

Girls Choral Academy
Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Planning Session June 14, 2014

Present:

Facilitator: Kayem Dunn

Exploring the Mission of Girls Choral Academy

A mission statement concisely describes the group's reason for being (why it exists and what it does). A review of published documents produced several strong statements of purpose.

Girls Choral Academy touches and enhances the lives of children through music.

We offer a unique program of music for girls who love to sing and wish to grow not only musically, but personally, in self-esteem and in leadership skills as well. We also focus on increasing math and reading comprehension in young children through music education. Founded in 1997, we are proud of the musical gift we offer to the community of West Michigan.

The Girls Choral Academy works to **Give Girls a Voice**. We offer unique programs of music for girls who love to sing and wish to grow both artistically as singers, and personally as leaders and members of a choir. We provide a safe environment where girls build leadership skills and self-confidence through music education.

The Girls Choral Academy is dedicated to enhancing the lives of children through music, fostering growth musically, academically, and personally.

A June 14, 2014 facilitated planning session began with board and staff members sharing memorable impressions from personal experiences with the girls, the choirs, and music that brought to life their commitment to the mission. This was followed by considering why the Girls Choral Academy needs to exist.

Allure of the arts:

- Arts are life changing, involvement makes a difference
- Music is something you have for your entire life
- Through music, feelings can be discovered and expressed

Girls Choral Academy environment provides:

- A sense of belonging and recognition of personal accomplishment
- Sense of safety, a place of refuge, awareness of commonality
- Peers and mentors who foster self-esteem
- Opportunities to learn teamwork
- An expanded view of the world from new experiences and travel to other places

Results: impact on participants

- Discipline
- Self-confidence
- Courage
- Good citizenship, respectful of others
- Leadership skills
- Launch careers
- Appreciation of other perspectives
- Learn to accept support from others

Need:

Music is less present in the school curriculum; there is a gap

Mission Statement

Girls Choral Academy is intentional about the mission of

Giving Girls a Voice by providing:

- *excellent music education and choir participation*
- *a safe and positive setting where girls can explore a varied repertoire of choral music and encouragement to excel as artists and musicians*
- *opportunities for girls to collectively learn self-confidence, self-esteem and leadership skills while also building strong community stewards*

Vision for the Future

The vision statement captures aspirations for the future, the stretch goal to have greater impact while carrying out the mission. Looking ahead and dreaming about what people might be saying about the Girls Choral Academy in three to five years, planning session participants generated a robust list of aspirations.

Financially sustainable organization that is well run
Collaborations, connections, weaving separate threads together
Fulfilling mission
Central location, a center that is accessible by different modes of transportation (including the bus) and has parking
Participation in a nationally-recognized competition
Elevated quality
Be known as the “go to” experience for girls
Well known, build the audience and have sold out performances
Generate revenue from the performances
Increased number of girls participating
Recognized; higher visibility
Engaging the next generation of girls
Reshaped music education, including music theory
Increased capacity
Diversity within the choirs; broader, respectful, cultural perspective
Family involvement and engagement

Vision Statement

In 2018, the Girls Choral Academy is broadly recognized throughout the region for providing transformational experiences for school age girls. High quality choirs of diverse members sharing artistic and personal growth participate in many concerts, events, and collaborations with challenging and engaging musical programming.

SWOT

The analysis of internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats meant looking at things from all angles to have a good grasp of organizational capacity and both challenges of the road ahead and potential for achieving the vision.

Inside View: Girls Choral Academy

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product (choirs) plus “bling” (trips) • Process that works: choirs and institutional knowledge • Re-energized board of directors • History and track record plus experience meeting challenges • Resources of staff and music library • Volunteer leaders and executive director • Relationships to the community and donors • Successfully moved through the transition from organizational founder to next generation of board and staff • The girls and dedicated parents • Established community collaborations • Compelling story to tell • Graduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash flow; financial insecurity, no reserve fund • Too closely dependent on friends for financial survival • No endowment • Low enrollment • Limited recruitment tools • No marketing plan • Competition for time and funds • Location of rehearsal space • Board roles need restructuring • Lack of data about results to demonstrate value

Looking Outside: External Factors

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need created by decreased option for music education in schools; Ellington Academy is the only music focused magnet school • Community demonstrates a firm commitment to the arts • Good musicians in the community; availability of talent • Colleagues nearby to learn from • Choral music structure, regionally and nationally • Philanthropic community with a commitment to giving and education • Priority of education: community sense of responsibility • Strong arts community; willing to collaborate • Community data projects • Increased body of knowledge regarding the impact of the arts • Choral music is hot now; impact of television program Glee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ board members ○ donations ○ choir members ○ audience • Economy: ups and downs

Goals to Achieve the Vision

- I. Develop balance between sources of revenue: earned income, donations, and endowment interest
- II. Update organizational governance to ensure optimum engagement of talent
- III. Increase value and recognition of Girls Choral Academy music programs

Action Steps

- I. **Balanced Revenue:** Develop balance between sources of revenue: earned income, donations, and endowment interest.
 - a. Evaluate the business model and determine a balance of revenue sources appropriate to the Girls Choral Academy.
 - b. Create a marketing plan; consider ad trades with other arts organizations and exposure through relationships
 - c. Generate more tuition revenue; evaluate tuition rates and choirs
 - d. Research grant opportunities and submit grant proposals to appropriate funders
 - e. Strengthen donor development efforts
 - i. Follow-up by table hosts to their guests at 2014 event
 - ii. Activate donor development committee
 - iii. Maintain relationships with current donors through newsletter and concert follow-ups
 - f. Raise \$120,000 over three years for special project initiatives
- II. **Governance:** Update organizational governance to ensure optimum engagement of talent.
 - a. Review mission, vision, and strategic plan at June 25, 2014 meeting; review annually.
 - b. Review and update governing documents: bylaws, policy and procedures, including board responsibilities and committee structure to reflect capacity building needs
 - c. Update or develop fiscal policy and procedures to ensure appropriate financial oversight by the board and good stewardship of resources
 - d. Review operational structure to support board and volunteers
 - i. Evaluate the board meeting schedule and content
 - ii. Use technology, as appropriate, to increase efficiency and flexibility
 - e. Evaluate and promote diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organization
- III. **Programs:** Increase value and recognition of Girls Choral Academy music programs
 - a. Engage a voice instructor to work with choirs
 - b. Engage external clinicians to work with choirs
 - c. Participate in the Cincinnati Choral Festival
 - d. Increase partnerships with local arts organizations
 - e. Develop new teen choir at Grandville Avenue Arts and Humanities
 - f. Include Grandville choirs in Grandville Avenue performances