

# **Chapter History of Sisters of the Shining Mountains from Ouray, Ridgway and Montrose, Colorado**

## **2025**

### **Chapter Formation**

The Sisters of the Shining Mountains chapter was formed in 2014 by Ulli Sir Jesse. From its first gatherings it established a warm, service-oriented mission focused on bedside singing and community outreach. Ulli Sir Jesse no longer lives locally but sings with the group when she visits.

### **Membership and Contributions**

The current membership is twenty-seven. We have twelve regular bedside and/or song bath singers. The group maintains a steady core of volunteers who commit regularly to visits and performances while welcoming other members for community events and practices. There are six original members that are still active. There is a set of twins that are chapter members. The chapter has two members who are songwriters - Roberta Nowlin and Ulli Sir Jesse. Longstanding members provide institutional memory and continuity, while contributors who write original material enrich the chapter's repertoire.

### **Sings, Practice, and Clients**

The chapter practices 2-3 times per month. In addition, it has an average of 2 bedside sings per month, plus one monthly performance for a friend whose mother has Alzheimer's. The primary clients are residents of local assisted living facilities, friends and family of members, and referrals from local hospice. The chapter balances scheduled community visits with responsive requests for memorials and special events.

### **Chapter Leadership and History**

Initial growth of the chapter membership was word-of-mouth. New members are welcomed anytime. Our leadership model consists of co-leaders who host practices and have ongoing open communication. During COVID, practices continued outdoors on a member's covered patio. This flexible, volunteer-led structure supports steady activity and makes it easy for new singers to join.

### **Community Impact and Additional Activities**

The chapter has been invited to perform at several memorials, providing comfort and musical ministry to families after loss. Members also organize community sings in local churches and community centers as outreach. The choir has had particularly moving moments when patients with memory loss respond, sometimes joining in familiar songs. In support of local immigrants, eight chapter members presented a short musical program at the end-of-year fiesta for the local Adult English School, including two Threshold songs sung in Spanish. These engagements illustrate the chapter's commitment to cultural sensitivity and community connection.

### **Summary**

Since 2014 the chapter has grown into a 27-member ensemble rooted in service, with a reliable core of singers who regularly visit bedsides and lead song experiences. Guided by co-leaders and sustained

through word-of-mouth recruitment, the chapter continues to offer comfort, outreach, and culturally mindful performances throughout the community.

November 2023. Lori Syme, Carmella Wilson, Julia Reid, Eileen Izzo, Roberta Nowlin - back row  
Mary Redmond, Peggy Lyon, Lisa Young - front row



July 2025.

