



## Table of Contents

1) Welcome! from the Artistic Director.....	page 3
2) GMYC Vision and Mission.....	page 4
3) Board Members/Affiliations.....	page 5
4) Staff Bios/Contact.....	page 7
5) Volunteer Opportunities.....	page 9
a. Parent Liaisons	
b. Ensemble Parents	
c. Core Parent Group	
d. Chaperones	
e. Publicity	
f. Concerts Task Force	
g. Special Event Support	
h. Program Ad Cohort	
6) History of the Grand Monadnock Youth Choirs.....	page 11
7) Rehearsal/Performance .....	page 12
a. Description of Ensembles	
b. Rehearsal Times/Locations for all Ensembles/Parking	
c. Attendance Policy	
d. Snow Days/School Vacation	
e. Behavior	
f. Performance Venues/Parking	
8) Concert Attire.....	page 13
9) Audition Policies.....	page 14
a. Audition Procedure	
b. Re-audition Procedure	
10) Communication Policies/Methods.....	page 15
a. Parent Meetings	
b. Listening to Rehearsals	
c. GMYC Today	
d. Newsletter	
e. Announcements	
f. Privacy Policy	
11) Administrative.....	page 16
a. Tuition	
b. Forms	
c. Payment Plans/Tuition Assistance Information	
d. Fundraising Activities	

## **WELCOME! FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 22<sup>nd</sup> season of the Grand Monadnock Youth Choirs! To parents: thank you for supporting your child's love of singing by participating in this amazing organization. To singers: thank you for having the passion, bravery, and desire to sing among so many other engaged and talented voices!

In this handbook you will find important information about GMYC staff and board, rehearsals, performances, uniforms, volunteer participation, etc. Please give it a close read and let me know if you have any questions.

We have so much to look forward to! As always, each choral ensemble will perform both independently, together with another ensemble of the same age. We will perform our regular concerts in Keene and Peterborough during the first weekend in December and first weekend in May.

Our fall concert season will feature Theatrical Music; drawing from musical theater, movies, oratorios, operas, Shakespearian sonnets, both old and new. This season, the two choirs in the same age group will sing most of their repertoire together, while the Cecilia ensemble will sing independently at concert, and join with the other 4 ensembles for our concert finale.

In the spring, we hope to take the 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade choirs to New York City on tour, and will continue to plan the trip for Cecilia to Italy in 2020. The youngest singers will continue to learn the fundamentals of music reading, breathing, and sound production.

Throughout the year, GMYC will for the first time host SATB workshops for 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls in the Keene area!

Additionally, for the first time, GMYC is hosting a singing competition in the fall called "Singing Stars!" for 2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and will be hosting another competition for high schoolers in the spring.

Thank you so much for your support of GMYC! We set our sights high, and together we will soar!

Warmly,  
Esther Rhoades  
*Artistic Director*, Grand Monadnock Youth Choirs

## GMYC VISION & MISSION

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Vision:

**GMYC is the youth choral culture of the Monadnock region.**

We value choral music as essential to growing peace in our community.

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Mission:

**The Grand Monadnock Youth Choirs is the performance-based choral music education program for young singers in our community.**

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### **G**reater

Singers from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont comprise GMYC.

### **M**usic Learning

Our singers gain proficiency in music literacy guided by choral experts who adapt to the unique strengths of the singers.

### **Y**outh

Singers experience professional rehearsal and performance environments which foster musical expression and lifelong music appreciation.

### **C**ommunity

We contribute to the American and International choral communities through cultural exchange.



## **BOARD MEMBERS/AFFILIATIONS**

### **President, Scott Clarke**

**Scott Clarke** is a musical product of Keene High School. He attended the University of Rochester to study business and Philosophy. Scott was a supporter of A cappella singing long before its recent popularity, singing in the U of R YELLOWJACKETS. Scott currently performs with the Chamber Singers of Keene, and Main Street Broadway. Scott has been the President of DOUGLAS CO in Keene for over 20 years. He is proud to be a volunteer with the Monadnock United Way.

### **Vice President, Lisa Mahar**

Lisa Mahar served as administrator of Monadnock Waldorf School in Keene for twenty-six years, a school where students in early childhood through high school are nurtured by an educational program rich in both arts and academics. Lisa holds a bachelors degree from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She was a founding member in 1984 of the Noonday Singers, a chorus focusing on peace, social justice, and music of liberation from around the world. Lisa also provides educational consultant services to Waldorf schools and serves as a member of the board for Monadnock Food Co-op. She has three grown children and seven grand children and lives in Keene with her husband Bill Beardslee.

### **Treasurer, Bill Goodwin**

**Bill Goodwin** has been a Board member of the Grand Monadnock Youth Choirs since 2005 and has handled the Treasurer's position during all of those years. He graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in 1963 and worked in the bearing industry as a mechanical engineer from 1964 - 1996, working in both Connecticut and New Hampshire. Following retirement, he became very involved with community work and arts organizations. Bill has served as Chairman of numerous town committees in Dublin during the past 20 years and is currently treasurer of four organizations. He served as Trustee chairman at the Dublin Community Church for many years and has been actively involved with the Monadnock United Way campaign for the past 10 years. Bill was one of the founders of the Peterborough Folk Music Society, following the closing of the Folkway in 1995.

### **Secretary, Theresa Majoy**

**Theresa Majoy** graduated with a Bachelor of Science from Lowell State College in Elementary Ed. and received her Master of Ed. From Boston University. Working as an educator for 40 years, she spent the majority of time in the classroom and some time also in administration. Theresa has 2 step-children, 4 adopted children, and 1 adopted grandchild, Emma, who is in the Keene Youth Chorus. Theresa's participation on the board is fueled by her appreciation of Maria and Esther's enthusiasm and love for their work and the quality performances they bring forth from the singers. Perseverance and organization are what Theresa contributes to the board.

### **Kelly Dowd**

In 2005, attorney Kelly Dowd left the "Big City" of Concord and followed his heart to Keene, NH, where he has been engaged in the practice of law in Southwestern NH ever since. His primary focus is "small-town" litigation and encompasses criminal defense, family law, appellate work, land use and zoning, as well as litigation.

## STAFF BIOS

### **Esther Rhoades, Artistic Director**

*Director, Trebles, Keene Youth Chorus, Elm City Singers, Choristers, Cecilia Ensemble*  
[esther.rh.rhoades@gmail.com](mailto:esther.rh.rhoades@gmail.com) / 603-499-3505



Esther Ruth Holland Rhoades is thrilled to be the Grand Monadnock Youth Choir's new Artistic Director. There are four GMYC ensembles under her direction rehearsing in both Peterborough and Keene. Her energetic teaching style, expertise in music, and infectious positivity allow GMYC singers to thrive and grow not only musically, but also as individuals.

Esther Ruth Holland Rhoades has been immersed in choral music since childhood, which inspired her to complete a Bachelor's of Science in Music from the University of Delaware. While at UD, she was the student assistant choral director of the internationally renowned University of Delaware Chorale under the direction of Dr. Paul D. Head. She has also received training at Westminster Choir College. After graduation, she taught public high school chorus and music classes in VT and NH. Additionally, Esther was the Assistant Artistic Director and Conductor of the Children's Chorus of Springfield in Massachusetts. After returning to Keene, Esther served Keene Unitarian Universalist Church as their Choir Director, and the Monadnock Waldorf High School teaching the a cappella choir.

When you can't find Esther making music, she is likely hiking, baking cookies, or playing outside with her husband, Jason, and three daughters.

### **Susan MacNeil, Administrative Director**

[susan@svidol.com](mailto:susan@svidol.com) / 603-313-0052



Susan MacNeil has lived in the Monadnock Region since 1976. She has been involved in creative arts all her life, as a writer, event organizer and producer of the singing competition, Keene Idol, for 13 years. Professionally, Susan served as the Marketing Director and Interim Executive Director of the Colonial Theatre, followed by 14 years as Executive Director of AIDS Services for the Monadnock Region. From 2012-2014, she served as the publicist and a board member of the newly launched Monadnock International Film Festival.

Susan believes strongly in serving the greater good, as evidenced by her passion for social justice and community arts programming. She is delighted to join the team of the Grand Monadnock Youth Choirs to support the vision of Artistic Director, Esther Rhoades, and be part of providing an opportunity for young boys and girls to find their voice!

### **Ilana Cady, Collaborative Pianist**

[Ilanacady16@gmail.com](mailto:Ilanacady16@gmail.com)



Pianist Ilana Joyce Cady, native of Massachusetts, has been a choir accompanist for thirteen years. She has played for church, children's, adult and collegiate level choirs including Andrews University Singers, Chorale, and Women's and Men's choruses, South Lancaster Academy's Il Voce and concert choir, Coro Dante Italian choir of Cambridge, MA, and the New England Advent Children's Choir. Collaborating with choirs is one of her favorite types of accompanying, and she is very excited to join the GMYC family. Ilana graduated with a Master's of Music in piano performance at Longy School of Music of Bard College in May 2017,

under the direction of Leslie Amper. During her time at Longy, she has performed at Pickman Hall, Sanders Theater at Harvard University, and the Dante Alighieri Society in Cambridge. She has collaborated with Longy's Side by Side

El Sistema program and the Boston Cello quartet. Being involved with Longy's chamber program, Ilana has had the privilege to work extensively with Robert Merfeld. Recently Ilana embarked on a collaborative journey by co-founding *Table for Two / A Piano Duo* with fellow pianist Linda Chavez. The duo debuted in Graz, Austria, at the Styriarte festival as winners of the Lunchkonzerte competition. They have also toured in Texas, Vermont and Massachusetts. They were invited to participate as Teaching Artist Fellows at the Lincoln Center in NYC in the summer of 2017.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

The Grand Monadnock Youth Choirs relies heavily on the support of community members, parents, and family members to serve in the following volunteer capacities:

### **Parent Liaisons** (2 parents)

Serving on the Board of Directors, one Parent Liaison from Peterborough and one Parent Liaison from Keene play crucial roles in the communication of information from parents to the board, and from the board to parents. These two individuals help coordinate choral-related activities and parent volunteers, including planning Monthly Core Parent Meetings (see below) and working in collaboration with Ensemble Parents (see below).

**We are currently seeking our Peterborough Parent Liaison. If this is a good fit for you, please contact us.**

### **Core Parent Groups (Peterborough and Keene: 10 – 20 parents total)**

Two Core Parent Groups (one in Keene, and one in Peterborough), consist of 5 – 10 parent leaders from each rehearsal town and meet monthly during rehearsal time. Meetings are facilitated by the Parent Liaisons. This group determines ideas, needs, and goals of our choirs including distribution, collection and maintenance of uniforms; preparation of the space for concerts; providing refreshments and clean-up for concerts; chaperoning at concerts and assisting in ways that contribute to our success.

### **Chaperones** (parents and community members)

Both parents and non-parents are encouraged to chaperone special events such as collaborative concerts, extra rehearsals, GMYC performances, and the Cecilia Ensemble Trip. The Core Parent Groups will request Chaperones specifically for each unique event.

### **Publicity** (parents and community members)

Parent and non-parent Publicity Experts are requested to create a valuable online GMYC presence through social media and web design including but not limited to providing GMYC updates, educational articles about music/singing, interesting and engaging articles, etc. Additionally, this group of experts creates donor/sponsorship posters, brochures, business cards, etc.

### **Concerts Task Force** (parents and community members)

Parents and non-parents, under the direction of the parent liaisons from Keene and Peterborough, meet once before our concerts to plan concert responsibilities such as striking the spaces used for the concerts; organizing the refreshments/social time and clean up; and providing all rehearsal chaperones with expectations and job descriptions. This task force also helps publicize the concerts, provides signage at the concert and takes tickets/distributes programs. Concert task force members should wear clearly visible identification at each concert and be available to manage disruptions, seating, and requests.

### **Special Events Support** (parents and community members)

Throughout the year, GMYC requests our broader community and parents with specific skills volunteer. Special Events are short-term commitments that help keep GMYC running smoothly,

and have in the past included: hemming dresses, uniform cleaning and storage, ushering concerts, setting up and dismantling risers and shells, baking/cooking, transporting children, addressing and stuffing appeal letters, maintaining online presence, etc. When we are in need of Special Events Support, we will send an email requesting help, and await responses from parents and community members.

## **HISTORY OF THE GRAND MONADNOCK YOUTH CHOIRS**

The Peterborough Children's Choir was founded in 1997 by Maria Belva and David Vernier. The organization's name was changed in 2011 to reflect the expanding regionality of the ensembles. The original organization began to provide an opportunity for young singers to develop their voices while learning fundamentals of musicianship, music reading, performance, and the joyful rewards of singing the highest quality music.

Remaining true to the original mission, the Grand Monadnock Youth Choirs now provides a choral opportunity for young singers in grades 2 through 12 to build self-confidence, leadership, and independence, strengthen musical literacy, and illuminate our communities as ambassadors regionally, nationally and internationally. Our choirs enrich the choral and musical education the children receive in school and at home. The singers experience excellent performance-based choral music education through lively weekly rehearsals including both movement and singing. At the end of each semester, all five GMYC ensembles perform at our Keene and Peterborough concerts.

With over 100 singers from more than 17 towns in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts, the Grand Monadnock Youth Choir's growth over the past few years has been truly been "grand."

In the summer of 2017, Maria Belva stepped down as Artistic Director after 20 years, handing the baton to GMYC's new Artistic Director, Esther Rhoades. Esther feels that it is great privilege to have been chosen to take on this leadership position, and looks forward to deepening our roots, and expanding our branches.

## REHEARSAL/PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

### Description of Ensembles

#### **Trebles (Peterborough) and Keene Youth Chorus (Keene)**

Grades 2 through 4; meeting for one hour per week; foundations of singing technique and music reading, learn concert etiquette and performance skills; mostly unison and two-part music; join other GMYC ensembles for combined concert pieces.

#### **Choristers (Peterborough) and Elm City Singers (Keene)**

Grades 5 through 8; meeting for 1¼ hours per week; concentrate on more advanced ensemble singing and music reading; expected to have perfected concert etiquette and performance skills; usually more complex two and three part music; join with other GMYC ensembles for combined concert pieces.

#### **Cecilia Ensemble (Peterborough)**

Grades 9 through 12 treble singers; meeting for 1½ hours per week on Monday afternoons from 5:00pm – 6:30pm; more sophisticated music, from unison to four-part; members must be self-motivated, responsible individuals; accomplished musicians; instrumental study or private voice lessons are strongly encouraged. European concert tours planned every other year. Participation in extra fundraising activities is expected.

### Rehearsal Information

Rehearsals for the 2018 – 2019 school year are held weekly. Singers should arrive 15 minutes early to all rehearsals and performances.

#### **Keene Rehearsals** take place at St. James Episcopal Church

Please park in the lot next to Lindy's Diner, or drop off your singer next to the St. James Church Door at the north side of the Parking Lot.

- 1) Keene Youth Chorus (grades 2 – 4) Tuesdays 4 – 5pm
- 2) Elm City Singers (grades 5 – 8) Tuesdays 5:15 – 6:30pm

#### **Peterborough Rehearsals** are at the Peterborough Unitarian Universalist Church

Please park in church parking, anywhere on Main Street, or drop off your singer at the side entrance to the church.

- 3) Trebles (grades 2 – 4) Wednesdays 4 – 5pm
- 4) Choristers (grades 5 – 8) Wednesdays 5:15 – 6:30pm
- 5) Cecilia Ensemble (treble voices, grades 9 – 12) Mondays 5:00 – 6:30pm

### Attendance Policy

All singers are expected to be at every rehearsal, dress rehearsal, additional events, fundraising events, and performances. Attendance to all events is **mandatory**.

Singers who miss more than 2 rehearsals/events may not be able to perform in the concerts. Additionally outside and at-home practice may be needed to make up for lost time in order for a singer to perform.

You must contact the director before 3pm on the day of the rehearsal if a singer will be absent because of an illness, school trip, concert, or religious holiday. Esther – 603-499-3505

If transportation is an issue, please call another GMYC parent to make arrangements for transportation, and in the event of an emergency, contact the director. Transportation is not an acceptable excuse for an absent singer.

**Any choir member who misses the last rehearsal before a performance, or the dress rehearsal will not be permitted to sing at the concert. Any choir member who misses a concert may not be invited back to sing in the choir.**

### **Snow Days/School Vacation**

GMYC will cancel rehearsal with local school closures, early release, and cancellation of after school activities. Keene Choirs will be cancelled if Keene Public is closed, and Peterborough Choirs will be cancelled if Peterborough Public is closed for Keene Youth Chorus, Trebles, Elm City Singers, and Choristers. If schools are open but the weather looks bad, it is up to you to determine if it is safe to drive during inclement weather. Because the Cecilia Ensemble is comprised of singers from many districts, private schools, and homeschools, Cecilia Ensemble will be held regardless of weather, unless Esther specifically cancels. If we have rehearsal, but the local roads are unsafe to drive on, Cecilia Ensemble singers are excused from rehearsal.

Snow days will not be counted as a missed rehearsal.

### **Behavior**

Rehearsals and performances are *safe spaces* for children to express themselves as individuals and as musicians. In order for us to foster musical growth and expression, **compassionate respect** and **self control** are absolutely essential for every rehearsal and performance. If a child is not able to control his/her own attention, physical body, or words, the directors will be in communication with the singer's family to find strategies to help, or ask the singer to sit the semester out.

### **Performance Venues/Parking**

Keene Redfern Arts Center

Parking on weekends in the Redfern Arts Center parking lot is free. You can find it by following signs from Main Street, Keene.

Peterborough Unitarian Universalist Church

Families are encouraged to choose a parking lot nearby the church, such as the one behind the Toadstool Bookstore, the Historic Society, or on street.

St. James Episcopal Church, Keene

Parking is available behind the building, and is accessible from Gilbo Ave. On street parking is also available, however it is metered Monday through Saturday, and is free on Sundays.

## CONCERT ATTIRE

GMYC offers the following uniform choices to each singer.

### All Ensembles/Singers

**Please pull hair away from the face and up and off the neck; no jewelry; no scents. All attire must be clean and pressed for each performance. Singers who come to a performance without concert attire will not be able to perform.**

### Choice 1

#### Trebles/Keene Youth Chorus

**Families provide:** white, navy, or black stockings/leggings, black closed toed flat or low-heeled “fancy shoes” (no sneakers or boots). **GMYC provides:** a navy jumper/skirt and a white blouse, which should be returned after concert season.

#### Choristers/Elm City Singers

**Families provide:** neutral stockings and black closed toed flat or low-heeled “fancy shoes” or “character shoes” (no sneakers or boots). **GMYC provides:** dresses, which should be returned after concert season.

#### Cecilia Ensemble

**Families provide:** neutral stockings, and black closed toed low-heeled “character shoes.” **GMYC provides:** black gowns, which should be cleaned and returned when the singer graduates or leaves the ensemble.

### Choice 2

**Families provide:** Fancy white long sleeved shirt/blouse, black dress pants/skirt, black socks/leggings/stockings, black close toed flat or low-heeled “fancy shoes” (no sneakers or boots).

### Choice 3

**Families provide:** White button down collared long sleeved shirt, white undershirt, black dress pants, black belt, black socks, black close toed flat “fancy shoes” (no sneakers or boots). **GMYC provides:** a tie, which should be returned right after each performance.

## **AUDITION POLICIES**

Auditions are open to *all* children entering grades 2 through 8 in Fall 2018, and all treble singers entering grades 9 – 12 in the Fall 2018. Auditions are private, and last 15 minutes.

### **Audition Procedure**

At the audition, we meet the child and family and listen to the singer. We will sing low and high, match pitches, look at some written music, and sing either Row, Row, Row the Boat, or Happy Birthday. Older singers may be asked to sing their favorite song, sight sing, and sing a melody while we sing the harmony. Successful auditioners are willing to work hard, sing and move according to the music, accept responsibility, behave appropriately, be trustworthy, and be a team player.

### **Re-Audition Procedure**

Returning GMYC singers may or may not be required to re-audition, at the discretion of the director. Choir members whose music has not been prepared well, miss a concert, or leave the choir before the end of the semester may not be invited back to GMYC.

## **COMMUNICATION POLICIES/METHODS**

Communication between directors and families is absolutely crucial to the success of the singers, organization, and process. It is of utmost importance that parents/guardians closely read all emails, take-homes, and general communications coming from GMYC **and respond as necessary in a timely fashion.**

### **Parent Meetings**

At least once per semester, GMYC holds a mandatory parent/family meeting in which we talk about plans for the semester, volunteer opportunities, changes to the schedule, updates about the organization, fundraising events, and music. If parents are not able to make it to the meeting, it is important that you send a trusted substitute to relay information for you afterwards.

### **Listening to Rehearsals**

All families are welcome to attend any and all rehearsals! Please make yourself at home at the back of the rehearsal space, taking care to minimize distraction to the singers. Please remember to quite cell phones and other noisemaking devices during the rehearsal.

### **GMYC Today**

GMYC Today is an email sent at the will of the director or Parent Liaison when information, updates, news, etc., needs to be communicated to parents. Often the information provided in GMYC Today is pertinent to performances, rehearsal cancellations, reminders about the schedule, etc. **If a response is needed, please make every effort to return the email right away.**

### **Newsletter**

The newsletter is a quarterly online communication prepared by the Managing Director, which is sent to all choir parents and members of our larger community. The GMYC newsletter provides information, updates, and news about the choirs and organization.

### **Announcements**

Occasionally, important announcements will be made during rehearsal pick-up times. Announcements will be made verbally at the end of a rehearsal, and will also be written on a take-home flyer. Please make time to read through written announcements.

### **Privacy Policy**

All families sign a photo/video release permission form at the start of the year, or semester in which the singer joins GMYC for video/photo use on our Website, Facebook Page, Online Newsletter, Print Materials (newsletters, brochures, posters), Flickr, Instagram, Presentations, or Press Releases in newspapers, etc.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE**

### **Tuition**

Tuition for each choir member is \$200.00 per semester. A non-refundable deposit of \$50 is due prior to the semester, and the balance is due by the first rehearsal.

Payments can be made online by visiting [www.grandmonadnockyouthchoirs.org](http://www.grandmonadnockyouthchoirs.org), or by sending a check to **GMYC, PO Box 54, Peterborough, NH 03458**. Kindly put the singer's full name in the memo line of any checks.

We want to be sure that participation in GMYC is a good fit for both the singers and the organization, therefore the first three rehearsals are considered a "trial period." If the director or parent/guardian has concerns or reservations, this is the appropriate time to make changes in the membership of the singer without forfeiting tuition. After the third rehearsal, if a singer quits, tuition would be forfeited.

If families have not paid the tuition balance from the previous semester, unfortunately singers will not be able to continue participation in GMYC. If families are unable to pay tuition, please see the **Tuition Assistance Information** section below.

### **Forms**

All singers/families must return the necessary GMYC forms including but not limited to: Agreement Form (found at the end of the handbook), Photo Release Form, and Scholarship Request (if needed) with a non-refundable \$50 deposit prior to the first rehearsal. All forms can be found online by visiting [www.grandmonadnockyouthchoirs.org](http://www.grandmonadnockyouthchoirs.org).

### **Payment Plans/Tuition Assistance Information**

GMYC offers payment plans and need-based scholarships to families who need assistance with tuition payments. We believe that no qualified singer should be denied membership in the choir for financial reasons. Payment plans are available without additional fees, however a Tuition Assistance request must be filled out in order for a payment plan to be honored.

GMYC makes every effort to provide tuition assistance, however the allotment of aid in a given semester will depend on available funds and number of requests we receive. Tuition Assistance forms are available online at [www.grandmonadnockyouthchoirs.org](http://www.grandmonadnockyouthchoirs.org), and must be filled out in order for a scholarship to be issued.

If families have not paid the tuition balance from the previous semester, unfortunately singers will not be able to continue participation in GMYC. If families are unable to pay tuition with assistance, please contact the Artistic Director or Administrative Director.

### **Fundraising Activities**

Although tuition accounts for only 25% of GMYC's operating costs, we strive to keep tuition costs low for all families by subsidizing tuition with donations, sponsorships, and fundraisers. Your help in these fundraising events throughout the year is crucial in keeping great music education accessible to all children in the Monadnock Region.

Parents not obligated but are highly encouraged to participate in one or more of the following Fundraising Activities:

**1) Special Events Planning**

You will have the opportunity to join with other parents and non-parents in planning special fundraising events, such as an annual ice cream social, basket raffles, or special barn performance.

**2) Cecilia Ensemble Fundraisers**

The Cecilia Ensemble members and parents run a food booth during Children and the Arts Day in Peterborough in May of each year.

The Cecilia Ensemble participates in extra fundraising for their concert tours. Members make pumpkin pies to sell every fall, organize raffle baskets, perform in additional concerts, etc.