

# Voices

## Upcoming Events

October 17—20  
October 30  
November 3  
December 7  
December 10

Fall Musical: "9 to 5"  
Show Choir Dress Rehearsals & Photo Night (All Show Choirs)  
Cabaret: Freshman & Warrior 3:00, Concert & Warrior 7:00  
Rising Stars Show Choir Camp  
Winter Choral Concert, 7:00 (Freshman & Concert & Warrior)

September 24, 2019

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## Cabaret 2019: tickets to be sold online for first time ever

By Steph Cota, Cabaret Chair  
Cabaret is an annual themed event showcasing performances by Westside High School's award-winning choirs and show choirs, along with selected soloists. It is a fundraiser for the Westside Vocal Music Parents Association and all proceeds support the vocal music department. **Cabaret 2019, "Music of the 90s," will be Sunday, Nov. 3 with shows at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.** Freshman Choir performs only at the 3 p.m. show, while Concert Choir performs only at the evening show. A few updates are planned for this year's event:

### Online ticketing:

No more filling out paper forms and mailing off your orders, hoping they arrive in time. Gone are the days of coming to Westside during lunch hours to make a purchase or waiting in long lines at the event. This year all Cabaret tickets will be sold online. You choose your own seats

and your tickets will be emailed directly to your inbox.

Tickets for both shows go on sale Friday, Oct. 25 at noon. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$8 for students. The ticketing website is [showtix4u.com/events/westside](http://showtix4u.com/events/westside). Questions? Contact Andrea Williamson at [two-coach@cox.net](mailto:two-coach@cox.net).

### Raffle update:

Each year during Cabaret there is a prize raffle to help raise funds for the program. Our goal this year is to increase opportunities for students to sell raffle tickets to friends, family and co-workers. To that end, the 2019 Cabaret Raffle has three great prizes that all raffle ticket purchasers will be eligible to win. They are:

- Grand Prize: 4 main floor center tickets to the Broadway tour of Tony-

Award winning musical "Dear Evan Hansen" in Omaha on Friday, March 20 at 7:30 p.m. (\$400 value)

- 2nd prize: \$250 Visa Gift Card
- 3rd prize: Sonos One Gen 2 voice controlled smart speaker (\$199 value)

Raffle ticket prices are:

1 for \$5; 3 for \$10; or 6 for \$20.

Winners will be drawn during intermission at the 7 p.m. Cabaret show and do NOT need to be present to win.

ALL show choir students are asked to sell at least 20 raffle tickets prior to Cabaret. Packets will be handed out to your student in choir class the week of Oct. 14. Thanks to Nebraska Furniture Mart and the Kelley family and the Watanabe family for their generous support of our raffle! Questions? Heather Madson [heather@madson.info](mailto:heather@madson.info).

## Cabaret Important Dates

**Cabaret Performances are Sunday, November 3rd.**

**Ticket sales (online) begin on October 25th at noon**  
[Showtix4u.com/events/westside](http://Showtix4u.com/events/westside)



## Showtimes:

**3:00 p.m. (includes Freshman Choir and Warrior Choir)**  
**7:00 p.m. (includes Concert Choir and Warrior Choir)**

**Westside High School Auditorium**

## Westside's Chamber Choir to perform at the 2019 NMEA conference

Greg Woodin is pretty excited about Westside's Chamber Choir being chosen to sing at the Nebraska Music Education Association Conference Nov. 22 in Lincoln.

Not only is it a special recognition — it's been 22 years since a Westside group was selected to perform at the event. "It's a huge honor," said Woodin, who directs the group.

The 24-member Chamber Choir will perform six songs during the "concert hour" for music educators who gather from across the state to attend the annual symposium. The performance at 10:25 a.m. at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Lincoln is open to the public.

It's a great opportunity for Westside, Woodin said, and a chance to showcase this part of the vocal music program.

"The church fills up during this performance with teachers from around the state and with people from the community as well as family and friends so it's great exposure to show that Westside does so much more than show choir," he said.

The members of this year's Chamber Choir are Delilah Keeling, Lucy Kupka, Tiana Dancer, Delaney Wetjen, Yasmine Elrefaie,

Sam Howdle, Zoe Miller, Lan Volberding, Brooklyn Webster, Mara Summers, Gracie Ethofer, Jill Stark, Eliot Gray, Paul Suder, CJ Litton, John Littler, David Goodwin, Austin Carman, Jake Kroeger, Gabe Becker, Brett Upton, Brandon Wigodsky, Isaac Wiles and Mason Sanwick.

The choir was chosen from an audition tape of last year's group, which included seniors Jonathan Sullivan, Josh Paul, Evan Dondlinger, Jaylen Gould, Connor Smith, Brandon McMiller, JT Bergman, Sam Petersen, Tierney Schirmer, Vivian Jacobitz, Josie Svoboda, Chloe Shepherd, Rachel Stouffer and Tatenda Chivero.

Chamber Choir meets once a week during school hours for just 35 minutes. "Obviously that's not nearly enough so we are trying to find time in everyone's busy schedule to have a retreat of sorts to get all the notes learned and start diving into musicianship as soon as possible," Woodin said.

The set list for the performance is: Cantate Domino — Hans Leo Hassler; Deilig er den himmel blaa — arr. Paul Christensen; Nelly Bly — arr. Jack Halloran; Soon-ah Will Be Done — William Dawson; Abendlied — Josef Rheinberger; and Swingle Song — Darmon Meader.

# Order your show choir bears now!



Show choir bears are back and they're so "unBEARably" cute that you'll want more than one.

What do bears have to do with show choir? Well, here are the bear essentials:

They're a fun keepsake of your child's show choir days. The 10-inch bears are dressed in costumes resembling the costumes for each Westside show choir.

— Bears cost \$25 for one or \$20 each for two or more. Profits go to VMVA to defray show choir expenses.

— You can order them now! The goal is to have orders submitted by Nov. 5 completed in time for the holidays. You can order online or with a printed order form. It is possible for these to sell out, so ordering early is encouraged.

— Bears also will be sold for teams attending Westside's Competition of Excellence on Feb. 1. Pre-orders will be taken for these groups, but volunteers also will make and sell the bears at the competition.

An enthusiastic team of volunteers began working in May designing, sewing and gluing costumes for Westside's show choirs,

along with creating online order forms and payment methods

Teaming and scheming with other show choir moms has already made this fundraiser a success before we even raise a dime, said Mary McPadden, one of the moms helping sew bear costumes.

"We always knew Westside's talent ran deep on the show choir stages. Show choir moms also will be wowing the crowds at the Competition of Excellence behind-the-scenes as they cut fabric, sew tiny outfits and hot glue these bears into shape," said McPadden, whose son is in Warrior Express.

For years, selling the costumed bears was unique to Westside's COE and they were very popular. The bears have been hibernating for eight years but Doran Johnson suggested bringing them back this year in celebration of the 20th anniversary of COE.

We're fortunate to have Diana Lalley take the lead on designing the bear costumes. Lalley, whose daughter is in SI, has a bachelor's degree in fashion and costume design from Kent State in Ohio. She designs wedding dresses and specialty gowns, so she's had to scale her skills back to the tiny bears.

"I love working with other parents in an effort to make money for the program and memories for the kids," she said.

Jennifer Scruggs said she's had fun sewing more than 40 Warrior Express (WX) boy bears, complete with ties, vests and rolled-up sleeves. It's been a creative outlet for her and she's sure show choir fans will want the personalized bears as keepsakes.

"From the feedback so far, the bears already are a hot topic," said Scruggs, whose son is in WX.

While a core volunteer group is in place, more are needed and you do NOT need to sew! Anyone sort of crafty can help out. If you can handle a glue gun, tie ribbon for bows, cut out patterns or use fabric paint, there's a job for you. We also need people to help market the bears the bears. Contact Jackie Kroeger at [jackiekroeger@cox.net](mailto:jackiekroeger@cox.net) if you want to help or if you have questions.

To order bears, you'll find online order form on VMVA's Facebook page or on Westside Choir's website. If you'd like one emailed directly to you or to get a paper order form, contact Kathy Nellor at [Kathy@nellor.com](mailto:Kathy@nellor.com).

## Westside Show Choir Bears Ordering Information

### ATSC Bears order form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfzrNwY\\_fZ71BVPnvQfXOFdRYfc\\_vQP0jiMrP5sen-Uog-EWQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfzrNwY_fZ71BVPnvQfXOFdRYfc_vQP0jiMrP5sen-Uog-EWQ/viewform)

### SI Bears order form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfoT44M295hh1b9H\\_QyH8uuxPnhBSINnofSEWeQsdn5IQPVHQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfoT44M295hh1b9H_QyH8uuxPnhBSINnofSEWeQsdn5IQPVHQ/viewform)

### WX Bears order form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScE12QIMv5kU2dO1GNEjFaFx\\_xYe9uw-BftdgRThDOPRyZZoaQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScE12QIMv5kU2dO1GNEjFaFx_xYe9uw-BftdgRThDOPRyZZoaQ/viewform)





# “Mama Millard” is now “Award-Winning Mama Millard”



Everyone involved with Westside’s vocal music program knows how outstanding Denise Millard is.

Now she has an award to prove it.

Millard, who is starting her ninth year as

Westside’s accompanist, received one of 10 Outstanding Employee Awards from the Westside Community Schools Foundation at the end of last school year.

Millard’s nomination was submitted by Doran Johnson and Greg Woodin, along with five letters of recommendation from parents and colleagues.

“Greg and I were very passionate about nominating Denise for this award,” Johnson said. “We see all of the work she puts in behind the scenes every day to keep this program running. We wanted her to be recognized for all she does beyond playing the piano.”

Millard, who was nicknamed “Mama Millard” by students in her first year at Westside, never has an idle minute. When she isn’t playing piano for one of Westside’s six choirs and three show choirs, she helps soloists prepare for auditions or mends show choir costumes. She organizes choir robes, manages the choral music library, and plays in the orchestra pit for musicals.

“Denise is just amazing,” Woodin said.

“She doesn’t just play the piano. She’s an ear for our kids and she does so much for our show choir program as well. She’s on top of everything but is also so flexible and makes adjustments.”

Millard said she “ugly-cried” when she found out about the award and read the letters of recommendation. “They meant so much to me,” she said. “It was very surreal, yet humbling.”

Announced at the end last school year, the award was intended to be a surprise and, boy was it ever. Millard and her husband had headed to Colorado to start their summer vacation. When their plane landed, Millard saw a message from Johnson urging her to check her Facebook page.

“I thought maybe I’d been hacked,” she said. But that was where he posted a congratulatory message.

The award comes with a \$500 prize from the Foundation. To be eligible for the award, a person has to have worked for at least two years for the Westside school district, for at least 20 hours a week.

## Camp Ready to Mentor “Rising Stars”

Our next group of “rising stars” will be mentored at Westside’s Rising Stars Show Choir camp Saturday, Dec. 7.

Spread the word to friends and family with kids in grades 4—6 who are future show choir singers and dancers. The camp costs \$40, runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the high school, and has room for only 120 kids.

**Contact Choral Director Doran Johnson for a registration form.**

The day ends with a 2:30 p.m. performance by campers and WHS’s ATSC. About 15 members of ATSC also volunteer at the camp, helping students learn choreography, while Johnson and Greg Woodin teach vocals.

The Rising Stars Show Choir camp is a fundraiser, but it benefits Westside students and our vocal music program in many other ways. It gets kids pumped up about doing show choir in middle school and then high school, Johnson said.

“It opens the parents’ eyes to our high-profile program,” he said. It’s also a chance to promote the premiere nights for ATSC, Simply Irresistible and Warrior Express, along with other show choir performances.

For the ATSC kids who help teach, it’s an opportunity to give back to a program that’s been important to them. For those con-



sidering a career in education, it’s a chance for some hands-on experience, Johnson.

Costs for the camp are minimized because Johnson and Woodin donate their time and students create the choreography. However, if someone wants to underwrite the cost of t-shirts for the campers or the pizza meal, it would boost profits which all go directly to support all three Westside show choir programs.

A small team of parent volunteers is needed to handle registration, supervision and lunch. To volunteer, contact Andee Scioli at [andee.scioli@kutakrock.com](mailto:andee.scioli@kutakrock.com).



## Westside's Vocal Music European Tour 2019: The Power & Universality of Music

By Katie Coss, Westside Parent

Touring Europe is an adventure most people only dream of. For a group of nine Westside choir students, touring and singing in the most famous cathedrals throughout Europe, it was a reality this June. Doran Johnson, Westside High School's Choral Director & Performing Arts Department Chair, led the students on a stunning two-week Europe tour as part of the Midwest American Music Tour Honor Choir. It was Johnson's seventh trip as an honor choir director.

Despite a massive heat wave in France and the devastating fire that ravaged Notre Dame Cathedral in April, the honor choir soldiered on and, by all accounts, the trip was hugely successful.

The formerly bi-annual Europe trip is now offered annually to Westside choir students in grades 10 — 12. Johnson offered his perspective on the benefits of going on tour across Europe with the talented and eager students he directs. "I get to see students develop confidence and a spirit of adventure right before my very eyes. They start the trip a little hesitant, but once they get their feet under them, they fully immerse themselves in everything the trip has to offer. The students get connected with their fellow travelers and share life changing experiences together," he said.

"Musically, students are a part of a choir experience singing historical music in historical venues. Students see first-hand the power and universality of music." According to Johnson, "We decided to offer the trip in 2019 because it follows a

different route. Instead of Barcelona, the tour included more of Switzerland and Italy — including Venice and Verona." Students who make the trip next summer will return to Barcelona, Nice and Monaco as well as the traditional stops in Paris, Lugano and Munich. This route is Johnson's favorite, as students get to sing in Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain; visit Mont Saint Michel Abbey and Saint-Malo in western France, which provide exploration and education, and experience "spectacular" Monaco.

Westside Junior Ava Williamson echoed Johnson's sentiments in endorsing the Europe Tour...with gusto! "I've never been to Europe before, so this was a really great first experience. My favorite part of the trip was the day we spent in Lugano, Switzerland. We basically spent the whole day paddle-boating on the lake and swimming together. It was so relaxing, and was such a beautiful place to be," she said.

The famous Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris has always been a favorite stop on the Europe trip, but, because of the fire, students were instead supposed to perform at Notre Dame de Chartres. However, that also was canceled due to a missed flight by part of the group. "The trade-off was getting more free time to explore Paris on our own," Johnson said.

Williamson concurred with Johnson. "I was sad that we didn't get to sing here, but overall I was fine with it because that meant we got a full day to explore Paris."

Johnson said he took a small group to see

the burned cathedral, which is being rebuilt. He said it was walled off and the public couldn't get close. Notre Dame is an area normally teeming with tourists but Johnson said it "seemed oddly deserted." Because most of the students had never been inside the historic French Gothic cathedral, the sight of the ruined church didn't impact them as much as it did Johnson who has sung with honor choirs there for years. "It really made my heart hurt not being able to go inside and sing in that amazing cathedral," he said.

Williamson added that she would definitely recommend this trip and the lifetime of memories it creates. "You see so many amazing things and see such interesting cultures," she said. Most importantly, Williamson said, she "took away a lot of vocal techniques, such as breath support. It was also interesting to get to sing different styles of music than what I'm used to."

Westside Sophomore, Jenna Liakos will head out on her first Honor Choir trip next summer. Liakos has gotten word from several Westside alumni (including her older brother and sister) that the trip to Europe is "amazing." She said she's also excited about the chance to improve her singing of "classical choir music and finding that type of music in my own voice."

There are still some spots available for next summer's trip, June 27th through July 12th. The 2020 tour will begin with two days of rehearsals in Lincoln, followed by two weeks traveling across Europe. Westside vocal music parents can contact Mr. Johnson for more information.



# Warrior Theatre and the WHS Vocal Music Department Present "9 to 5: The Musical"



## Performances Are:

**October 17th, 18th, 19th  
at 7:00 p.m.**

**October 20th at 2:00 p.m.  
WHS Auditorium**

Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$8 for students.

People can purchase general admission tickets online at [whswt.booktix.com](http://whswt.booktix.com) (when they are available)

Warrior Theatre patrons will be able to advance order tickets AND RESERVE their seats. Depending upon your patron level, you may be given an access code for free seats.

"Nine to Five: The Musical," based on the 1980 film, features a book by Patricia Resnick, based on the screenplay which she co-wrote with Colin Higgins (who directed the film). Dolly Parton wrote the music and lyrics for the musical, which opened on Broadway in April, 2009. The two-act production, featuring nearly 20 songs, is set in the late 1970s.

The protagonists of "Nine to Five: The Musical," Doralee Rhodes, Violet Newstead and Judy Bernly, co-workers at Consolidated Industries, are toiling under the autocratic leadership of the very sexist and egotistical Franklin Hart, Junior. Doralee is under constant unwanted pursuit from Hart, Judy struggles with her first job outside the home

### Cast List

Violet Newstead ..... **Delaney Wetjen**  
Doralee Rhodes ..... **Kelly Kroeger**  
Judy Bernly .... **Hannah-Kate Kinney**  
Franklin Hart, Jr. .... **Eliot Gray**  
Roz Keith ..... **Jill Stark**  
Joe ..... **Julian Hinrichs**  
Dwayne ..... **Isaac Wiles**  
Dolly ..... **Paige Hakari**  
Missy ..... **Morgan Beutler**  
Maria ..... **Laura Dodge**  
Dick ..... **John Littler**

and Violet has once again been passed over for a promotion that is rightfully hers. The three women get to know one another and discover their mutual loathing of Hart. Then, there is an untoward incident with rat poison, which puts into motion the remainder of the musical's plot.

To deal with their precarious situation, the three women concoct a rather convoluted plan to rescue themselves, which works for a time, long enough for them to institute some major changes at Consolidated that have vastly improved the atmosphere of the workplace. However, more challenges ensue, with everything culminating in a dramatic conclusion in Act II.

Kathy ..... **Yasmine Elrefaie**  
Margaret ..... **Audrey Christensen**  
Bob Enright ..... **Austin Carman**  
Tinsworthy ..... **Adian Upton**  
Josh ..... **Andrew Johanningsmeier**  
Detective ..... **Brandon Wigodsky**  
Doctor ..... **Paul Suder**  
Candy Striper ..... **Kari Chatmon**  
Intern ..... **Oliver Delgado**  
Cop ..... **Quentin Egbert**  
New Girl ..... **Sarah Lalley**

### Production Staff:

Director: Jeremy Stoll  
Music Director: Greg Woodin  
Choreographer: Melanie Walters  
Technical Director: Aaron Boyle  
Assistant Director: Hailee Munhall  
Stage Manager: Owen De La Cruz  
Assistant Stage Manager: Abby Schreiber



### Ensemble:

Audrey Egbert, Sammy Gillotte, CJ Litton, Liam McCann, Macy Rieser, Jimmy Stacy, Mia Stiles, Elena Sullivan, AnnaLeesa Telford, Ava Van Gelder, Dori Watanabe

### The "9 to 5" Orchestra

Emma Galusha and Rick Avard, Synthesizer  
Alessandra Meza, Auxiliary Percussion  
Will Morrow, Drums  
Chad Fey and Mason Sanwick, Guitar  
Emily Langford, Bass  
Andy Li and Elsie McCabe, Reeds  
Ben Waxberg and Ian Address, Trumpet  
Oliver Gurney, Trombone  
Mrs. Millard, Piano

### All-State Choir Important Dates

October 4—5 (Friday and Saturday)  
All-State Auditions (recorded at WHS) — All juniors and interested students

November 21—23 (Thursday through Saturday )  
All State Festival (Lincoln) — Selected students

# Meet Westside High School's Vocal Music teachers

## Doran Johnson, Choral Director

Doran Johnson has perfected a signature high-pitch scream-squeal that both terrifies and thrills his choir students.

The first encounter terrifies students who, understandably, assume their teacher is distressed. Students quickly learn the scream is a good thing — often an expression of excitement that their singing has given him goosebumps.

He's also known for his steely concentration when his show choir is about to take the stage at a contest. Hint to parents — this a bad time to attempt chit-chat! Let the man work.

Johnson has taught vocal music for 32 years, with 22 of them being at Westside. He chairs Westside's Performing Arts Department and directs Warrior Choir, which consistently wins a superior rating - the highest possible — at the District Music Contest. He also directs two show choirs — the prep group Warrior Express and varsity ATSC.

His "summer vacation" seems to be spent teaching more kids more music. He often travels to Europe as assistant conductor for the Midwest Honor Choir, including a trip this year where he succumbed to his shopping addiction for plaid shirts and

## Greg Woodin, Asst. Choral Director

Last year Greg Woodin proved that he's a team player. Draped in plastic bags, he let WHS accompanist Denise Millard smash a pie in his face to celebrate meeting a fund-raising goal for show choir.

Woodin, in his fourth year as Westside's associate choral director, was volunteered for the pie-smashing by Doran Johnson, who might have laughed a little harder than he should have when Mrs. Millard smashed the pie a little harder than anyone thought she would have.

Woodin says he isn't plotting revenge ... Or maybe that's exactly what he wants Johnson and Millard to think.

Woodin teaches Concert Choir, Voice and Music Theory. He directs the women's varsity show choir, Simply Irresistible, and two a cappella groups – Chamber Choir and Decibelles. He also is the musical director for WHS's annual musical.

You know when it's a super busy time for Woodin because he forgets to shave. During the musical and show choir season, he grows a beard that would make any mountain man jealous. The mustache he sports in May has a totally different meaning. He grows that for Mustaches for Kids, a non-profit that raises money for charities that



“accidentally” bought 25. He directed the All-Iowa Show Choir this summer with Stephen Todd as choreographer. He also teaches at the Nebraska Show Choir Camp in Lincoln.

He is famously known by his students for his love of Diet Mt. Dew and for laughing at his own jokes.

Disney in Orlando is one of Johnson's favorite places not only because his ATSC has won three Grand Championships at national competitions there, but because it's where he and Jolon, his wife of 33

years, spent their honeymoon. Their two children, Jordan and Jaylee, both graduated from Westside and participated in the choir and show choir programs here.

In his actual free time, he works out (not kidding) and is grandpa to two-year-old Abel. The Johnsons are awaiting their second grandchild in November.

During his Westside career, Johnson has been recognized with many honors. He received the 2016 Alan and Sandra Chapman Outstanding Director Award at Show Choir Nationals. He was named the 2012 Educator of the Year by the Nebraska Music Education Association. Johnson was presented the inaugural BRAVO award from the Westside Foundation and also has received the Distinguished Teaching Award from the Schragger Foundation, the H. Vaughn Phelps Excellence in Teaching Award and the Lundquist Award for Excellence in Teaching.

He currently serves as District 2 music coordinator for the Nebraska School Activities Association. An Iowa native, Johnson has a bachelor's degree in Music Education from the University of Northern Iowa. His master's degree in music is from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.



and now is choral director at South High, while Cross was at WHS last year and now is Elkhorn South's assistant choral director. Woodin and his roommates have bonded over comparing corny jokes Mr. Johnson subjects them to.

They also have a dog-son named Max who, Woodin says, is a good boy and loves to fetch. “But he knows no personal boundaries, just like Mr. Gruttemeyer. They were meant for each other,” he says.

Woodin has a bachelor's degree in music education from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. He is a member of the American Choral Directors Association in Nebraska and Iowa and continues to serve as chair of the Iowa All-State Jazz Choir.

Previously he was choir director at Adel-DeSoto-Minburn Schools in Adel, Iowa.

He helped coach Westside's Rugby Club and plays in the Omaha GOATS Rugby Club.

Woodin's healthy head of hair makes a statement. People assume he uses special products to tame his hair flow. But he says he just lets the natural oils work their wonders. His sister gave him the idea and he thinks it's been working pretty well.



## Meet the Teachers: Mama Millard

Denise Millard unconditionally supports every kid. She doesn't play favorites.

Until now.

Our "Mama Millard" became "Grandmama" to little Oakley Grace, born July 31. Oakley's awfully cute and she's filled Millard's heart, but we've no doubt she's saved enough room for the 350 students she'll work with in her ninth year as Westside's accompanist.

She was affectionately nicknamed "Mama Millard" her first year here because of how she cares for students as if they are her own kids – whether it be reassuring a nervous student before an audition, doling out cold medicine on a show choir trip, or just listening to a story about a challenging day.

When she isn't playing piano for one of Westside's six choirs or three show choirs, she uses her time and talent to do whatever is needed to make the vocal music program successful.

And we mean whatever it takes.

She even agreed to take a pie in the face last year. Doran Johnson volunteered her to get the pie if a fundraising goal for show choir fell short. But when the goal was met, Mrs. Millard got to throw the pie at Greg Woodin instead.

Turns out, she has some mad pie-throwing skills!



Known for her kind and gentle manner, sweet Mama Millard smashed the pie with gleeful aggression that surprised everyone.

Apparently peer pressure got to her. Students were egging her on with loud and enthusiastic cheers for her to throw the pie.

"And then all of the sudden physics took over," she said.

Millard calls her work at Westside a

"dream job" because she gets to play piano every day for kids who work hard and love music. She has a great sense of humor, which comes in handy because she shares a very tiny office with Mr. Johnson who thinks he's the funniest person in the vocal music department.

She studied music education with an emphasis in piano at Biola University in La Mirada, Calif. She and her husband, Mark, are from southern California but moved to Omaha 27 years ago for his job.

They raised three children here — two daughters and a son, who just got married in September. The Millards enjoy spending time with their family and that means Oakley is sure to attend a Westside choir concert sometime this year. She'll probably bring her parents, Denise's daughter and son-in-law. Oakley doesn't have any Warrior gear — yet — but already has she two Husker outfits.

We're fortunate that Millard does so much more than play piano for Westside's vocal music program. No task is too small from managing the choral music library and organizing choir robes to mending show choir and making time for extra practices for soloists and show choir boot camps.

In her spare time, she collects dogs. Her furry family includes two dogs, Sunny and Charlie, and "grand dogs" Simba, Kaia and Theo.

## Support Westside's Show Choirs — And Look Cool Doing So

Literally wear your pride for Westside's choir program on your sleeve by purchasing spirit wear from this link at Lawlor's Custom Sportswear. This gear will be double as the preferred logo for volunteers to wear at the Competition of Excellence. This is particularly important for the COE 2020, the 20th anniversary COE, on February first, because there won't be a separate COE tee-shirt this year. So, pick your favorite and wear it often. There are also a few non-clothing items, such as a back-pack and a blanket.

Three dollars of every purchase goes to the Vocal Music Parents Association.

[lawlorcustom.com/westside-show-choir](http://lawlorcustom.com/westside-show-choir)



*A small sampling of the many Westside Show Choir clothing items and other Westside Show Choir items available to purchase.*



Members of Warrior Express attend class on September 20th.

## Vocal Music Education Has Unexpected Benefits for Students

Want nicer, more inclusive kids? Consider mandating choir.

That's the message Daniel Pink, best-selling author of **When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing**, delivered in keynote addresses to K-12 leaders at education workshops across the nation this year.

Science shows that synchronized activities — such as choral singing — calms heart rates, boosts endorphin levels and increases sensitivity to others, Pink said.

“The benefits of choral singing are outrageous. It is shocking,” he said. In fact, in terms of benefits, it's up there with exercise and meditation.

“It is more powerful than you could ever imagine,” he said.

Children are more likely to smile, engage in eye contact, help out their teacher and befriend others who are not exactly like them

after they've participated in a synchronized activity like choir, said Pink, citing research from the Journal of Developmental Science.

Singing in a choir — not alone or solo but in a group — is the “new exercise,” Pink said. Choir practices, not just performances, produce these results, he said. Benefits include higher pain thresholds and reduced need for pain medication, along with reduced symptoms of depression and improved mood, he said.

The takeaway? Schools might want to consider making choral singing mandatory for all students, Pink said.

“There's something about synchronizing in time with others that is profoundly human,” he said. “People who sing in a group report a far higher well-being than those who sing solo.”

*Compiled from reports in Education Week and CNBC.*

### A few responses from Westside Vocal Music Students

#### Claire Wing, Sophomore

“I personally know choir does amazing things for me. I take mostly honors classes each day. It's very stressful. The minute we start warming up and getting into the music for the day, the stress I'm feeling melts away. It's a great break in my very full day.”

#### Abby Cota, Senior

“In choir and show choir, I am able to focus and work in a different way than I do in a classroom setting. I have to direct all my attention to the singing and movement and I forget about all the things I am stressed and worried about. It clears my mind and is a break from sitting at a desk. I also have friends that I might not otherwise know, because of our common interest.”

#### Paul Suder, Junior

“It's been a really big stress reliever for a lot of things. I feel like I can be myself and have a good time with my friends. Choir is an escape from the pressure of other classes.”

#### Laura Dodge, Junior

“We have assigned spots in choir class. Every semester I find I am seated next to people I've never met. It doesn't take long for us to become friends because of the camaraderie of choral singing. I get a little sad when our positions change but I enjoy seeing my choir friends in other places at school and the chance to make more new friends.”

#### Anson Haney, Freshman

“Choir is great because some of my favorite people are in it — and it provides a brain break from my other classes.”

#### Mara Summers, Junior

“Show choir is so stressful and competitive, but that competitive environment is something that pushes us to grow as people. And when you spend so much time rehearsing and practicing with your show choir, it becomes your team and, eventually, your second family. Plus show choir is so aerobic that it's like double endorphins from the singing AND dancing.”



## Save the Date!

February 1, 2020

The 20th anniversary of  
Westside's  
Competition of Excellence

Everyone's help is needed — and appreciated!

- Volunteers are needed on Friday afternoon and evening (January 31st) for set-up, and all day on COE day, February first. It's the VMPA's biggest fundraiser of the year.
- Contact Joy Suder, [joysuder@gmail.com](mailto:joysuder@gmail.com), with questions and ideas





ATSC meets the Larson family, who were helped by Katie DiCicco Karin's "Wear It Backwards" foundation. From L to R, seated: Jake Larson, Wendy Larson, Katelyn Larson, Katie DiCicco and Jasper DiCicco

## Westside students meet the reason for their backwards shirts

Have you ever wondered why show choir students often wear tee-shirts with text printed backwards? Well, a special visit last week from an Iowa family has a lot to do with that question.

The members of ATSC enjoyed a special treat during their September 18th rehearsal with choreographer Katie DiCicco, who has been creating programs for ATSC for more than 20 years.

First, a little background.

In addition to her choreography work, her nursing school studies, and caring for her two children, Ty and Jasper, in 2013 DiCicco began the "Wear It Backwards Foundation," whose goal is to help families caring for a child enduring long-term medical treatment. "There are so many needs that a family encounters during a long hospital stay for a loved one. Food, lodging, gas, medical supplies, care for older children. It is our mission to help ease some of the burden." DiCicco's work in this field grew out of her own experiences when Jasper, then nine months old, was desperately ill. "Since then, it has been my personal mission to provide financial resources to families going through what we did," DiC-

icco said. She gave some examples, "We provide care packages, medical supplies, food, lodging, and gas gift cards, financial support, birthday and holiday gifts, and numerous other things that are not covered by insurance or typical financial aid."

DiCicco's foundation raises funds by creating and selling tee-shirts for dancers, who often rehearse looking into mirrors. Therefore, the text is printed backwards, to allow the performers see the words correctly when looking at their reflection. You may have noticed some of these shirts in past photos!

So, back to our ATSC story ... last Wednesday, ATSC enjoyed a visit from Katelyn Larson and her family from Odebolt, Iowa. Katelyn is a healthy, thriving six-year-old, who needed a heart transplant within a few months of her birth, the result of a condition known as dilated cardiomyopathy. Katelyn is one of the pediatric patients whose family has been helped by DiCicco's "Wear It Backwards" foundation.

If you would like more information about this organization, their website is: [wearitbackwards.org](http://wearitbackwards.org).



Simply Irresistible learns choreography, September 14, 2019

# Hall of F.A.M.E. key for Westside's show choir fundraising

Imagine getting a bill for your child's show choir expenses: costumes, professional choreographers and musical arrangements tailored to each show, plus music licensing fees would cost well over \$1,000 per kid.

That's what happens at nearly every other Omaha school with a show choir program — except Westside. Most schools treat show choir like an extra-curricular activity and parents pay a fee upfront to cover the cost for their kids to participate. That can't happen at Westside because show choir is a class here and state law prohibits charging fees for a class.

So we raise the funds essential for our amazing show choirs to compete at highest level. That fundraising kick off each year with Hall of F.A.M.E.

It's the easiest way to donate to Westside's

show choirs. You simply write a check. The amount is up to you — whatever fits your budget — and it is all tax deductible. The goal is that every family will donate something. We need 100 percent participation.

Checks should be payable to the Westside Foundation and mailed to Westside Vocal Music Parent Association, WHS, 8701 Pacific St., Omaha, NE.

Donations also can be made online at the Westside Foundation website, [wcsfoundation66.org](http://wcsfoundation66.org). Just click on the "Donate Today" rectangle in the top-left corner, then scroll down to the last option, which is the Westside High school button. Then, if you click on the pull-down menu, VMPA-HOF is the fourth choice down.

Maintaining a top-notch show choir program is expensive and school funds now

cover only 10 percent of our costs. This makes donating to Hall of F.A.M.E. even more important than ever.

Thirty years ago, our show choir program started humbly with students creating their own choreography and parents sewing the costumes. Standard choral music was adapted for the shows and the show "band" consisted of a drummer and keyboardist.

Fortunately for the 175 kids involved today in Westside's show choirs, parents back then started the Hall of F.A.M.E. to take show choir to the next level. That resulted not only in years of show choir success, but also in creating special learning opportunities and memories that last a lifetime for the kids involved. So we hope you'll continue supporting the tradition of show choir at Westside with a Hall of F.A.M.E. donation now.

## The Results Are In: Westside's Vocal Music Program had a great fundraising year

When Westside's spring and summer show choir fundraisers were "put to bed," the results brought "sweet rewards."

Selling mattresses brought in more than \$9,000 in what was essentially a one-day effort requiring very little manpower from parents and students. Selling Village Inn Pies raised \$15,166.50, exceeding the goal of \$12,000.

But hold onto your sheets and prepare your sweet tooth because a second round of both fundraisers is likely. Nothing is set in stone yet, but if you need a new mattress, hold off for a while and plan on a pie for your Mother's Day dessert.

### Mattress Sale Update

Lisa Gobar, who chaired the mattress fundraiser, said she's grateful so many families supported the first-time event. "Thank you to the generous families who elected to purchase bedding through us instead of a brick and mortar store," she said.

The Vocal Music Parents Association partnered with Custom Fundraising Solutions to sell mattresses June 1 at WMS School. The event replaced fireworks sales, which required 2 weeks of 24-hour volunteer work.

In contrast, CFS did all of the "work," including selling and delivering brand new mattresses, sheets, bed frames or pillows to everyone who bought one at our fundraiser.

People were pleased with the quality of their purchases and reported excellent customer service with on-time deliveries. "I know my son loves his new mattress, frame and sheets. And the process could not have been any easier," Gobar said.

The mattress sale also exceeded its goal of



Two of these three vocal music educators (and a whole bunch of students) found this moment rather amusing.

raising at least \$6,000, which is what the fireworks sales averaged.

### Pie Sale Update

The other spring fundraiser — selling cards to purchase Village Inn pies — also was successful in its first year, according to Sydney Goodwin and Mary McPadden, who chaired the effort.

Parents could either donate \$75 or sell pie cards that would generate the same amount of money. About 45 percent sold pie cards and 55 percent made straight donations.

To fuel excitement, Doran Johnson volunteered Assistant Choral Director Greg Woodin to take a pie in the face if the goal was met. If the effort fell short, Westside accompanist Denise Millard would get a pie in the face.

For obvious reasons, everyone wanted the pie

to be thrown at Woodin. But when pie sales lagged for a while, the sales deadline was extended and it looked like Mrs. Millard might find out what a whipped cream facial feels like. A last-minute donation saved Mrs. Millard, although more than one student volunteered to take Millard's place for the pie throwing.

Many are clamoring for a repeat of this fundraiser — not just because it was easy and the pies are tasty — but because they want Mr. Johnson to be the target for a pie in the face.

It's no surprise that both Woodin and Millard have "volunteered" Johnson to take a pie in the face as incentive for hitting the next pie fundraising goal.

Goodwin thanked parents for making this year's efforts a success. She said many commented on how easy it was to sell the pie cards.



## Welcome from VMPA Presidents, Meg and Nate Dodge

We are excited to welcome you to the 2019 — 2020 vocal music season. The schedule is packed with clinics, performances and competitions. The Vocal Music Parents Association (VMPA) will be there to support, fund, feed, applaud, and transport student performers.

The VMPA was established more than 25 years ago to ensure students would have the opportunity to be a part of an excellent high school music program. You will see VMPA members distributing cookies at concerts, selling tickets and concessions, sewing bear costumes and recruiting door monitors for concerts. In addition to funding choreographers, costumes and musical arrangements for three award-winning show choirs, VMPA supports all choral students by funding guest clinicians, lighting and

equipment updates, providing meals to All-State Choir members and funding scholarships.

The VMPA hosts several fundraising events annually: Cabaret, Rising Stars Show Choir Camp, Competition of Excellence and An Evening of Show Choirs. Last year we introduced two new fundraisers; Pie Card sales and the Matress Sale, both of which were very successful. We need your time and treasure at each of these events. However, our most important fundraising endeavor is the Hall of F.A.M.E.

The Hall of F.A.M.E provides crucial funding needed to ensure that Westside's vocal music program and renowned show choirs continue the tradition of excellence that has provided unparalleled experiences for so many students. Please support the

efforts of the VMPA by joining the Hall of F.A.M.E. with a generous financial contribution. Your gift will make a difference.

We look forward to volunteering with you this year and witnessing together the positive impact the vocal music program has on our students. Thank you in advance for your support of the Hall of F.A.M.E. Truly, we cannot provide the support our choirs need without your donations.

Be sure to take in a performance of the school musical "9 to 5," October 17th through the 20th, and remember to order your tickets for Cabaret on November 3rd — available online October 25th.

Sincerely,

Meg and Nate Dodge  
VMPA Presidents  
2019—2020

## VMPA officers 2019—2020

Presidents: Meg and Nate Dodge  
Vice Presidents: Joy and Matt Suder  
Treasurer: Dave Cota  
Secretary: Jackie Kroeger  
Advisor: Ann Hofmann  
Advisor: Sue Barnhart  
Hall of F.A.M.E. Chair: Sydney Goodwin  
Cabaret Chair: Stephanie Cota  
COE Chair: Joy Suder  
Rising Stars Chair: Andee Scoili  
Voices: Jackie Kroeger, Katie Coss, Elizabeth Tape  
Dad Crew: Nate Dodge, Terry Kroeger and Andy Wetjen  
ATSC Picnic: Steph Cota and Janelle Kupka  
ATSC Retreat: Katee Upton  
Hauling Heroes: Mike and Debbie McKay  
Bulletin Boards: Katie Bauerly and Nicole Bauerly  
Hospitality: Kim Falk  
Costume Transport: Kim Simon, Ann Hofmann, Jackie Kroeger

### Join Today

Select Your Membership Level & Tax-Deductible Contribution

#### Individual/Family Levels

- Top-Ten Hits Member . . . . . \$10-\$74**  
Recognition in the vocal music newsletter throughout the school year and opportunity to reserve seats for WHS' Evening of Show Choirs event in May
- Gold Record Member . . . . . \$75-\$249**  
Includes all benefits listed above
- Platinum Album Member . . . . \$250-\$499**  
Includes all benefits listed above

#### Business/Corporate Levels

- Sponsor . . . . . \$500-\$999**  
Recognition in the vocal music newsletter, text listing on banner\*, 2 free tickets to Evening of Show Choirs
- Benefactor . . . . . \$1,000-\$1,499**  
Recognition in the vocal music newsletter, text listing or logo (business/corporate sponsors) on banner\*, 4 tickets to Evening of Show Choirs, plus free ½-page student ad in Evening of Show Choirs program
- Underwriter . . . . . \$1,500 or more**  
Recognition in the vocal music newsletter, text listing or logo (business/corporate sponsors) on banner\*, 8 tickets to Evening of Show Choirs, plus free full-page student ad in Evening of Show Choirs program

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(as it should appear in hall of FAME program)  
Contact \_\_\_\_\_  
(corporate only)  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Donating online is easy:

visit [www.westsidechoirs.com/hall-of-f.a.m.e](http://www.westsidechoirs.com/hall-of-f.a.m.e) or by visiting [www.wcsfoundation66.org](http://www.wcsfoundation66.org). Click on DONATE Today and scroll down to Westside High School donations and select VMPA.

### Make checks payable to Westside Foundation and mail to:

Vocal Music Parents Association  
Westside High School  
8701 Pacific Street  
Omaha, NE 68114



## Thank you to the 2019—2020 Hall of F.A.M.E. Members

### Underwriter \$1,500 — more

Anonymous  
Stephanie and David Cota  
Meg and Nate Dodge  
Ann and Scott Hofmann  
Jackie and Terry Kroeger  
Kim and Jim Simon

### Benefactor \$1000 — \$1499

Michael Hollman and Chelsea Chesen  
Jamie and Ted Friedland  
Wendi and Scott Kroeger  
Heather and Justin Madson  
Jamie and Troy Meyerson  
DJ and Lisa Rezac  
Kristin Williams and Roxanne Wiles

### Sponsor \$500 — \$999

Marty and Sue Barnhart  
Steve and Katie Coss  
Cathy and Steve Haney  
Jerry and Robyn Kleidosty  
Suder Law PC LLO

### Platinum Album Members \$250-\$499

Chad and Katie Bauerly  
Deb and Jon Becker  
Corey and Jessica Cross  
Whitney and Dave Goldner  
Mary and Bryan McPadden  
Janet and Doug Parsonage

### Platinum Album Members, cont.

Jennifer and David Paul  
Brenda and Rich Rosenblatt  
Jennifer and Stephen Scruggs  
Amanda and Derek Smith  
The Tape Family  
Katee and Troy Upton  
The Wallace Family  
Joy and Gordon Watanabe

### Gold Record Members \$75 — \$249

Justene Bunting  
Adam and Sydney Goodwin  
Paula Jackson  
Jim and Dorothy Morrow  
Cindy and Joshua Persky  
Bill and Sharon Sonnleitner  
Carissa and Tony Schragger  
Kellie and Jason Tagge  
Meagan and John VanGelder

### Top-Ten Hits Members \$10 — \$74

Lacey Baumann  
Liz and John Decker  
The Jackson Family  
George and Cheryl Lapka  
Lori Leibold  
Kathy and John McClellan

# WHS Vocal Music Program Calendar, 2019–2020

Date	What and When and Where	Choirs
October 4–5 (Fri–Sat)	All State Auditions (recorded at WHS)	All juniors/interested students
October 17–20 (Thu–Sun)	Fall Musical: “9 to 5”	
October 30 (Wed)	Show Choir Dress Rehearsals & Photo Night	ATSC/SI/WX
November 3 (Sun)	Cabaret @ WHS (3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.)	Freshman/Warrior (3 p.m.) Concert/Warrior (7 p.m.)
November 21–23 (Th–Sat)	All-State Festival (Lincoln)	Selected students
December 7 (Sat)	Rising Stars Show Choir Camp: Camp 9–3 (Performance at 2:30)	ATSC volunteers
December 10 (Tues)	Winter Choral Concert (WHS Aud.), 7:00 p.m.	Freshman/Concert/Warrior
January 3 (Fri)	ATSC Rehearsal 9:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.	ATSC/Band/Crew
January 4 (Sat)	ATSC Rehearsal with Dina — Noon to 4 p.m.	ATSC/Band/Crew
January 7 (Tues)	ATSC Premiere Night 7:00 PM (WHS Aud.)	ATSC/Band/Crew
January 10–12 (Fri–Sun)	Viterbo IOI Show Choir Invitational (La Crosse, WI)	ATSC
January 14 (Tues)	SI Premiere 7:00 p.m.	SI/SIB
January 18 (Sat)	Waukee Starstruck Invitational (Waukee, IA)	SI/SIB
January 23 (Thu)	Warrior Express Premiere 8:00 p.m.	WX
January 25 (Sat)	Millard West Invitational	ATSC/SI/WX
February 1 (Sat)	Westside Competition of Excellence	ATSC/SI work & perform, WX work
February 5 (Wed)	Concert with Gustavus Adolphus College	Warrior Choir
February 8 (Sat)	Southwest Showdown (Lincoln Southwest)	ATSC/SI/WX
February 15 (Sat)	Crystal Cup (Elkhorn South)	ATSC/SI/WX
February 18 (Tues)	Choral Clinic Concert 7:00 p.m. (Aud)	Warrior/Concert/Freshman
February 21–23 (Fri–Sun)	Swingin’ On The River (Hastings, MN)	ATSC/SI
March 12–15 (Thu–Sun)	Wheaton-Warrenville South Invitational (Chicago, IL)	ATSC/SI
March 21 (Sat)	Mitchell Show Choir Classic (Mitchell, SD)	WX
March 31 (Tues)	6–12 Choral Festival 7:00 p.m. (Main Gym)	Warrior/ATSC
April 2 (Thur)	Show Choir Auditions 3:30–10 p.m. (Vocal Room)	
April 21 (Tues)	Pre-Contest Concert 7:30 p.m. (Main Gym)	Warrior/Band/Orchestra
April 23–25 (Thu–Sat)	District Music Contest @ Papillion	Warrior/Concert/soloists
April 26 (Sun)	ATSC Picnic 6:00 p.m. (Courtyard/Little Theater)	ATSC
May 2 (Sat)	An Evening of Show Choirs 7:00 p.m. (Aud)	ATSC/SI/WX
May 6 (Wed)	Spring Choral Concert 7:00 p.m. (Aud)	Warrior/Concert/Freshman

