



Family Guide 2019

What is *It's MYChoir*?

It's MYChoir is a fundraising campaign and an opportunity for MYC members to share their story with the wider community, spotlighting music education and the benefits it provides.

Why is Fundraising Necessary?

2019 Goals

MYC would not exist without the generous support of *philanthropists*—people who catch a vision and financially support ideas that are meaningful to them. Sharing your story is an invitation for others to join the MYC community as cheerleaders, enthusiasts, and supporters.

All of us at MYC—singers, conductors, and staff, have an MYC story to tell. *It's MYChoir* is about telling *your* story and sharing it with individuals who care about how you spend your time. Especially this semester as we consider the idea of *legacy*, we encourage you to think about little things making a big difference. Your “ripple” creates momentum and widens the circle. Your story is part of MYC's legacy—please share it!

The family fundraising contribution goal of \$200 helps cover the gap between tuition and the amount it actually costs MYC to provide programming. Reaching this goal every year allows us to meet our budget without raising tuition. Everyone's participation in fundraising is important!

100% participation and **\$38,000 in donations**

Participating means sharing your MYC story with at least one person **outside of your immediate family**. If they respond with a donation—great! If not, they will have, at the very least, learned something new about MYC and the benefits of the music education you are receiving.

\$38,000 is a realistic goal if everyone participates and if every family considers their fundraising goal of \$200. (You can see your progress toward your goal on your most recent tuition statement.) Last year we raised over \$36,000 through this campaign!

If you've already met (or exceeded!) your \$200 goal for the season by other means—awesome and thank you—we still want you to participate in this campaign. Why? **We value your MYC story and want it shared across the community.** Just like in rehearsal, every voice is needed and your participation is key. **Thank you for reaching out to at least one person outside your immediate family!**

Important Dates

Step One: Read the Guide & Make a Plan

By February 10/11

Get a treat week!

Turn in your golden ticket for
completing Step One.

Who to include?

Extended family
School/Parents' friends
Neighbors
Babysitter
Employer
Businesses you frequent
Doctor/Dentist
Coaches/teammates
Current & former teachers
Tutor
MYC Alumni

Step Two: Launch Your Appeal

By February 17/18

The campaign begins February 3/4 and ends March 17/18.

- Read the 2019 Family Guide—Hey! You're already doing this! Great job!
- Make a list of people who care about how you spend your time. Think about who might be interested in learning more about your involvement with MYC. ***People generally love to be invited to participate in a worthwhile cause; understanding why MYC is important to you will encourage them to respond.*** Remember, even if they decide not to donate, you will have honored them by sharing with them something of importance to you. Don't underestimate how meaningful this is to a friend or family member!
- Think of the best way to communicate with each person and organize your list by noting how you will reach them: **by letter, email, phone call, personal visit, or Facebook appeal.**
- Take a look at the calendar and map out your plan for communicating. Be sure to start early so your donors have enough time to respond before the March 17/18 turn-in deadline!
- Start thinking about why MYC matters to you and jot down your ideas.
- Whether you send a letter, share an email, make a phone call, or create a post on Facebook, you will want to communicate *your* MYC story. We've included sample language, a framework, and a list of prompts to help you get started in this Family Guide.
- Be creative! Let your letter/appeal reflect your personality. Include a photo! Keep it simple but from the heart.
- Provide clear directions for how to donate, keeping in mind the channel you are using (letter, email, etc.). (See sample)
- Credit card donations are made via the It's MYChoir link on our website. The electronic form collects all the information we need to credit your campaign. Easy!
- Donations made by check (payable to MYC) should be returned to you along with a completed donor record form. You collect all donations made by check and turn them in (along with a donor record form for each) at the end of the campaign.
- Include a deadline for a response prior to the March 17/18 turn-in date! We suggest March 15.

Step Three: The Big Send!

February 24/25

Get a treat week!

Turn in your purple
ticket for participating!

- We will be celebrating **The Big Send** (everyone's participation) during rehearsal the weekend of February 24/25.
- Let us know you participated—created an appeal and shared it with at least one person outside your immediate family--by turning in a signed PURPLE participation slip at rehearsal.
- It's a treat week!

Step Four: Saying Thank You and Tracking Donations

- As donations arrive, be sure to thank your donors!
- Keep track of each donation received on your Progress Tracking Sheet.
- Donations made by check and their corresponding Donor Record Cards stay with you until Turn-In Day (March 17/18).
- As electronic donations are made, we will be announcing our progress toward the goal: the earlier you start, the earlier we have numbers to share!
- If you are expecting a donation that has not come in, call or email with a reminder.
- Remind donors using the electronic form to notify you when they have completed their donation so you can include their gift on your Progress Tracking Sheet. (The MYC office can also be helpful in notifying you when a donation comes in.)

Step Five: Turn-In Day!

March 17/18

- Organize your packet **making sure all donations—including those made electronically and via Facebook--are listed on your tracking sheet and that you have a green donor record form for each donation made by check or cash (Important!).**
- If you collected cash donations, **please write a check for your total cash amount made payable to MYC. Please do NOT turn in cash.**
- We recognize that March 17/18 is spring break for some area school districts. We will accept donations and count them toward recognition awards through April 7/8. Donations received after April 8 will be gratefully accepted, but will not count toward recognition awards.
- Each donor will receive a donation acknowledgment and tax receipt from MYC (or Facebook). **Please make sure the information recorded on each donor record form is accurate and legible**

Bonus! Recognition, a.k.a. *Prizes*

- The ensemble recording the highest percentage of participation and/or the largest amount raised per capita, will be rewarded with a pizza OR ice cream party (subject to logistics and timing).
- Individual awards for the **most raised overall** will also be recognized.
- In addition to the individual awards, each singer who raises \$200 **through this campaign** will receive a limited edition MYC T-shirt to wear proudly. Woot!

Does MYC Contact My Donors?

- We consider *It's MYChoir* donors to be YOUR donors and expect that you are thanking them and keeping them up to date with your MYC activities.
- We keep a record of their donation (as we are required to by law) and send a tax receipt/acknowledgment, but we will NOT contact them for more money (unless they are already on our "Friends" list.)
- If they desire more information from us and would like to receive concert information and other news from MYC, they can indicate that on their donor card and we will happily add them to our contact lists.

I'm Not Sure About This. Convince Me.

Articulating why something like MYC is important to you may seem hard at first. Couple that with asking for a donation and now the whole idea may seem too overwhelming to even begin. Don't be overwhelmed! It's actually **EASY!** If you've never done something like this before let us encourage you with the following ideas to ponder:

- MYC, like all other non-profit organizations, survives by carefully managing the resources it is given. Without donors we would not be able provide the programming and outreach that enriches the lives of so many young people (like you!).
- Inviting members of the community—of *your* community—to support your music education through MYC is a natural response to the enthusiasm you have for this organization.
- It's really true that people want to know what you care about and they want to be part of worthwhile endeavors. Giving your friends and family the opportunity to be part of MYC's mission by making a donation—in whatever amount—provides them the satisfaction of participating in something important and with lasting value.
- And again, while we hope to reach our financial goal, we truly value every single connection you make within the wider community—whether they give or not. Sharing the stories of MYC (your stories!) encourages the community at-large and reminds everyone of the importance of the arts.
- A thoughtful, heartfelt letter is always appreciated. Be confident that whatever your recipients decide, you will have honored them by including them in this project. They will appreciate that you thought of them! And they will appreciate the opportunity to consider supporting your music education through MYC.

Sample Letter: First-time Donor

This is suggested language only and is meant to provide a simple framework for what you might include.

Please write a letter/make an appeal that reflects your personality in your own words.

Dear Uncle Bob,

You may know I am a member of the Madison Youth Choirs (MYC), proudly singing with [choir name], an ensemble with [insert number] other singers. Every week we rehearse together with the goal of becoming better musicians, better thinkers, and better people. I love being a part of this choir!

I am writing to you today to ask if you would consider supporting the Madison Youth Choirs with a donation in any amount. Every year we participate in the ***It's MYChoir*** Campaign. ***It's MYChoir*** reminds us that MYC is *our* organization and would not exist without the support of the families involved who pay tuition (like mine) and the generosity of individual donors who want to support music education and outreach. I included you on my list of people to invite because I thought you might be interested in hearing what MYC means to me.

[Insert your history with MYC here. Include specific examples/stories here of how you have enjoyed MYC, what you have learned, experiences you have had that you'll never forget. See the prompts on the other side of this insert to help you get started.]

Thank you for considering a donation to MYC! Every dollar we raise through this campaign will directly help MYC continue providing music education and outreach opportunities that truly change lives. Your donation will benefit everyone in MYC.

Ways to donate:

- By check payable to MYC: complete the donor card enclosed (or attached) and return everything to me by Friday, March 15. [include hard copy if sending by regular mail; attach pdf version if sending via email]
- Online: visit madisonyouthchoirs.org, click on the "It's MYChoir" logo to donate. If you donate via the website form, please let me know so I can keep track of my progress!
- [If you are also doing a Facebook fundraiser you could mention it here. See Facebook fundraiser instructions]

Thank you for helping me reach my goal and for supporting Madison Youth Choirs!

Sincerely yours,
[your name]

P.S. I hope you can come to my concert in May! You can follow MYC on Facebook or visit their website to see up-to-date event information: madisonyouthchoirs.org

Sample Language for Contacting an Established Donor

Be sure to provide up-to-date and fresh information for your established donors. This sample language might help:

Dear Uncle Bob,

You may recall one year ago when I asked you to consider a donation to the Madison Youth Choirs and you responded with your generous gift. Thank you, again! Your contribution helped us raise over \$35,000 to fund scholarships and provide a meaningful music education for hundreds of kids like me.

I'm excited to tell you that I'm still singing with MYC! Would you consider supporting my choir again this year? [Insert your progress with MYC here. What happened this past year that is meaningful to you? Did you change choirs? Did you sing with the Madison Symphony? Did you have a part in the opera? Did you go to Scotland?]

[Conclude your letter by thanking your contact. See sample paragraphs in first letter above for how to close.]

Prompts: Questions to Help You Write

Use these questions to help frame your MYC story. Remember, if it's important to you, it's worth sharing. Your personal experiences with MYC are compelling to the people in your life who care about how you spend your time.

- What does music mean to you? Why is it an important part of your life?
- Do you have favorite pieces that you have sung with MYC? What do you love about them and why?
- What have you learned from your conductors that has: Surprised you? Changed you? Made you a better musician, person, or friend?
- What are the things about MYC that are the most fun for you?
- Do you have any specific, special memories of experiences you've had being a part of MYC?
- How has MYC challenged you to try new things or to think differently about the world?
- What does it mean for you to sing in an ensemble rather than by yourself?
- What would it be like for you if MYC were not a part of your week?

Quick Facts About MYC You May Want to Include

- MYC serves over 1,000 students annually, ages 7-18, through a wide variety of music education programs in our community.
- Singers in our performing choir program attend weekly rehearsals during the school year and participate in at least two public concerts each year.
- In addition to our two introductory and nine performing choirs, MYC is active in the Madison community providing outreach programs designed to break barriers to music participation and enjoyment. We provide **in-school choir programming** at two public schools in Madison to over 200 students. We offer an **intergenerational choir experience** for residents of Capitol Lakes Retirement Community. Our **spring outreach tours** reach over 8,000 audience members throughout southern Wisconsin who might not otherwise be able to attend a concert.
- We are passionate about music education and our rehearsals reflect our desire to think deeply, critically and respectfully as we consider new ideas and talk about them.
- We regularly collaborate with the Madison Symphony Orchestra, Madison Opera, Madison Choral Project, and Opera for the Young.
- We recognize the educational and social benefits of traveling and performing internationally and have led three tours to Aberdeen, Scotland (2014, 2016, and 2018) providing life-changing experiences and creating unforgettable memories for nearly 200 students.
- Current enrollment is over 450 (and growing):

Choraliers: 33	Con Gioia: 58	Capriccio: 45
Cantilena: 26	Cantabile: 33	Ragazzi: 40
Purcell: 44	Britten: 34	Holst: 33
Intro Choir YTD: 115		

- Tuition paid by families covers just under 50% of the actual total cost of a singer's participation. The rest is funded through the generosity of foundations, publicly supported grants, individuals who believe in our mission, and MYC families who participate in fundraising.
- MYC defrays up to 100% of annual tuition for singers with demonstrated financial need through our tuition assistance program.
- MYC is dedicated to fiscal transparency and responsibility. You are encouraged to review our listing on Guidestar.org, the leading database of non-profit financial information.
- MYC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.