

Threshold Choir

2011 Annual Report

History

From an avocation of community singing for 20 years, I stumbled on the concept of singing at bedsides in 1990. Since that time, the path has opened relentlessly and beautifully as this work has grown and expanded. The first two choirs started in March 2000 in the SF Bay Area. Today, 12 years later, we have 100 choirs in the US and more starting all the time. It thrills me that this work is so immediately satisfying and so indicative that kindness is still relevant. As we flow into our second decade, one of my hopes is that the intimate, friendly, personal quality can be sustained as we grow to serve more communities. Making our mission meaningful in the 21st century also involves using the internet and various other technologies to support and enhance our work.

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A tax-exempt organization under
IRS 501c(3), EIN 26-1852507

A Message from our Founder Kate Munger

In June 2011, I gave presentations at Festival 500, a prestigious International Choral Festival and Academic Symposium in St. Johns, Newfoundland. We continue to focus on refining and deepening our singing at bedsides and at the memorials of our bedside folks. We have sung at many Services of Remembrance and we continue to offer in-services for agencies offering end of life services. We celebrated our 7th anniversary of providing weekly singing with women incarcerated at Marin County Jail.

Membership was introduced and embraced by a significant number of our singers allowing us to better know who is doing this work in our name. Regional Gatherings happened in Santa Barbara CA, Santa Fe NM, Sturgeon Bay WI, Vashon WA, Yellow Springs OH, Littleton MA, New York City, and Littleton CO. Each local group gave us a wonderful taste of their area and we strengthened our ties in each region.

We will begin to offer Introductory Workshops in communities where Threshold Choirs are asked to start.

Regional Gatherings will become even more important and the vital Directors Meetings will happen in different parts of the country. I plan to implement a 3 year training for 25 - 30 members to begin to take over the leadership of these Regional Gatherings. This year we began offering songwriting workshops after some Regional Gatherings which yielded many gorgeous songs that have gone right to work at bedsides.

After 12 years of doing this beautiful, insightful work, I am more excited about it than ever. I know that "kindness made audible" is flourishing and growing, becoming clearer as a way that humans can choose to face their mortality. I thank the Board of Directors and our new Executive Director for their work all along this path.

Blessings,
bless sings,
bless singers,
Kate



Threshold Choir is a network of *a cappella* choirs of primarily women's voices: a community whose mission is to sing for and with those at the thresholds of life.

A Note from the Board Chair - Kay Caldwell



Hello all you wonderful singers. Our beloved Threshold Choir has experienced another year of amazing growth. The choir is now twelve years old. Our current Board is in its second year of continuing to build the structure necessary to nurture the organization to insure that our many local choirs receive the support and inspiration they need to

flourish. We have hired a part-time Executive Director, Heidi Dressler, who is bringing many years of experience to our mix. She and Kate are working hard to continue the transition we began under Joy Carlson's stewardship.

Our financial systems are now accurate and transparent. We have a new beautiful logo, thanks to a special non-profit rate from the high-end design firm, Joey's Corner (part of Michael Osborne Design). We introduced Charter Membership in March of last year and look forward to being able to handle renewals and new memberships (among many other things) on our new and beautiful website! This website has been a massive accomplishment, thanks to the effort and leadership of Ellen Rose and Cathy Baird. We are really proud of it. It

will be unveiled soon, with a clear and easy-to-navigate public part available first, and the gradual phase-in of a new and improved members-only area where you can do wondrous things.

I'd like to thank Joy for her pioneering presence as our first Board Chair. She is a hard act to follow! Her vision and diligence gave us a good base for building this organization. I am honored to continue her work and excited by all our accomplishments.

Thanks for all contributions, past, present and future to the work groups, web team, our working Board and all our many vibrant local choirs. Our goal is to build a strong foundation to sustain this work, and to support you, the people who share the sacred gifts of your voices at life's thresholds. We invite your input. And we are interested in adding a few more dedicated people to our Board.

Please contact us if you are interested in doing this rewarding work, or if you know someone you would like to recommend. You can reach us at: board@thresholdchoir.org

In gratitude for this wonderful organism,
Kay Caldwell

A Message from the Executive Director - Heidi Dressler

I am delighted to bring my thirty years of non-profit management and business coaching experience to Threshold Choir. I come from a long line of choral singers, composers and directors so feel doubly blessed to put my skills to work in this field. The future for Threshold Choir is bright and our goal of building strong foundations with our choirs and the communities they serve will provide a solid base upon which we can build a sustainable future.

The gift our directors and singers bring to our recipients and their caregivers is amazing and represents service in the truest possible sense of the word. Gifts are to be shared and I am committed to doing what I can to make sure Threshold Choir provides a base from which those gifts can be given. My intention is that any community that wants a Threshold Choir can have one and, with the support of the national organization, more people at life's thresholds can be soothed by our gifts of song.

I am honored to be part of the journey Kate started as I join with Threshold Choir in living its mission, now and for the future.



Barbara Molloy



Secretary
Kelsey Ramage



Vice-Chair
Pat Friday



Cesca Wright



Treasurer
Barb Adams



Board of Directors

Threshold Choirs in the USA & Canada

AL Huntsville	HI Kamuela	OH Cincinnati, Columbus, Sandusky, Toledo, Yellow Springs
AZ Flagstaff, Tucson	ID Coeur d'Alene	OR Eugene, Florence, Medford/Ashland, Portland
CA Arcata, Aromas, Auburn, Carlsbad, Chico, Costa Mesa, Cupertino, Davis, Glen Ellen, Grass Valley, Kensington, Los Angeles, Montara, Napa, Oakland, Ojai, Pacific Grove, Palo Alto, San Diego, San Francisco, San Rafael, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Sebastopol, Ukiah, Walnut Creek, Woodland	IL Park Ridge, Wheaton	PA Pittsburgh
CO Colorado Springs, Denver, Glenwood Springs, Littleton	IN Bloomington, Indianapolis	TX Austin
CT West Simsbury	KS Lawrence	VA Charlottesville
FL La Belle	MA Andover, Boston, Littleton, Oak Bluffs, Swampscott	WA Bellingham, Coupeville, Kirkland, Olympia, Port Townsend, Seattle, Stanwood, Vashon
GA Sandy Springs	MD Annapolis	WI Eau Claire, Madison, Milwaukee
	MI Ann Arbor, St. Joseph, Sterling Heights	CANADA Sechelt, BC, Vancouver, BC
	MN Grand Rapids, Minneapolis	
	NC Durham, Etowah	
	NM Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Taos	
	NY New York City	

Threshold Choir Profit & Loss

January through December 2011

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
405 · Membership Dues Income	54,905.19
415 · Grants	6,100.00
425 · Interest Earned	4.15
Workshop & Gathering Income	
430 · Workshop Income	1,635.00
435 · National Gathering Income	32,061.41
440 · Regional Gathering Income	14,460.00
Total Workshop & Gathering Income	48,156.41
Donation Income	
450 · Donations - Memorials	1,973.00
455 · Donations - General	19,572.51
465 · Donations - Restricted	8,332.00
Total Donation Income	29,877.51
Product Sales	
License Plate Holder	25.00
480 · Songbook Sales	6,113.35
482 · CD Sales	4,627.22
484 · Shipping Income	2,151.00
490 · Sales Tax Paid	-2,713.28
Total Product Sales	10,203.29
Total Income	149,246.55
Expense	
ADMINISTRATION	
505 · Wages & Salaries	50,800.00
510 · Worker's Comp	771.60
515 · Payroll Taxes	4,449.30
520 · Accounting	896.06
525 · Bank & Paypal Fees	1,562.24
530 · Board Meeting Expense	900.28
535 · Consultants	3,383.10
540 · Dues & Subscriptions	235.00
550 · Insurance	1,305.00
565 · Office Expense	4,442.80
570 · Postage & Shipping	1,280.39
580 · Rent	3,250.00
585 · Telephone & Internet	1,296.56
Total ADMINISTRATION	74,572.33
Total Expense	121,826.59
Net Ordinary Income	27,419.96
Net Income	27,419.96

Why We Sing

Some of our singers share where they have taken our music and where it has taken them:

Making My Own Music (Gina)

I thank you for the gift of song that I have received through Threshold Choir and the greater gift of being able to connect with others through the songs. They are my form of prayer. I have a half-hour commute to work in the morning, and I never listen to music on the radio. I make my own.

Connecting with Song (Diane)

Today I went to visit one of my hospice patients. When I got there, she was asleep. I decided to sing softly to her for a while since I had gone all the way over there. I was singing softly with my eyes closed, and suddenly I realized I didn't hear her light snoring any more, so I opened my eyes, and she was awake. She had tears in her eyes and said she thought it was so beautiful and such a wonderful way to awaken.

Celebrating and Mourning (Susan)

Four years ago, my father died at my childhood home. Threshold Singers were there to send him on his way with soft harmonies. I was unglued and astounded by the experience of this, and for me, the rest unfolded in perfect balance. I returned home, immediately found the Threshold Choir there, and, from that day forward, have celebrated (and beautifully mourned) my father's living and dying.

Transforming Fear (Cathy)

People have sometimes confided in me that they would be afraid to sing at bedside or, as choir members, that they would be afraid to be the leader at a bedside singing. What I have discovered is that there may or may not be a part of me that is afraid, but the fear is of no consequence. I am completely aware that what happens is simply what happens and is therefore perfect the way it is. With no attachment to outcome but only a commitment to the work itself, I have no expectations and nothing to desire control over.

I realize that if I could approach everything in my life with this lack of fear and lack of attachment to outcome, my life would be transformed. I hope to have the grace to remember this as I become aware of resistance and fear in other situations. Being in the choir has not only "given me a voice" but also now provides this wonderful breakthrough in my perspective on life.

Sharing Joy (Nancy)

I have sung with Threshold women to welcome a new baby girl into the world. Parents and friends all gathered in the backyard while we sang as part of a loving ceremony to say hello to a new soul, Tembani. The feelings of joy were shared by all who were present. Tembani may not have a conscious memory of the afternoon, but her presence brought a lot of loving people together to share the beginning of her life in harmony.

Growing Understanding (Ellen)

Before I was in Threshold Choir, my father died as I was holding his hand. Not long afterward, I saw an article about Threshold Choir in the newspaper; I reread it many times, cut it out, and saved it. At the time, I was not a singer and still had unresolved feelings about my father's death, so the possibility of my joining such a choir seemed remote. However, within a year or so, I had both taken up singing and been diagnosed with breast cancer, and thus was facing the prospect of my own death. A while later, when a friend asked if I'd ever heard of Threshold Choir, I was ready.

My experiences in the choir have allowed me to explore the dying process from so many unique and positive directions. I've also grown in my understanding of singing as a cultural bond.

Singing in unison celebrates our human connection, that we are literally on the same wavelength.

Singing in harmony celebrates our diversity, that out of our differences can come an amazing energy with the power to move ourselves and others.

Comments from Families

"Your voices were those of the angels my father had by his side as he left this life and went to the next. You helped him experience complete peace in his last moments . . ."

"Your gift of song touches the soul, bringing hope and joy . . ."

"I cannot express sufficiently how much your beautiful women's voices meant to my father. He did tell me that he loved it when you sang for him. So did I, the few times I was lucky enough to be there . . . Thank you again for the very important and healing work that you great women do."