As Northeast Florida’s children have been preparing for the school year, we here at the JCC have been preparing to celebrate our 25th Anniversary!

A quarter of a century is a remarkable milestone. It reflects an organization that is sure, strong, and represents a clear vision and lucidity for the future. This year, we celebrate the over 14,000 children whose lives have been touched and enriched by their participation in The Chorus. The expansion of The Chorus in 1995 from 16 voices to an organization that currently serves over 900 children, performing both nationally and internationally, has been extraordinary. The JCC currently offers seven different yearlong choirs, a professional adult ensemble, an Honors Choir Festival, preschool music classes, group piano classes, and most recently, the River City Choral Festival and Day Camp. No matter what the situation, when a child becomes involved in The Chorus, we all watch carefully as the metamorphosis begins. Young lives are changed through increased self-esteem, the development of leadership skills and the ability to overcome difficult circumstances.

Please accept my deepest appreciation, and that of the staff for giving us the opportunity to work with our community’s most precious resource. It is your dedication and support that make this possible.

With gratitude,

Darren Dailey,
President and Artistic Director
Bonding in Their Love of Song
A singer’s perspective on the JCC

What made you interested in the JCC? How did you hear about it?
My mom saw multiple advertisements to join. I remember we looked on the JCC website and saw the incredible opportunities the choirs got to experience. I wanted to join JCC to experience those same opportunities as well.

What was your first day like? First rehearsal?
My very first rehearsal was in Treble choir. I remember being very nervous, but all the nerves immediately went away when I saw how welcoming Ms. Tuttle and the other choir members were. That’s when I knew I had made the right decision to join JCC.

What was your first performance like?
The thing I remember the most was the audience. I had performed in front of crowds a few times before I joined JCC, but I specifically remember not feeling any sort of nerves or stage fright when I started performing. It was freeing, in a way, because I was able to do what I love, sing and perform, without being nervous.

Do you feel that your participation in JCC has improved your confidence, introduced you to new friends, allowed you to be a part of something bigger?
All of the above. Ever since I joined JCC, I have developed a love for performing, I have formed inseparable bonds with so many people, and I have loved spreading the joy of singing wherever we perform.

Are there any other ways in which JCC has changed you?
JCC has most definitely taught me responsibility and how important timeliness is. It has also taught me not to be afraid to sing out, and to not be afraid to take any opportunities that come my way.

What has been your favorite performance or tour, and why?
I think my favorite tour has been the summer 2019 tour. Not only did I very much enjoy all the places we performed, but it also taught me that we were able to overcome any difficulties that came in our way.

—Amanda, JCC Singer
Developing Musicianship and Independence.
A parent’s perspective on the JCC

What brought you to the JCC?
I wanted Amanda to be involved in music like I was as a child, not only for the experience, but for the lasting relationships that she would build and maintain the rest of her life. Once I found out that JCC existed, I researched the staff and knew that she would be led by talented leaders. Amanda was in All-State Chorus when she was in 5th grade, which is how I discovered Darren Dailey and his gifted methods of teaching.

Describe Amanda prior to her involvement in the JCC.
She was social, had a huge heart, and loved helping other children. She always loved to sing and her performance was the one that the audience looked forward to the most at a local church talent show that was put on yearly, starting at the age of 4.

Do you feel that her participation in the JCC has positively affected her?
Yes. The music education cannot be beat. She has developed a very strong ear and even perfect pitch. She will listen to the hum of a motor or beep of a car alarm and know what note it is. Being part of something bigger has been a huge benefit for her, as well as taking on the responsibility of traveling with The Chorus. That has helped her independence grow as well.

Tell us about seeing your daughter perform on the stage.
Just like any parent, I am always very proud to see her perform. As a performer myself, it's a great bond that we share being able to talk about the "gig".

—Sarah Lee, JCC Parent

Did You Know?
The Jacksonville Children’s Chorus recently unveiled our first public art installation! The JCC partnered with local artists - based on a design by JCC Graphic Designer, Carolyn Audije, the sculpture was brought to life by sculpture artists and University of North Florida Associate and Assistant Professors, Jenny Hagar-Vickery and D. Lance Vickery. Representatives from the City of Jacksonville Neighborhood Matching Grants Program attended to watch the unveiling, as well as Kerry Varkonda, president-elect of The Meninak Club of Jacksonville, who also provided a grant for upcoming improvements.

Improvements to the JCC headquarters began in June, in part to commemorate 25 years of the Jacksonville Children's Chorus, and to contribute to the revitalization that's been taking place downtown. The 25th Anniversary year is a monumental milestone for the JCC and we are celebrating in style with many improvements and commissioned pieces to be revealed!

“Mrs. Audije’s design represents the mission of the Jacksonville Children’s Chorus at its very core... Ms. Hager was selected to create the sculpture design because of the joy, engagement, and craftsmanship infused in her work.”

— Darren Dailey
President & Artistic Director

Jacksonville Children's Chorus
If you are reading this, you have most likely had the experience I did the first time I heard the Jacksonville Children’s Chorus (JCC) sing almost 10 years ago – overwhelmed with the quality and professionalism of these young people. Since its founding 25 years ago, the JCC has served over 14,000 children from age 18 months to 18 years old. And these children have not only learned how to sing with excellence, they have also learned self-discipline and persistence, have become more confident and have learned how to work hard and effectively as part of a team. Some have gone on to careers in the arts, but all have benefitted from the skills they acquire and relationships they make no matter where their adult lives take them.

As part of the Meninak Club of Jacksonville, I get to enjoy The Chorus at one of our lunch meetings every year in addition to other performances. At the end of their most recent performance this year, we learned that one of the soloists who performed wonderfully was a last-minute substitute as the scheduled soloist had become ill. I mention this, because no one in the audience had a clue this was the case. The soloist who performed was poised and smiling throughout. The chorus never missed a beat. That is professionalism – and these young people experience it in every rehearsal and performance.

I am also appreciative of the continued growth in The Chorus’ scholarship offerings. Nearly half of the students who are part of this year’s chorus are receiving scholarship assistance. The JCC never turns away a singer due to their family’s inability to pay. Because of the increase in scholarship need last season, the JCC is in need of scholarship donations now more than ever. It is up to us to help.

And speaking of excellence - In addition to the many annual concerts the JCC performs (Cool Side of Yuletide, Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing, etc.) the touring choir performed at the Vatican last year and will perform in Carnegie Hall in June of 2020! What an honor these invitations are. One only needs to look at the caliber of organizations that have asked The Chorus to perform to know we have one of the best children’s choirs in the country.

The JCC continues to expand its Early Childhood programs with both free and paid preschool classes, as well as a Primary Choir for K-1st grade. Music exposure and education at a young age are significantly beneficial to a child’s development.

As part of its ongoing efforts to better serve our community, the JCC is improving its campus with a fun and attractive public art installation, garden boxes and tree lighting, banners, and some needed fencing. These improvements make the campus safer and more attractive to families of prospective students. The Meninak Club is pleased to be part of this project through awarding our $40,000 annual charity grant to the JCC in 2018.

There is nothing quite as uplifting as experiencing the joy of children singing. If you need a lift at the end of a long day, go to the JCC website and listen to “Bowling Green”, or “Show Me How”, or one of the other pieces there. You’ll be smiling and reflecting on the more important things in life when you do. And your appreciation for the ways you are blessed will be restored by the voices you hear.

Congratulations on 25 years of excellence JCC! We have much to look forward to in the decades ahead!

—Kerry Varkonda
President - Meninak Club of Jacksonville
Priceless Gifts
A staff member’s perspective on the JCC

As I am now in my sixth year with the JCC, first as a staff member and then as a parent of one, and then two, singers with JCC, it is very exciting to be able to see the short term and long term growth of all of the children with which JCC works. Even more, I can easily see the same growth and how it translates into the world outside of JCC within my own children. I LOVE playing piano for all of the performances that each choir puts on. Seeing the pure joy bloom on a Training Choir child’s face, seeing a better understanding of music and musical expression, the simple fun that Treble/Lyric Choirs have, seeing their confidence as performers blossom, and the aspiration of the Concert Choir as they perform with and without the Touring Choir have been some of the most enriching experiences I’ve had as a performer and staff member. I must also mention the professionalism and artistry that is present in the Touring Choir as the young singers have matured into the proud performers they are today.

As a parent of two singers in the Touring Choir, my husband and I are very grateful for all of the experiences the children have had. Traveling through Europe, seeing different cultures, and even nature, are priceless gifts that can only enhance the lives of all of our children. My girls especially enjoy getting to meet and perform with other countries’ choir members, and that seems to be their favorite thing to do. Hanna and Yuki are very independent for their age, and we rarely have to check their homework or remind them to practice for JCC. Both my husband and I sure wish that independence and dedication extended to their chores and keeping their rooms clean though! :-) We also have to mention how important the scholarships are for our girls. Without scholarship assistance, it is likely that neither of our girls would have been able to experience everything they have with JCC over the past several years; nor would they have made the strong bonds with their JCC friends over the shared challenges they’ve overcome as they work to uphold the reputation of JCC all over Europe and North America! My husband and I are extremely proud of the accomplishments of our children within JCC, the maturity that JCC has helped them to develop, and the opportunities and experiences that JCC has provided to them over the years. Thank you JCC!

— Sachiko Frampton, Collaborative Pianist and JCC Parent
**UPCOMING CONCERT Highlights**

**DECEMBER 14, 2019**

**Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church**

**2 Shows - 4:00pm & 7:00pm**

Christmas and Hanukkah favorites, featuring all JCC performance choirs.

**FEBRUARY 15, 2020**

**Mardi Gras Party**

Ponte Vedra Concert Hall

6:30–10:00pm

Join in the fun at the 2nd Annual Mardi Gras-themed event featuring live music performers, DJ music, dancing, food, specialty drinks, aerialists, live and silent auction, prizes, photo booth, and more. Tickets are $75. All guests must be 18 and older.

**FEBRUARY 22, 2020**

**“Lift Ev’ry Voice & Sing”**

Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church

2:00pm

Annual concert in celebration of Black History Month and honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. featuring all JCC performance choirs with special guest choir Morehouse College Glee Club.

**JUNE 6, 2020**

**Dancing with the Stars**

Munnerlyn Center at Episcopal School

7:30pm

Annual celebration in celebration of Black History Month and honoring Martin Luther King, Jr. featuring all JCC performance choirs with special guest choir Morehouse College Glee Club.

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For full calendar of events and ticket information, please visit www.JaxChildrensChorus.org.