### CHICAGO CHILDREN'S CHOIR \* IS NOW \*

# VOICES

CHICAGO

2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT

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If there is one constant for our organization—beyond inspiring and changing lives through music—it is how essential the concept of change is to all that we do. At the dawn of the Civil Rights Movement, our founder Christopher Moore knew there was no greater force for change than young people. He brought a group of young Chicagoans together with a simple vision: **unite young people from all walks of life through music and they'll discover their common humanity**.

Change has guided our work for decades, and never has this been quite as true as during our 2022-23 season. We embraced the evolutionary—and revolutionary—character of our work, and changed our name to better reflect who we are, who we have always been, and who we will be in the coming decades. We elevated the belief that music cuts through the noise, brings us together and prepares young people to become the leaders of tomorrow.

The significant achievements of this remarkable year reinforce the notion that we are more than Chicago, more than children and more than a choir.

We provided more scholarships for our Bridging America tour than ever before, making a global world more accessible for young Chicagoans. We embarked upon almost a dozen unique collaborations with renowned Chicago institutions that redefined what is possible in the imaginations of our singers. By doubling down on what we do best—empower and unite young people from diverse backgrounds to find their voice and celebrate their common humanity through the power of music—we opened the door to innumerable life-changing opportunities, the impact of which will reverberate for decades.

Our world today is unfortunately not too different from the fractured world we started in, and we're still committed to changing that. But our work over the last 66 years—and especially in the 2022-23 season—is proof that music can transcend the barriers that divide us.

Thank you for joining us on the journey to a harmonious world.

With Gratitude,

Josephine Lee President

David Koo Chairman of the Board

## WE ARE UNITING VOICES

#### OUR VISION

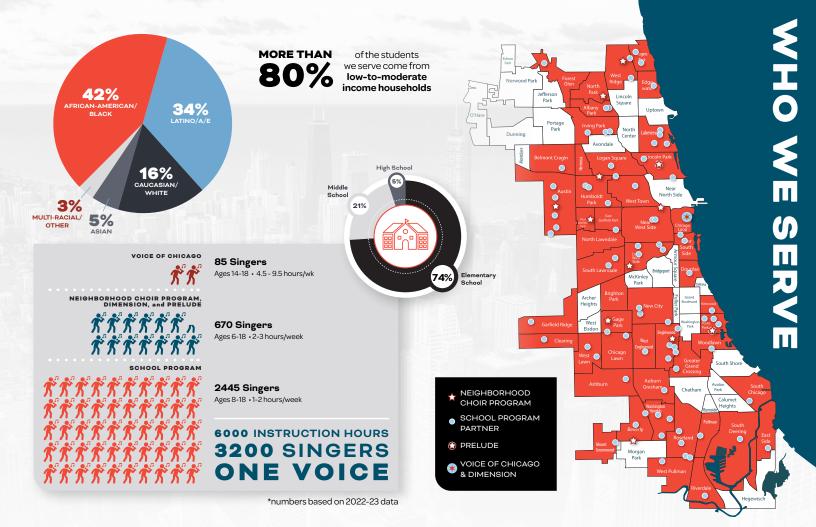
A harmonious world

OUR MISSION

Inspiring and changing lives through music

OUR VALUES

Education • Expression • Excellence



# HELLO, OUR NAME IS UNITING VOICES

More than 2,000 singers, alumni, family and community members and supporters celebrated our evolution from Chicago Children's Choir to Uniting Voices Chicago, a name more reflective of our long-term commitment to empowering youth to find their voice and celebrate their common humanity through music.





Singers connected with culture bearers and guest artists from around the world, exploring history through music from the Basque region, Ballet Folklorico, Renaissance and medieval vocal music, Friends of the Gamelan and other traditions. And our **Black History Month Concert Series** took school program singers on a Sankofa journey, exploring the history of music from Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Trinidad and Tobago, South Africa, and the United States.

### MORE THAN CHICAGO

Through our annual **Bridging America tours**, youth from across Chicago connected with peers in Lexington, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Detroit and Toronto. And in April, members of Voice of Chicago performed with Colombian pop superstar Karol G on **Saturday Night Live**.

### MORE THAN CHILDREN

We continued to empower tomorrow's leaders to succeed in an ever-changing world. The **senior class of 2023** achieved a 100 percent high school graduation rate and will go on to institutions such as George Washington University, American University of Paris, Northwestern University and Morehouse College, carrying with them the confidence, empathy, cultural competence, and social responsibility developed through their time with Uniting Voices. And four current collegiate music education students receive paid mentorship and hands-on experience with culturally empowering teaching through the **Future Music Educators program.** 



### MORE THAN CHILDREN

Our alumni continue to bring fresh life to our work! Through our first ever **alumni tour scholarship initiative**, the generosity of former participants expanded our ability to support current singers, extending to them the same eye-opening experiences through travel that our alumni had. Alumni also brought their voices back to our performances with vibrant features at our rebrand celebration, the annual **Red Jacket Optional** gala, and **SoundBites**, a fundraising event hosted by our Ambassadors Board.

### MORE THAN A CHOIR

We are **140 ensembles**! The year culminated with **Paint the Town Red**, as a community of **3,000 singers** came together in Millennium Park to lift their voices in song, showcasing the positive power of Chicago youth and witnessing that they are part of something larger than themselves.

Throughout the year, after-school program participants came together for special artistic projects with collaborators including Ravinia Festival, Lyric Opera, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Theaster Gates and more.

Starting with a pilot program through our Lincoln Park/DePaul Neighborhood Choir, we launched a new program, **Prelude**, which extended foundational music education to our youngest singers in first and second grade, opening a new path into our programs and creating meaningful friendships from an early age.

### UNITING VOICES + OFF THE STREET CLUB

We celebrated 20 years of partnership with **Off The Street Club** with a concert on January 27. Off The Street Club is one of Chicago's oldest youth service organizations.



#### Lin Brehmer

Uniting Voices mourns the loss of radio legend Lin Brehmer (1954-2023), who spent more than 30 years on the air at WXRT and collaborated with our singers at Hot Stove Cool Music, a celebration of music, baseball and giving in support of Uniting Voices' Board Member Theo Epstein's Foundation To Be Named Later.

### IN MEMORIAM

#### Nancy Carstedt

Uniting Voices fondly remembers Nancy Carstedt (1940-2023), former Executive Director of the organization. Nancy led the choir to our home at Chicago Cultural Center, brought singers on a transformative tour to South Africa in 1996 and many other outstanding milestones, without which the organization would not be what it is today.

### DONOR HIGHLIGHTS

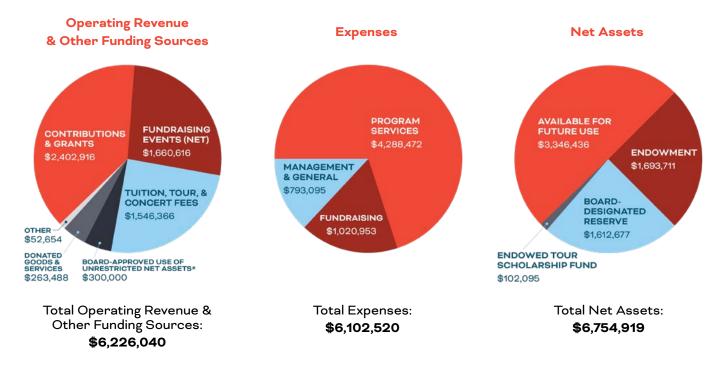
**David and Lesly Koo**—fierce champions of our work and Red Jacket Optional 2022 honorees—activated a record-breaking \$2 million in philanthropic support at our annual gala and generously committed a separate seven-figure gift in support of accessible and empowering music education programs. In his five years as Board Chair, David charted a path of growth and sustainability for Uniting Voices with whole-hearted enthusiasm and advocacy to match.

The evolution from Chicago Children's Choir to Uniting Voices would not have been possible without the pivotal support of Periscope, a full-service, award-winning creative agency and a **Quad Company**. Periscope led a thorough process to develop a new name that reinforced the organization's reason for being while repositioning for future aspirations and growth. Quad generously provided 18 months of pro bono services to ensure the resonance of this change. Special thanks to Uniting Voices board member **Eric Ashworth**, President of Agency Solutions and Executive Vice President of Product and Market Strategy at Quad.

### DONOR HIGHLIGHTS

The Association of Fundraising Professionals Chicago Chapter honored Uniting Voices Board Secretary **Ellen-Blair Chube** with the Emerging Philanthropist Award. Ellen-Blair is a seasoned finance executive who brings an impact-driven expertise, a passion for Chicago youth and a spirit of innovation to her role on the Uniting Voices Board of Directors. In 2021, Board Chair David Koo took home this same honor. Uniting Voices launched **Crescendo Fund**, a multimillion dollar fundraising campaign in support of our five-year strategic plan. Former Board Chair and leader of this campaign **Bob Fealy** was one of the first to pledge one million dollars to this initiative. Bob and his wife **Rose** are passionate about building a harmonious Chicago and their investment has inspired others to support opportunities for education, expression and excellence.

### **FY23 FINANCIALS**



\*The Board of Directors approved the use of unrestricted net assets toward the one-time expenses associated with the rebranding of Chicago Children's Choir to Uniting Voices Chicago.

#### **SPECIAL THANKS** TO OUR LEAD PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS

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A Member of Voice of Tomorrow, which recognizes donors who have made planned gift commitments

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#### **VOICE OF TOMORROW**

Generous gifts from Uniting Voices Chicago's Voice of Tomorrow planned giving society ensures life-changing opportunities are available for future singers.

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Dr. Doris Wineman Ph.D.

\*Board Member

#### **CRESCENDO FUND**

Uniting Voices gratefully recognizes the cumulative, multi-year support of generous individuals and institutions who have made commitments to Crescendo Fund, a special fundraising initiative to support the objectives of the 2022-2026 strategic plan.

#### \$1M+

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#### **Individual Donors**

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#### Anonymous

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Thank you to the tremendous number of volunteers - alumni, families and community members - who generously provide their time to support our programs.

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