

# District Youth in Harmony Program

Dr. Bill Adams, Vice President Youth in Harmony

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It is a simple idea.

E, therefore P

It lives in the very name of our Society.

Encouragement, therefore Preservation.

In our Code of Ethics there are three which speak directly to this:

1. We shall do everything in our power to perpetuate the Society.
9. We shall, by our stimulus to good music and vocal harmony, endeavor to spread the spirit of harmony throughout the world.
10. We shall render all possible altruistic service through the medium of barbershop harmony.

All three of these ideas lie at the very core of what it means to Preserve and to Encourage this art form. All three of these ideas also lie at the very core of the Youth in Harmony program.

Let's start with the last one. Bringing the joy of this magical art form to young people is one of the noblest altruistic outreaches we can have. Arts programs are being cut from public and even private school curricula at an alarming rate. More and more kids are finding themselves in situations where they have no music in their lives at all beyond what they might hear streaming digitally, on the radio, etc. All of this despite the fact that study after study has proven that kids involved in music curricula do better in all aspects of their academic lives. We must, therefore, do everything in our power to help existing music programs succeed and grow, help rebuild failing music programs, help install music programs where none exist, and bring excellent singing and amazing harmony to as many kids as we possibly can.

By doing this we begin to accomplish some of what is mandated in the ninth code. We begin to spread "the spirit of harmony" throughout the world. The "spirit of harmony." What is that? Consider what it takes to make a great quartet or a great chorus. No single singer can try to outshine the others. No singer can try to hide. All must be equals. All must come together, egos left at the door, and work together, unselfishly, to create this amazing sound. Only when we do this does it really work. We create utopian models of society every time we lock and ring. We experience a fellowship unlike any other from the inside of a chord. This spirit of camaraderie, of love and fellowship, of equality, is the true nature of the "spirit of harmony." The more this spirit pervades our communities, our societies, the better all our lives become, the better our future becomes. And, of course, it starts with the children.

And in so doing all of the above, eventually, we perpetuate our Society. Youth in Harmony is not about recruitment, but a successful YIH program will absolutely benefit the Society in numbers, in time. These kids that we Encourage to sing now will eventually come to us as members to help us Preserve this art form. It may not be while they're in school, it may be later in their adult lives, but they will come back. The more people who hear this form of singing, the more likely someone will want to try and experience it for themselves. It may be the father or brother or uncle or grandfather of one of the kids. Or it might be their neighbor who came to their YIH concert. Or it might be another teacher on their faculty. The more people hear it, the more opportunities we have to find new members.

The vision, then, for the YIH / Outreach program in the Carolinas is one of inclusivity and a comprehensive scheme of reaching out to every part of our District to get people singing Barbershop Harmony. We have created a Collegiate Challenge program aimed at engaging college a cappella ensembles through barbershop. We are creating a Youth Quartet Contest that will allow middle school, high school, and collegiate quartets to compete on a level playing field against quartets in their own age brackets. We are creating a mixed quartet contest to tap into this rapidly growing trend in barbershop. We are giving scholarships to students and educators alike to attend Harmony University. We are also creating a cultural outreach program called "Barbershop Revival" that will reach out to the African American community and reintroduce, give back, barbershop harmony to the African American Community where it began 140 years ago. The three-day Barbershop Revival Festival is slated for August of 2018 and will include some of the biggest names in Barbershop and Contemporary A Cappella all under one roof.

And we shall do all of this for the young men *and young women* in our District. The ensembles that compete in our Youth Contests can be all-male, all-female, or mixed. We will do everything in our power to help schools save, maintain, and grow their choral programs in the face of horrific budget cuts.

As we do all of this, we will **encourage** people to sing. We will **preserve** our Society and this wonderfully diverse and thrilling art form for generations to come.

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