

Chapter History of Berkshire Threshold Singers

2025

Chapter Formation and Origins

The Berkshire Threshold Singers chapter was formed in 2016. It was founded by Carol Emmanuel, who brought experience from singing with a California Threshold chapter. Although Carol Emmanuel is no longer active with the chapter, her initial work established the foundation for a small, community-focused ensemble that serves primarily hospice clients.

Membership Overview

The chapter currently has 11 singers. About six members regularly sing at bedsides or lead song baths, while the rest contribute primarily at practices and community sings. All members are hospice-trained volunteers. Two original members are still active. One member has written songs for the chapter.

Activities and Service

The chapter's public service focuses on bedside sings and occasional song baths for residents and patients in hospice and continuing care settings.

- **Average bedside sings per month:** varies with referrals; typically 6–20.
- **Average song baths per month:** about 1 during summer and early fall.
- **Community sings:** the chapter performs once monthly at a continuing care community during the summer and early fall.
- **Clients:** primarily hospice patients and residents referred through hospice organizations.

Rehearsal and Leadership Model

The Berkshire Threshold Singers practice twice per month. The chapter operates with a leader/administrator who organizes activities, completes reports, and runs most practices while inviting other members to lead occasionally. The group does not maintain formal committees.

Growth, Recruitment, and History

Early membership growth was driven by local outreach, including a newspaper advertisement. The chapter accepts new members throughout the year as space and learning capacity allow, with flexibility for individuals who can learn parts independently. The chapter is small and adaptable; recruitment depends on season and capacity.

Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 had a substantial impact: the chapter effectively restarted afterward. Many current singers joined post-COVID, and the original leader who began the group left prior to the pandemic, which contributed to a period of reorganization and rebuilding.

Notable Strengths and Practices

- All members are hospice-trained volunteers, ensuring sensitive, client-centered care.
- The chapter maintains a steady, manageable rehearsal schedule and adapts recruitment to the needs and availability of volunteers.
- Despite being small, the chapter sustains regular bedside work and seasonal community performances.

Summary

Since its founding in 2016, the chapter has evolved into a tight-knit, hospice-focused singing group of 11 members, with a core of performers who regularly provide bedside presence and song baths. It operates with a leader-driven model, flexible recruitment, and a commitment to hospice volunteer standards, having largely rebuilt its membership and activities in the wake of the COVID-19 disruption.