

CHAPTER HISTORY OF THRESHOLD CHOIR OF NEW YORK CITY (TCNYC)

Beginnings

In 2007, Kate Munger called Sue Ribaudo, a dear longtime friend who had just moved to NYC from Baltimore. Kate shared with Sue her vision of Threshold Choir and thought the timing seemed right to build a chapter in NYC. Kate introduced Sue to one of the founding members, Susan Graves, who recently moved back to NYC from California. If Sue could direct a choir, then Susan could pass along her knowledge of the choir's function and culture. All agreed, and so it began!

The first meeting of the TCNYC choir was May 6, 2007, near Lincoln Center. Kate travelled east to Manhattan for a choir brainstorm meeting and remained a guide by sharing her wisdom at rehearsals for several years thereafter.

Practices and Community Services

Initially, the choir met at a school on the Westside. The members spent months learning music, seeking to establish connections with organizations in which the choir could offer service, and most importantly, building a deep sense of community among its members.

Once the choir began singing at Memorial Sloan Kettering, its horizons began to widen. The practice space changed to the hospital. The choir sang for individual patients and for the nurses at their annual blessing and memorial services, as well as for groups of patients in the recreation room.

During the intervening years, the choir added two referring agencies - Visiting Nurse Service Hospice and Metropolitan Jewish Health Services. The choir sings in individual homes and apartments plus senior living locations. The choir has offered Community Sings at a local church, and these were always received with joy. Pre-Covid, we had 45 members, eight anchors, and sang for 25 'dear ones' (clients/patients) monthly.

Impact of COVID-19

Despite major changes brought about by COVID restrictions, the choir adapted through Zoom technology, reaching out to its communities through "song baths", telephone contacts, as well as keeping up its practices. The chapter has begun to recover from that devastating time in important ways.

Current Status

Through our strong NYC member bonds, the commitment to "audible kindness" is passed on and grows in wonderful ways. The chapter currently has 33 members, four anchors, affiliation with two institutions and sing for 14 "dear ones" monthly. The chapter recently co-hosted a Mid-Atlantic gathering. Eighty attendees from 21 chapters and 12 states made the trip to Stony Point, NY for a weekend of song, fellowship, and learning.

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