The beginnings of the Chester Children’s Chorus 10 years ago were, to put it gently, modest. Starting in the spring, I gathered seven second- and third-grade boys for weekly rehearsals in a Chester classroom. That summer, I picked the boys up at their homes every morning in a college van, sometimes getting lost en route, and made my way back to campus. We snacked, learned songs in unison, worked on music-reading skills, and tried a bit of group piano—can you imagine trying to teach seven boys all at once how to play the piano? What was I thinking? Afterwards, we’d hit the field for some softball. With only four or five boys fielding at any one time, the scores were more like those of a football game.

Afterwards, we’d go back to my apartment to hang out and have pizza, or we’d go to a movie, before I took the boys home. That camaraderie was clearly important to us: Three of the boys still drop by my house to hang out, and I’m still happy to see them.

A Decade of Growth

Even though I’ve watched the program grow over the years, I’m still amazed at what has evolved from that modest beginning. During the school year, we now bring 37 boys and girls from third through 12th grade to Swarthmore College twice a week for rehearsals and music lessons. This year, in our Summer Learning Program, we will have taught music to nearly 150 children, sung dozens of concerts, and created a strong year-round program that gives Chester children an unparalleled opportunity for learning and artistic expression.

Come Celebrate With Us!

10TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT AND RECEPTION
SATURDAY, MAY 15, 7:30 P.M.
Lang Music Building, Swarthmore College

Music old and new, from far and near
John Alston, Director

Anniversary reception with dessert buffet will follow the concert.

Admission is free—all are invited.

To make a tax-deductible contribution, please detach this coupon, complete, and mail to the following address:

Chester Children’s Chorus, Swarthmore College, Department of Music and Dance, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore PA 19081

Enclosed is a check in the amount of

$35 $75 $100 $250 $500 $1,000 Other: ___.

(Please charge my gift to my:

Visa Mastercard Discover

Card # ___________________________
Expires: __ / ___
Amount to charge: $ ____________

My gift will be matched by my employer.

THANK YOU!

Members of the Concert Choir and Junior Choir share their pride over the 10th anniversary concert with director John Alston. The 12-member Training Chorus will also sing in the concert, Saturday, May 15, at 7:30 p.m. in Lang Music Building at Swarthmore College.
For more information and to volunteer, call Managing Director Andrea Knox at 610-328-8180.

What’s Up For Spring

See Us in Lights!
May 15, will be featured on the circling lights atop the PECO Energy Building in Philadelphia, easily visible from the Schuylkill Expressway in Center City.
We’ll be in lights on May 8, 13, and 14.

Four Sing in St. John Passion
Four chorus members will sing in J.S. Bach’s St. John Passion with the Swarthmore College Chorus on Friday, April 30 at 8 p.m. in Lang Music Building. They are alto Craig Robinson and basses Nkenge Daniels, Steven Savage, and Vincent Wilson.

“In the Spirit of the Spiritual”
Director John Alston gave three exhilarating performances of his program “In the Spirit of the Spiritual” in February, one at Swarthmore College and two at churches in Wynnewood and Malvern. John and his accompanist, Jay Fluellen, gave many of the songs a jazz/Gospel/R&B spin, and John finished the shows with a spectacular display of vocal gymnastics à la Bobby McFerrin. The shows also conveyed a somber message, as John read letters written by slaves, which powerfully underscored the spirituals’ message of the intense physical and emotional suffering to which their first singers were subjected.

Thanks to Our Supporters

The Chester Children’s Chorus is funded by financial contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations, and by in-kind support from Swarthmore College and founder and Director John Alston.

We give particular thanks this spring to the late Judy Lord, who asked that contributions in her memory be made to the chorus, and to all those who have made gifts in her name. Judy was a friend of the chorus from its founding, helping as a volunteer, as a contributor, and in many ways through her position as coordinator of the College’s Department of Music and Dance.

—John Alston