Young Women Reach Higher in Math, Dance

Each Saturday morning, young women from the CCC meet to talk math. But banish any turgid notions of rote memorization or multiplication tables. This class is alive with discussion as the students wrestle with new concepts. The math class is part of the newly formed Young Women’s Club, a counterpart to the Young Men’s Club (which, this semester, is tackling the *Iliad*). These groups are intended “to offer as many opportunities as possible for our students to develop intellectually,” said Director John Alston.

Why math? The young women picked the subject themselves, sensing it was an area where they could stretch further. The girls range from 8th to 11th grade, so teacher Nancy Dyson—

Nancy’s main goal is to help young women that they can “know that they know” what they are doing in math, and understand that the logical thinking they are practicing here will benefit them in years to come.

Katharine D. Myers, a long-time supporter, has given the chorus a $50,000 challenge grant to “help raise lots of money” so that even more children can benefit from chorus programs. The new “matching” grant challenges the chorus to raise $25,000 in new or increased contributions by June 30 to release a $50,000 match.

Katharine, who is 85, has offered the same challenge annually for the rest of her life to spur additional contributions in years to come. “I hope more and more people will learn about the chorus, experience the chorus, and support the chorus,” Katharine said.
cational disparity in the city. “The difference in the upkeep of schools and the books and learning tools available between the schools that served white children and the schools that served African-Americans was really shocking,” she said. “It just wasn’t fair.”

That sense of injustice stayed with her. When her financial adviser challenged her to begin supporting a cause she cared about, she thought immediately of Chester children’s educational needs. She was especially concerned for young African-American men, whom she describes as the “most discriminated-against group” in the United States. Her first gift to the chorus in 2008 established the Young Men’s Club, which provides mentoring and educational opportunities for teen boys in the chorus. She has supported the Young Men’s Club and the chorus’ general operations every year since and has also become an enthusiastic supporter of the chorus’ sister organization, the Chester Upland School of the Arts.

“The concerts are a pleasure and a joy for me, but I also love watching [director] John [Alston] with the children. His love and caring are so obvious, and I am sure that can make a complete difference in a child’s life,” she said.

Katharine is one of two holders of the copyrights to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a widely used psychological testing instrument developed by her mother-in-law, Isabel Myers, and Isabel Myers’ mother, Katharine Briggs. “Isabel gave me the opportunity to give more than little bits and pieces of money,” Katharine (Myers) said. “And there’s nothing more fun than giving money away.”

Katharine’s challenge is a transformative gift that will help the chorus grow in numbers and broaden the services it provides for its members, Dr. Alston said. “Katharine aches to make the world better and we are lucky she chose us.”

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