

Chapter History of Threshold Singers of Appalachia

2025

Chapter Formation

The Threshold Singers of Appalachia chapter in Athens, Ohio was formed in 2023. Its creation followed years of local familiarity with Threshold Choir practices and a desire to formalize those efforts into an official Threshold chapter. Bonnie Edwards, the current leader and organizer of the chapter, learned about Threshold Choir from Kate Munger at a workshop in 2001.

Membership Overview

The chapter currently has a total of 12 singers. Of those, 8 members regularly sing at bedside visits or lead song baths. Four of the original members are still active. Membership growth has been organic and continues to welcome new participants at any time.

Practice and Sings

The chapter holds practice twice per month. It has an average of 6 bedside sings per month and does not conduct song baths.

Clients and Hospice

The chapter receives hospice referrals and word-of-mouth requests. The members sing for people in Athens, Meigs, and Fairfield counties. Eight members have completed volunteer training through hospice, which enabled the chapter to accept hospice patients as clients and strengthened its ability to serve in clinical and home settings.

Leadership and Operations

- **Initial membership growth:** The chapter began when Bonnie invited a small group of interested people to plan a sustainable chapter; additional members joined through personal connections with that planning group.
- **New member intake:** New members are accepted anytime.
- **Leadership model and key roles:** Bonnie serves as membership leader, administrator, and liaison with OhioHealth Hospice and Threshold Choir. The chapter maintains a music librarian role. It has had three music directors to date and is onboarding a new music director this month.
- **COVID impact:** The chapter did not exist during the COVID pandemic and therefore did not experience pandemic-related disruption.

Community Impact and Outreach

The chapter's official status has increased its visibility and credibility in the community. A strong relationship with the OhioHealth Hospice volunteer coordinator and other staff led to invitations to sing at five facilities, a hospital, and in private homes. The chapter performed a song at a local choir's concert to raise awareness of its service and received its first publicity in a local independent online news outlet.

Summary

Since forming in 2023, the chapter has established a steady practice rhythm, built meaningful partnerships with hospice providers, and delivered regular bedside singing to communities across three counties. Leadership remains volunteer-driven and open to new members, and the chapter continues to deepen its presence and outreach through trainings, community performances, and local publicity.

Ann Arbor Threshold Choir Gathering with Melanie DeMore on 3/15/2025. Suzanne Perry, Debra Spangler, Dianne Bouvier, Carol Kirk, Bonnie Edwards, Patty Mercer, Carole, Weiner, Ann Brown, Trisha Lachman.

