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Chorus America’s New Chorus Impact Study Reveals the Lifelong Benefits of Choral Singing

The Chorus Impact Study: *Singing for a Lifetime sheds new light on the impact choral singing has on individuals and communities—especially singers ages 65 and up.*

Singing in a chorus has a powerfully positive impact on people across generations, as well as on the communities in which they live, reveals a new study from Chorus America, the advocacy, research and leadership development organization that advances the choral field. The *Chorus Impact Study: Singing for a Lifetime* builds on previous data about choral singers, and, for the first time, looks in-depth at the role that singing plays in the lives of older adults.

The new research shows that choral singing in America is stronger than ever, with more than 54 million Americans singing in choruses. The percentage of Americans singing has also risen over the past decade, from 14 percent in 2008 to 17 percent today.

These numbers are good news, because choruses play an important role in individuals’ lives and in society. As with previous Chorus Impact Studies done in 2003 and 2008, the research finds that people who sing experience a number of personal benefits, from stronger relationships and better social skills to increased optimism, resilience, and mindfulness. And the positive personal qualities of choral singers ripple outward into the communities they live in and beyond. Singers are skilled team players and involved citizens, voting, volunteering, and contributing financially to the organizations they support at higher levels than the general public.

For the first time, the 2019 Chorus Impact Study explored the value of singing for older adults. The data shows that older singers (ages 65+) enjoy a better overall quality of life than the general public and engage in a broader range of activities than the general public of the same age, including working. Nearly 20% experienced improvements in some health conditions due to singing, and older singers also report being in better mental health than the general public of the same age. At a time when Americans are living longer and looking to maintain a high quality of life into retirement, singing promotes healthy, vibrant aging.

Chorus America’s data supports a growing body of research on the many benefits of singing and belonging to choral groups. “We hope this research helps choruses advance their valuable work in communities and encourages older adults – and people of all ages – to participate in this wonderful, accessible art form,” said Chorus America President and CEO Catherine Dehoney. “In addition to the fact that more people are singing today, we are excited to learn that choral singers who belong to more ensembles, rehearse more frequently, and have been singing longer are more likely to experience benefits. Simply put, singing is good, more singing is better!”

The full written report is available at chorusamerica.org. To increase access to *The Chorus Impact Study: Singing for a Lifetime*, Chorus America will release updated data points, infographics, stories, and tools digitally through September 2019.

Key Report Findings

- Choral singing in America is stronger than ever, with over 54 million adults and children participating in choral groups today. The percentage of Americans singing has also increased over the past decade, up to 17% today from 14% in 2008.
- Music education in schools remains key to supporting lifelong singing, with 76% of choral singers reporting that their first singing experience was in elementary, middle, or high school.
- People who sing feel more connected to others, and are less likely to feel isolated. 73% say group singing makes them feel less lonely, and nearly 7 in 10 choral singers say that singing has helped them socialize better in other parts of their lives.
- Chorus members give back to their communities in a big way. They are more likely than other Americans to donate money and volunteer their time to a variety of causes both inside and outside the arts.
- Choral singers are remarkably good citizens. 90% of singers report that they vote regularly vs. 55% of the of the general public, and singers also run for public office more frequently than their fellow Americans.
- Choruses are powerhouses of connection and tolerance. Singers are more likely than the general public to say that “it is always better to find ways to talk to and work with people you disagree with.” And 63% believe that singing has made them more accepting of people who are different from them.
- Choral singing promotes healthy, vibrant aging, as 69% of singers ages 65+ report a “very good” quality of life, vs. 22% of the general public of the same age.
- Nearly 20% of older singers reported improvements in one more chronic health conditions due to singing.

About the Report

The study was conducted by leading research firm Grunwald Associates, the organization that previously conducted research for the 2009 Chorus Impact Study. Researchers interviewed more than 5,700 choral singers using online surveys, including more than 1,800 singers ages 62 and older. They additionally surveyed 500 members of the general public and 600 members of the general public ages 62 and older for comparative data.

Study Funders

The 2019 Chorus Impact Study was made possible through lead support from the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), Katherine B. Andersen Fund of the Saint Paul Foundation, the NAMM

Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts*. This project was also supported by the May Festival Chorus, the San Francisco Girls Chorus, Choral Arts Society of Washington, the Colorado Children's Chorale, Encore Creativity for Older Adults, Indianapolis Children's Choir, and Kirkwood Baptist Church.

**The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author(s) and do not represent the views of the Office of Research and Analysis or the National Endowment for the Arts.*

About Chorus America

Chorus America is the advocacy, research, and leadership development organization that advances the choral field. We support and serve choral conductors, administrators, board members, and singers with tools, training, peer networking, and access so that choruses are better able to contribute to their communities.

More than 2,000 choruses, individuals, businesses, and organizations are members of Chorus America and have access to a wide array of programs, publications, research, and personal services developed for their benefit. These services strengthen their ability to build strong organizations that foster quality choral performances.

Chorus America is governed by a diverse board of accomplished arts leaders from across North America, and the staff is based in Washington DC. Learn more at chorusamerica.org.