The Chorus Impact Study:
Singing for a Lifetime
Project Sponsors

Katherine B. Andersen Fund of the St. Paul Foundation

Cincinnati May Festival Chorus
San Francisco Girls Chorus

The Choral Arts Society of Washington
Colorado Children’s Chorale
Encore Creativity for Older Adults

Indianapolis Children’s Choir
Kirkwood Baptist Church

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Project Goals

- Track trends from 2003 and 2008 Chorus Impact Study research
- Look at new qualities: mindfulness, tolerance, adaptability
- Explore the value of choral singing for older adult singers (62+)

The Chorus Impact Study: Singing for a Lifetime
Methodology

• Research firm: Grunwald Associates
• Online surveys of
  - 5,736 singers, including 1,833 singers ages 62+
  - 506 general public
  - 600 general public 62+
• **54 million** Americans are singing together today.

• That’s 17% of Americans, up from 14% in 2008.

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Reasons for Singing

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Young People’s Chorus of New York City

76% of choral singers say their first singing experience was in elementary, middle, or high school

Source: Grunwald Associates LLC
People who sing feel more connected to others.

73% say group singing makes them feel less lonely.

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• Singers give back to their communities in a big way!
• More likely to give, volunteer, vote, and run for public office.

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• Singers show higher levels of tolerance and respect for diversity.
• 63% believe that singing has made them more accepting of people who are different from them.
Quality of Life: Ages 65+

Singers
- Very good: 69%
- Good: 29%
- Neither good nor poor, poor, or very poor: 2%

General Public
- Very good: 22%
- Good: 61%
- Neither good nor poor, poor, or very poor: 17%

Source: Grunwald Associates LLC

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Older singers are more active than the general public.

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More likely to engage in leisure activities:
• Reading (84% singers vs. 69% general)
• Family activities with children or grandchildren (50% vs. 43% general)
• Running, biking, or working out (37% vs. 16% general)

More likely to be working:
• Paid employment (29% singers vs. 22% general)
Physical activity: less likely to have difficulty

- Climbing several flights of stairs (27% singers vs. 43% general)
- Walking one block or more (6% singers vs. 18% general)
- Lifting weights greater than 10 lbs (11% singers vs. 18% general)
20% of singers ages 65+ reported improvements in health due to singing.

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Medical conditions that have improved since joining a choir

- Voice disorders: 45%
- COPD or chronic lung disease such as chronic bronchitis or emphysema: 35%
- Asthma: 31%
- High blood pressure/hypertension: 18%
- Heart disease, angina, history of heart attack or stroke, etc.: 16%
- Chronic pain other than arthritis: 15%
- Nervous system diseases (tremors, Parkinson’s, Bell’s palsy, MS, ALS, etc.): 13%
- Diabetes (Type 2, adult-onset, sugar diabetes): 12%
- Sleep disorders (snoring, apnea, restless legs, narcolepsy, etc.): 9%
- Digestive disorders (reflux, ulcers, colitis, IBS, Crohn’s, gallstones, etc.): 9%
- Cancer: 8%
- Arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus, or fibromyalgia: 7%
- Pre/borderline diabetes, high blood sugar, impaired glucose intolerance: 6%
- Hearing problems (difficulty hearing, deafness, etc.): 5%

Base, for each condition: older respondents who indicated they have the condition

Source: Grunwald Associates LLC

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73% of singers 62+ say being in a chorus has made them feel less alone or lonely.

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Combating Loneliness

Singers are:
• More likely to be content with friendships and relationships (81% singers vs. 70% general)
• Less likely to feel isolated from others (7% singers vs. 12% general)

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Nearly 8 in 10 older singers say that singing in a chorus helps keep their mind sharper and think more clearly.

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Encore Creativity
Singers (age 65+) are less likely to report some indicators of mental health problems:

- Trouble falling asleep or sleeping too much (19% singers vs. 11% general)
- Feeling tired or having little energy (6% singers vs. 18% general)
- Irritable enough to shout at people, start arguments (6% singers vs. 18% general)

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Thank you!
More at chorusamerica.org