arts organization events, or inclement weather or hazardous road conditions. For those of you traveling from out of the Grand Forks area, we ask that you use your best discretion. Do not risk your own safety to get to rehearsal.

***Absence from Rehearsals Beyond the Allotted Amount.*** The appropriate director will consider excessive absences for any reason other than those stated under "exceptions" on an individual basis. Attendance and punctuality that do not demonstrate commitment to the Grand Cities Children's Choir will result in not being allowed to perform and possible removal from the program.

***Dress Rehearsals.*** An absence, for any reason, from a dress rehearsal before a performance on the choir calendar could result in the singer being excluded from the corresponding concert. Directors must be notified in advance if a singer is unable to attend.

***Performance Attendance.*** Attendance is required at all scheduled performances except for the reasons stated in *Exceptions to Attendance Policy* above.

***Commitment.*** Each singer has made a commitment to sing for the entire season. If, however, an extremely unusual circumstance occurs which would prohibit a singer from honoring that commitment, a personal conference between the director and parents must occur. If a student resigns from the program in the middle of the performance season, the parent remains responsible for the entire tuition fee. All GCCC provided materials must be returned or are subject to a replacement fee.

## Rehearsal

Each choir maintains a weekly rehearsal schedule. Following are the regular rehearsal times:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Poco Voce | Thursdays | 5:30 – 6:30 PM |
| Canto Voce | Thursdays | 5:30 – 6:30 PM |
| Accordo Voce | Thursdays | 6:45 – 8:00 PM |
| Primo Voce | Thursdays | 6:45 – 8:45 PM |

Our primary rehearsal location is Red River High School, Singers should be dropped off at door #1 (facing the football field.) Our secondary location is Sharon Lutheran Church. Rehearsal location will be identified with a black and yellow GCCC flag. **Please look for the flag prior to having your child exit your vehicle.** Changes or cancellations of rehearsal will be shared with you through email or social media pages.

We strive to make rehearsal time enjoyable and educational. The following procedures help us achieve the professionalism for which GCCC is known:

- **Please be on time.** Arrive no more than 15 minutes before the designated rehearsal time, check-in with your choir GG's and take your seat. Parent communication in advance is necessary for late admittance or early dismissal from a rehearsal so we can ensure the safety of our singers.
- Water bottles are allowed in rehearsals. Other types of drinks, food, or candy are not. Primo singers will have a 15-minute break to stretch, use the restrooms and socialize. A snack will be provided.
- As a community, singers, directors and parent volunteers will show respect for each other and the rehearsal facility. Running, yelling, and rowdy behavior in the building or on the grounds would not be appropriate at any time
- Always bring your music folder and a pencil to rehearsal.
- During rehearsals, focus on rehearsal. Singers should choose behaviors which positively help the choir achieve its goals and do not interfere with the learning of others.
- **NO phones or other technology are to be used during rehearsal time**. Devices should be set to silent/do not disturb while in the rehearsal space.
- Each week the Operations Director and/or the Artistic Director will be located at the Information Table and are there to assist you.
- In the event of inclement weather an email notification will be sent, along with a post on our website and social media sites.
- Dress rehearsals for our Fall and Spring concerts require singers to wear their concert uniforms for our staff to verify that each singer possesses all components of the uniforms and to ensure uniforms still fit the child.
- At the end of the spring semester, members are responsible for returning their black binders, all sheet music, and black skirts to their respective directors. Members who do not return these items are subject to a replacement fee.

# Performances

Performances require the very best in conduct, appearance and musicianship. Specific concert instructions will be distributed in the newsletter prior to the date of the performance. Below are our suggested guidelines prior to a concert:

- You should always eat a nutritious meal and get plenty of rest before a concert. Be sure to use the restroom prior to arrival at the concert site.
- You should arrive ten minutes before the performance call and immediately join your choir.
- Tardiness at a performance may exclude you from participating at that performance.
- All performers must arrive attired in proper concert dress as noted in the newsletter. Failure to wear proper concert dress will result in non-participation in the concert.
- Singers should conduct themselves at all times in a calm, polite and professional manner. They must give their undivided attention to the director at all times.
- All singers must know the music. Each musician must have a confident command of the concert repertoire. Failure to demonstrate this at the final rehearsal may result in release from the corresponding concert commitment.
- During a performance, if you feel ill, you should quietly sit down on the riser and rest for the remainder of the song. Then, if feeling better, you may get up and sing again, or if not, quietly leave the stage. Assistants are watching and will help if necessary. Once you leave the stage, you should not return except after intermission or when choirs are moving around.
- Remember that at all times you represent the Grand Cities Children's Choir.
- Dress rehearsals for our Fall and Spring performances are open for families to attend. We respectfully ask that any audience members during this rehearsal observe quietly, knowing that our students will be focused on their expectations for the performance.

# Communication

On your child's audition and registration forms, parents are asked to provide a current mailing address, email address, and phone numbers of primary & secondary contacts. This information is used by GCCC directors, staff, and advisory board members to contact parents or guardians regarding operations of the choir and in cases of emergency.

**Email is our primary tool for communication**. Parents/guardians are required to provide current email addresses that will be checked regularly. Each week, you will receive an email from your singer's choir director providing updates and information that pertain to that upcoming week. In the event you are not receiving these notifications, please check your spam/junk folder or provide the director with an alternative email address. GCCC will not publish or share your phone or email contact information with any outside organizations.

GCCC requests the permission of parents for public use of photographs on our website and social media sites. Group photos of our choirs appear on our website and in media publications for the organization. If you do not wish to have your child's individual photo appear in any of our publications or on social media sites, please indicate your preference on the Media Release Form completed at registration.

## GCCC social media

The Grand Cities Children's Choir celebrates and promotes the work of our singers through photographs and videos shared on GCCC social media platforms, the organization's website, and other program-related promotional materials. Students are not identified by name in any photo or video. Parents/guardians may choose whether to authorize the use of their singer's image in individual photographs or videos. If permission is not granted, GCCC will make every reasonable effort to avoid using individual images of that singer; however, families acknowledge that their singer may still appear as part of group photographs or videos taken during rehearsals, performances, or other program events.

**Website:** **www.grandcitiescc.org**

**Instagram: @grandcitiescc**

**Facebook: GrandcitiesCC**

## GCCC Directors

Jack Boyer, Director Primo Voce
jboyer160@mygfschools.org

Amy DeWitt, Director Primo Voce
adewitt150@mygfschools.org

Greg Nelson, Financial Director
duhnelsons@gra.midco.net

Maggie Nistler, Artistic Director
mnistler170@mygfschools.org

Kalya Skjervheim, Director Accordo Voce
kskjervheim180@mygfschools.org

Ruth Ann Tuseth, Director Canto Voce
rtuseth@gmail.com

Sara Peters Twite, Operations Director
grandcitiescc@gmail.com

Annella Winger, Director Poco Voce
annella.winger@gmail.com