

June 27, 2017

Dear Gaylene and Members of the Religious Arts Committee,

I don't know that I could ever convey what happiness you brought to all of us at Central Dakota Children's Choir. Raising money for a non-profit is difficult work and rarely does someone phone up and say, "We would like to give you some money, can you come in and pick it up?" Those are the kinds of things dreams are made of! We are so honored to be considered, and especially alongside such worthy groups as Capitol Shakespeare and Theo Arts School.

Every year we have children/families who find it impossible, for whatever reason, to be able to afford tuition for CDCC. We do everything we can to hold the cost down, but even then there are still circumstances when some are not able to pay. Thanks to you, some families will be able to see that their child, who loves to sing, is able to follow that path with CDCC.

Besides the education our singers receive in our program, one of the most important aspects of our organization is that we bring children together. So often children meet those from other schools across a field, or a court, where they participate in an activity of competition. These activities build teamwork and in some cases good health, but in CDCC, no one competes or sits on a bench. They are all starters!

Our Vision Statement, "Central Dakota Children's Choir has been formed to inspire children to a lifelong love of singing through the performance of fine choral music" is lived at every rehearsal. Also of interest is, besides the fact that our founding Executive Director retired, none of our choir directors have left the organization. Some of our duties have shifted around a bit, however, going into our 20th season, we directors have a combined CDCC experience of over 55 years—and we started with only one choir of 78 children.

Like the 2 other non-profits who shared in the ceremony at the Presbyterian Church, our group offers something to children that they can't find anywhere else in the community. So many children find a special place, a niche, where they meet children with like interests and have a chance to fulfill some of their dreams. Some of these children have trouble 'fitting in' in their mainstream experiences, and when they can find a place where they fit, and make lifelong friendships—well, what could be better than that!

My mother, Joan Fay, loved the Presbyterian Church, she loved singing, and she loved children, not just her own 5, but all children and she was always so proud to speak of what your 1st Presbyterian Church did for children: The Children's Choirs (Sunshine Singers and Messengers, which I actually directed for 3 years), day care, Bible School (which my children attend), Sunday School, the children's sermons on Sunday and many other things that I may have forgotten along the years.

I always found that the Presbyterian faith accepted all people and held a very special place in their heart for children, AND for those who found life difficult because of "fitting in". I have seen such great examples of real Christianity in your church. It took growing up for me to understand why my mom chose not to convert to my dad's faith. Mom would have had a big smile on her face with your gift to CDCC. She was not only a big fan of mine, but also of CDCC. She loved what we do.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the incredible gift of money. It will be put to good use! I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Teri Fay, Artistic Director  
Central Dakota Children's Choir