August 9, 2018

Dear SAA Parents of Girl’s Chorus Students,

 We are very excited to begin a new school year. We have many wonderful things planned for our terrific students. We now have increased our space due to the JRA move to the former SAA office building. We have added a classroom which is attached to our music room. This addition affords us the opportunity to have two things going on at the same time. This really increases the skills we will be able to teach.

 Our first performance will be Wednesday, October 10th. Our holiday show will be Monday, December 10th. We are hopeful to attend “America Sings” in March. This is a wonderful event that will take place at Universal Studios in Orlando. More information will be sent home soon.

 There will be two fundraising opportunities. Both really do WORK if you take the time to send them out.

1. Sing-a-thon – The students will perform their Fall Follies on Wednesday, October 10th.

This can also be used as a “Sing-a-thon” Concert. Students email or hand-deliver as many letters to as many people as possible. Relatives, family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, doctors, dentists, orthodontists, etc. should all receive letters. A sample Sing-a-thon letter will be sent home soon.

1. Singing Christmas Cards – These forms will go out right after the October concert. Students get as many people as possible to purchase a $5 Singing Christmas Card. On several days during the last week of school before winter break we call the recipients and “sing” either Merry Christmas or Happy Hanukkah. It is loads of fun to hear the surprised and excited voice as we sing to them!

 Some parents prefer to pay for the trip and not be bothered with fundraising, but it is an opportunity for students to raise money as well. Sometimes a grandparent or parent’s employer will sponsor the entire amount!

 Both of these are tax deductible. In order to do that, it cannot totally benefit an individual child, so 90% goes to the student and 10% goes to the trip fund. We use that 10% to purchase a meal for the group. If a student raises more than they need for themselves (and his/her parent if the parent is chaperoning) it can go toward general expenses or to help another student.

 We are very interested in performing in the Sarasota Christmas Parade. We will need a float and will be discussing this with music parents to see who will be able to help us in this endeavor.

 Our Broadway musical this year will be “Grease”. We do not know the exact date or place yet but we will let you know as soon as this has been determined.

 We will again be using Sean Layne’s “Acting Right” which begins each class period with “The Actor’s Toolbox”. We loved this program last year. It was truly amazing to watch the students begin class, get their bodies, voices, and minds prepared to learn and focus, all in the first minute of class! It has a great set of principles which will be our class standards every moment of every class period. They are as follows:

1. Behavior is a choice.
2. Be the boss of your brain!
3. Make the strong choice, not the weak choice.
4. Have a calm body, focused mind, and balanced emotions.
5. Remember the Golden Rule – Do to others as you would have them do to you.
6. You don’t have to blow out someone else’s light to let your light shine!
7. Be kind. Be brave. Be awesome.
8. Be your courageous brilliant self every single day, no matter what!

 Grades in all music classes are based on class participation, formative assessments, and performances. Students are NOT graded on their talent. They are graded by full participation in all classroom activities and attendance at performances. We do not give midterm or final exams. Their performance is their final exam. Therefore it is imperative that students attend all performances. If your child is sick and cannot attend please call or text me BEFORE the show in order to excuse your child. Every child is important in every show. If the child is not there, it affects all the other students so please be sure your child is there. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

 We really love parent helpers! The thing we need most from you is help with costumes. We have 180 students in the music program. We do 18 shows a year and there are literally thousands of costume pieces to be organized, fitted, and washed. We could really use help with this. Parents who have time during the day could be very useful in organizing. Parents who cannot help during the day could sew costumes or wash them in the evenings.

 A second way is to help build sets. This is usually done on Saturday mornings. Mr. Bryan loves people handy in this area!

 The last way you can help is to chaperone events. We will be sending information to you all year giving you many opportunities to fulfil your volunteer hours. Every moment you spend assisting the music program is tremendously appreciated! In order to chaperone you must have a level 2 clearance. Please see Kathy or Donna in the office for assistance with this.

 Please feel free to call or text me on my cell phone at 941-544-4232 or email me at jmchugh@sarasotaacademyofthearts.com. The best time to reach me is 5:00 AM to 7:30 AM, 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM, 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM, or 6:00 PM to 11:00 PM. I know sometimes you really need a question answered quickly and this way you know you can get in contact with me. Please put my phone number into your cell phone so you can reach me at any time.

 It will be a wonderful year at SAA! We look forward to many exciting things in the music department.

 Please return the attached form by Friday, August 17th. Thank you.

 Sincerely,

 Julie Rohr McHugh

 Bryan Egan