

Alumni Survey Responses

In February of 2013 and again in July of 2014, THS graduates who had been in choir while in school were asked to answer three questions:

1. How do you feel being in choir in high school and/or jr. high has impacted your life (either knowledge, skills and attitudes you learned, social aspects, experiences, or whatever made an impact on you)?
2. You made the decision to stay in choir when you were young. What would you say to students currently facing the same decision.
3. Please include your graduation year. what you are currently doing (occupation, school, etc.), and whether or not you are still involved with music in some way.

Here are the responses:

Erin (Beresford) Reibman , 2002:

I think that choir made a HUGE impact on my self confidence. It was one aspect of my life I knew I could do well in. It helped make me comfortable singing/speaking in front of any size group with ease. Because in a choir, the group must work together to create a perfect sound, I feel it helped to create good bonds and friendships among peers. Even if they weren't relationships that extended outside of choir, we had to bond and mesh for the greater good of the group!

Choir is honestly what kept me in school. I hated every other class, but I never missed choir. I would tell choir students to stay in choir if they love to sing because they will not have the same connection with other classmates. In choir, you're there because you love to sing, and auditioned to get into a quality group. Not just for a credit. Other classmates in other elective classes won't understand what us music kids do.

2002! I am a self employed hairstylist. I sing karaoke every Wednesday, and the National Anthem at Emerald Downs every summer!



Kelsey Taylor, 2009:

1) Choir helped me to gain a lot of self confidence. Feeling confident when singing in front of others and while learning music for the first time has helped me be more confident in other aspects of my life. Although I already knew how to sight read before I sang in the high school choirs, practicing those skills in class helped me to maintain and in some cases enhance my knowledge in sight reading.

2) Stay in choir. Students don't often get a chance to cultivate their artistic sides. While I think that math, science, writing, etc. are incredibly important, performing in front of others creates a skill set that you can't get in other classes. I think that most people have a very skewed perception of what goes on in choir. We are being trained to sing in a style that requires skill and dedication, not preparing for a stint on American Idol.

3) I am graduating spring of 2013 (that's right, this year!). I am an Environmental Science student at WWU, and I will also be graduating from the honors program. I am sorry to say that I am not involved with music in any way, but I would like to be in the future.



Rachel (Dunn) Alldredge, 1998:

Joining High School Choir was one of the best decisions I've made. Music was a huge part of my family growing up. In Junior High I was involved in choir and drama. I came to love the arts.

However, I lacked self confidence in my abilities. Because my voice was young and under-developed, I had very little volume when I sang. When I entered High School, my freshman choir teacher Mrs Turnbow had solo try outs for one of the songs in our Fall concert. She had each girl take turns singing the first line of the song. When it came to my turn, I was scared and shy but I decided to do my best. To my amazement, she was very pleased. She chose me that year to perform the solo from among girls I thought for sure would get the part. That experience started my self confidence that continued to grow during my high school years. It set the tone for my involvement in many other school activities. Being able to travel with the choir was enriching. I found my love of music and love of learning in choir. It motivated me to take vocal lessons and stretch my abilities.

After graduating in 1998, I attended Ricks College which is now BYU-Idaho. My major was music performance and education. My aspiration was to be a music teacher...preferably high school choir just like Mr. Riggs. Again while studying music, I had many wonderful experiences. I was able to travel and meet many influential people. Some of our choir performances were aired on national television. I performed in three oratorios and in the opera "Carmen" put on by a local group. I also had a couple voice students.

I graduated from college and moved back to Seattle and taught private vocal lessons for a few years. For financial reasons I ultimately decided to work in the field of finance. Even though my occupation is in investments, I have remained heavily involved in music. I am a member of the Federal Way Chorale which traveled to Ireland a few years ago. I am heavily involved with music at church and direct the children's music for programs and performances. Being able to teach my talent to others has been a blessing in my life. I started my own girl band called Chicks on Strings...three girls who sing and play



acoustic guitar. We've performed and placed in talent competitions at the Puyallup Fair and have been requested to perform in small venues such as Victorian Country Christmas at the Puallup Fair. I have also performed in local musicals such as Seven Brides for Seven Brothers.

I highly encourage any young person to consider joining or staying in choir. Music gives opportunities to relate with people on a personal level and educate society about history or current issues. There is so much to be learned through music such as theory, history, anatomy, self confidence, socialization, communication, self mastery and discipline, listening skills, and focus. Music has an amazing healing element. If you have the gift to sing, develop it and use it to enrich your life and the life of others. It will make you happy.

Heather McKinlay, 2010:

1. Being in choir helped me learn how to work in a group for a common goal. Having to work as a section and as a whole choir was difficult at times, but when we got it right it made such a huge difference, and that was definitely a learned skill for me that I didn't find anywhere else. I've used it in my jobs many times. It has also helped me develop friendships with other people who were in choirs in high school that I might not have had. It gave me a sense of community throughout high school and beyond that I love.

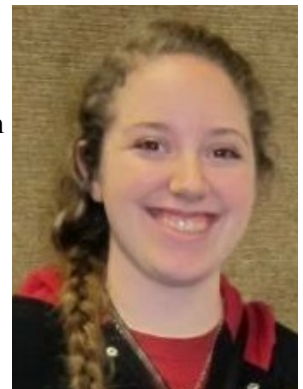


2. If you love it, stick with it! Even though there were things that were difficult and times that I didn't want to be there, the skills I learned and the fun I had made everything worth it. The friends you make and the things you get to do (concerts, tours, etc.) are memories that you will love for a very long time to come.

3. I graduated 2010, I am working for my church, and I am heavily involved in the music program at my church.

Melissa Moorehead, 2010:

1. Choir enhanced my prior knowledge of music, but more than that, it provided a social outlet. My fellow Treble Choir members became my friends, and I loved being able to sing with them every class period. I looked forward to working with them. There's a certain aesthetic in choir that you don't get anywhere else. (I was a band student, too, and I still believe choir does something that band doesn't.) Even if you don't like the songs you're working with, you get to sing. You literally raise your voice as a means of self-expression. From that, I gained confidence in myself and my abilities. I was very, very timid in the beginning, but I ended up as a section leader who was willing to work harder and project more than I thought I could. That confidence has carried over to who I am today, and how I approach everyday situations, professionally or academically.



2. My situation was a little different than most. I took choir when I was very young, then switched over to band, then switched back to choir in high school. I'm very glad I made that decision, in retrospect. Either

way, being involved with music in junior high and high school was very important to my development as a teenager. Even if you don't plan on pursuing a career with music, any passion for it at all makes choir worth your while. Choir is a multifaceted genre. It's a social system where you can forge lifelong friendships; it makes you well-rounded with the knowledge of music theory under your belt; it urges you to be creative and do something that makes you proud. When you put on a great performance, and you hear the crowd cheering for you, and you can look around at your fellow choir members who are right there with you, take a snapshot of that moment and don't forget it. No other experience can emulate that amazing feeling.

3.

Graduation Year: 2010.

Current Occupation: English/Creative Writing major at Western Washington University.

Involvement with Music: I'm not studying anything music-related at WWU, but I attend choral events on-campus as well as musical theatre performances, and on the off-chance I have the time to, I play the piano and attempt to write my own orchestrations.

Jenni Lawler, 2007:

1. Everyone always talks about how horrible their Jr High and High School experience was and how they would never repeat that period in their life. I have never agreed with that comment, and that is because I had the experience of being in choir. I have always loved to sing, and choir gave me an outlet for that passion. It put me in a group of like-minded individuals who became my best friends throughout my time in school and some even in the present. Choir taught me so much about the art of music and actually led me to pursue a degree in Music. I will be forever grateful that I decided to stick with choir all throughout my schooling, because it was one of the greatest experiences of my life. By sticking with choir, I went on to be accepted in my University Chorale and served as President of the group for two years. Without my prior experience, this never would have happened.



2. Staying in choir was a no brainer for me. I actually had to give up being in the honor's program in Jr High because the scheduling conflicted with choir, but I never will regret making the decision to stick with choir no matter what. It was the class I lived for where I was truly happy. There is nothing better for you during your school years than having a place where you always feel joy, and that is what I found in choir.

3. I graduated in 2007 and after getting my BA in Music, I am now teaching preschool. I use my knowledge of music everyday by singing songs with the children and teaching them basic rhythm and pitch. I am also involved in several choirs that meet at different times throughout the year and I enjoy them very much.

Emery Dillon, 2012:

Being in choir for 3 of 4 years of my high school career has actually really impacted my life a lot. I hadn't even considered choir until my friend told me to take choir with her and I grudgingly did so. But, almost 4 years later, here I am, a music major at college—all because I joined choir in high school. I gained SO much musical experience and knowledge from being in high school choir, as well as experienced the family like love that comes with singing in a group with people who love the class and music just as much as you do.

2. I would say, if you are a student debating on whether you should continue with choir or not, DO IT. Whether you are a pro singer or not, the experience is worth it. Music is good for you. ;) And again, I made some of my closest friends in my life in choir.

3. I graduated in 2012, and I am currently a piano major at Central Washington University, and I am in 4 different vocal groups. I am in 2 a cappella groups as well as University Chorale and Vocal Jazz 3. It's awesome.

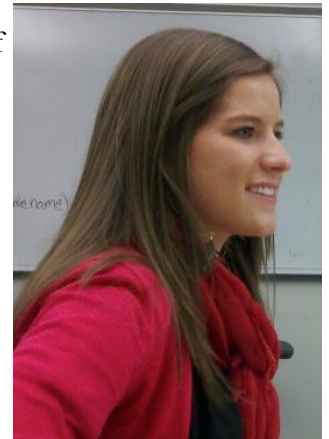


Riley Sanders, 2009:

1. I was in choir all throughout junior high and high school. I learned so much about music including, how to read music, rhythm, time, tempo, musical genres, history, etc. Along with these skills, I also learned how to work together with a group of people to blend our voices and create an accurate sound. In choir, I truly believe that you develop the ability to listen. This is one of the most important things that choir (and Mr. Riggs) has given me and that I have applied to my everyday life.

2. I would tell you that life is hard and if singing is something you are passionate about or something you love, then stick with it because it won't last forever. If you are thinking about taking choir just because it is "easy" and that is your only reason, then I'm going to be blunt and say that you would be wasting everyone's time, including your own. Choir is a place for you to learn and build your singing skills, as well as your attitude and social skills. If your heart isn't in it, you will have a negative effect on your entire class. Also, if you are worried about taking Choir because it will interfere with your course load or other electives, there are ways around it. I took choir all four years in high school and could use that as a substitute for my occupational education credit in order to graduate. I took the minimum requirement for PE (two years) and still took Spanish for three years and Leadership class for one year, so it can be done.

3. I graduated high school in 2009. I am currently in my senior year at Central Washington University at the Des Moines campus location. I am in the Teacher Preparation Program where I will earn my Bachelor's of Education Degree with endorsements in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. I start Student Teaching in March and will graduate in June. Unfortunately, I haven't been involved with music as much as I would have liked. However, I am currently taking a class called "Integrated Arts in the Elementary Classroom" where we are learning about integrating the arts (music, visual art, drama, dance, etc.) into our everyday subject matter. We sing songs, compose songs, and learn about the musical components on a regular basis. It is such a nice reminder of what music can bring to someone's life and it is definitely bringing back a lot of good memories from junior high and



high school choir. Even if choir/music is offered at the school where I will be teaching in the future, I will still integrate it in my classroom and it will be an important part of our classroom climate and community.

Tristan Pennington, 2012:

1. For me personally, being in choir helped me to be more outgoing and helped me be more confident in public speaking. Another thing I'd like to share is that it's my opinion that students who take choir end up having a more successful school career.

2. I enjoyed choir so much in high school, it was one of the few things I enjoyed doing. I still do in fact. Statistically, students who take a music course will be more successful in school, work and life.

3. I graduated in 2012, I am taking broadcast journalism at green river, as well as writing my own music.



Janelle Waldram, 2011:

Personally, high school choir really helped me grow not just musically, but as a person. I felt a better sense of confidence as I put work into it. It was not about the choir I was in, or how talented I was, it was about seeing that I got what I put into it. I took it seriously and really feel like it became a part of who I am. The friends I keep in contact with from high school are all from choir. I spent time with these people, doing something we all loved. And I have memories I will never forget.

Stay!!!! Of course I am incredibly biased, but the only thing about high school I miss is choir. You cannot expect to be an all-star overnight. It will take work to progress and you shouldn't expect to have it come easy unless you are willing to work, but it is worth it! If I could go back and do it again, I would just work harder.

I graduated in 2011, and am currently attending BYU-Idaho for my associates, then transferring to BYU-Provo after I get married this August. I stay involved in music as much as I can. When I am not studying I am playing piano, I sing in church and school choirs. Music is a part of who I am. You don't have to be studying music to love it. I am not studying music in college because it is a passion of mine. It is something I work on when I desire and has been an incredible blessing.



Laura McGuire, 2011:

1. Choir has always been a major part of my life, it gave me an avenue to explore new things and a chance to perform in front of people. Now because of that practice of being in front of people and singing its a lot easier to speak in public. Because of different things that I learned in choir socially, I am able to interact successfully with a wide range of people which is extremely useful. Also choir taught me to be very positive about things, even when I wasn't feeling well choir was something that never failed to make me feel better. It is just a great avenue to express yourself, in a group setting.



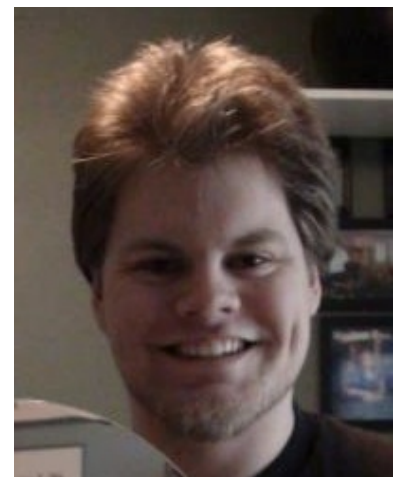
2. It's generally my belief that sticking with something makes you a much better person. You can never get better at something if you don't stay with it. Also, something that employers and colleges look for is loyalty dedication and perseverance. Sticking with choir or anything through your schooling shows them that you have all those qualities.

3. I graduated in 2011 and I am currently going through a missionary program called Generational Leadership at my church Generational Hope Christian Center. Choir is one of the things we use as a tool to minister to people, therefore my experience from school has really been useful to me. My classmates and I are currently preparing for a trip to Honduras, where we will be spending some time helping out a small school.

Steven Wang, 2011:

I think being in choir helped me feel better about myself. It gave me enough courage to go and try something I had no idea if I could really do, like do a solo and go to state, or even audition for a chamber and jazz choir. It's probably what gave me the mind set that "I'm going to go achieve my goals I'm going to be a movie director," not "My dreams are too big for me, I'll try but I'm not expecting much."

If you're questioning if you want to do it or not, you should just go for it. I made the tough decision from Middle School to Junior High to stay in choir because I enjoyed it. I sort of knew that I wasn't going to make a career in music, but having a class that I knew I could look forward to helped a lot in school. "I just have to get through math and the I'm off to choir," was a great relief.

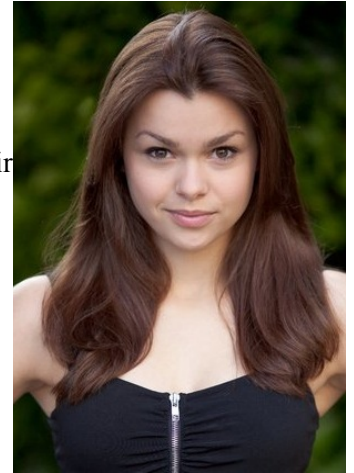


I graduated in 2011, I'm currently a toner cartridge technician and filming the middle school/Junior High plays and helping film the high school plays, all in the Tahoma school district. I'm also providing my

support to a local community drama program, and doing video and photography for the robotics organization, FIRST. Other than filming the musicals and helping the community drama program, the only involvement with music I'm really involved with is Mr. Riggs' annual community choir, which I have been a part of almost every year since my sophomore year in high school.

Reba Buhr, 2006:

As someone who auditions for musical theater for a living, I find that when it comes to testing who has a good ear for harmony (which comes up a lot) I find I have stronger skills in that area than most people. Since I only did one year of college choir I have to think most of those skills came from high school. I also would have had a much harder time majoring in music in college without the reading skills I learned in high school. Graduated in 2006 and I am a WORKING singer/actress :)



Michael French, 2011:

1. The biggest aspects of my life that being in choir in high school afforded me were a much deeper appreciation for classical and choral music. I'd always been a fan as it was because of my parents but it's one thing to listen to music and like it and a totally different thing to perform it yourself. Something about hearing a great song being performed by oneself and others around you makes it ten times more enjoyable. Something else it does is it makes you much more comfortable with your own voice whether or not you had previously sung. It gives you tremendous sight reading experience which, if you continue choir or other music, will really help out. It's so satisfying seeing a song you've never heard or sung and still getting the notes right the first time. The people you will meet will strengthen everything about music, the class, and the friendship you may or may not have already had with them due to that common bond you share in the appreciation of music performance.

2. While I wasn't in choir until high school I did play and take lessons on piano and trombone from a young age. Throughout that experience I really struggled to appreciate it very much because as a kid you hear all these amazing musicians and you expect to sound like that and be that good right away. You don't want to put forth all the effort over many many years that it takes and you fail to realize that those people you hear were once in the exact same position you are. When that frustration sets in just deal with it and keep listening even more to motivate yourself. I quit taking piano lessons after only a couple years and it was definitely one of the biggest mistakes I ever made. I did however stick with trombone and ended up having a lot of success with it so that time will pay off if you really want it to.

3. I graduated with the class of 2011 and I'm currently attending a small school called Benedictine College just outside Kansas City, Missouri. I am studying Music Education and Music Composition and plan to continue on after graduation in order to complete at least a Master's in one of those two areas. I am in a plethora of music performance groups such as a large choir, smaller choir, liturgical choirs that provide music for all kinds of different religious services that take place throughout the week. I am also in jazz band, concert band, and am taking private lessons for voice and trombone as well as numerous music theory, history, and pedagogy classes. Very very busy but worth every minute.



Megan Moorehead, 2010:

Choir was such an incredible time for me in high school. It was the one class in which I felt confident but still had plenty to learn. I was able to focus on my own learning while still working with a group, improving my own voice as an individual but also working in a group to improve the performance as a whole. I learned so many new things, jumping from an all girls choir to both jazz and chamber choir, and most of what I know about singing to this day was what I learned my senior year in those choirs. I was able to develop my own talents while still being a part of something, and I had a huge amount of fun, and it made for the highlight of my high school career.

I was involved with choir at a very young age, and then took a break from choir to participate in band. I wanted to be a part of music in many ways. I jumped back into choir in high school, and found I enjoyed choir far more. Either way, taking time each week to learn and hone music skills is a fantastic way to spend valuable time in high school, especially in that it's less stressful than most classes but also more rewarding.

I graduated in 2010, and I'm currently studying at Western Washington University as an English Literature major. I've taken a break from singing in class, but I still sing often and sometimes collaborate with friends, and I'm planning to audition for an a cappella choir in a few months.



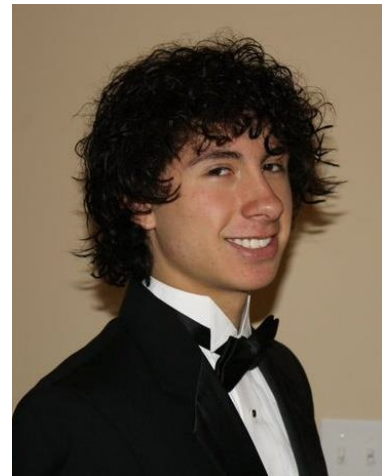
Jose de Howitt, 2011:

1. I moved from Ecuador to start my junior year in the U.S. and after my first semester at Tahoma I decided to take choir because I like to sing and I thought it would help my singing (which I never thought was great in the first place). Little did I know it would become the greatest high school experience ever! I fell in love with the class and in all honesty it was the only class I ever looked forward to every gold day, the only gold days I didn't like were the ones we didn't rehearse. During spring break of my senior year I decided that I wanted to study music and this desire would only grow larger with every class and every concert.

2. When I was younger I didn't have the chance to experience choir but if I would've had that chance I would not have had a second's hesitation to stay with it, specially if singing and/or music is something that moves you.

3. I graduated 2011 and like I said before I am following my heart and I'm still doing music. I'm studying to be a composer and even though I'm not necessarily following singing, I am following my heart with music.

Nothing will make you happier than following your heart, and if music is what your heart tells you to do then do it and be happy!



Alli Woolcock, 2006:

Being apart of choir through junior high and high school was the most important and significant life experience. It allowed me to utilize and grow in my talent, to share it and to learn how to play nicely with others. I built life long friendships. My confidence at the time... Whooo! (let's just say I realized at one point how dramatic I was too!) there is something so special about the connection we all shared. Some people have sports, where they all work together to achieve a common goal, and choir is the same thing. Yes, choir is still a sport!

Regarding someone leaving choir early on, DONT EVEN THINK ABOUT IT! It is up to you to spread the joy of music and friendship to the grades below you! (sometimes I rock out THS Jazz choir From 2002 CD in my car :) Obviously, there is a reason you joined in the first place. Not because you're the next American idol, not because you like to go on field trips, but because you love to sing.

I graduated in 2006, pursued music at green river...(eye roll). (Word of advice, GET GOOD GRADES AND GO TO A UNIVERSITY! It's simple!) After feeling like I was someone special within the TJHS/THS choral program for seven years prior, I let the competitiveness of up and coming divas get the best of me and I stopped doing what I treasured more than anything. However, I do get paid to perform everyday, I am the assistant manager of a booming restaurant, The Rock Wood Fired Pizza and Spirits, here in Vancouver. When I was brought down here in 2010 I was the youngest manager in the history of the company. The choir program taught me how to be a leader and how to persevere through anything, (even when all you want to do throw your purse and push Courtney Grosvenor off the stage.)



Kelsey Williams, 2007:

1. I made some of my best friends in choir. The sad thing after high school is that people move far apart but, as we used to say, friends made in choir are friends made to last. I still regularly meet up with choir friends even though we living in different cities. And when you run into another THS choir alum, you have an instant connection and friend.

I also learned many of the technical skills I've used in other groups I've sung in since. I know how to sing with good tone quality and form which people who did not take choir have a hard time learning. I also knew basic music theory which is invaluable if you decide to move forth with a career in music (even if it's just a hobby). Since graduating THS, I went to Western Washington University and ended up directing an a cappella group. I saw first hand the musical difference between people who had sung with a choir and those who had only sung along to the radio. Starting good singing habits now will benefit you for the rest of your life.



I also want to point out I was not the best choral singer at THS, I never made it into Chamber Choir, but I've been able to use everything I've learned and do SO much musically. I want to encourage everyone who thinks they are not a good singer because they did not get a solo or had a bad audition to just keep moving forward and learn from Mr. Riggs everything you can about music. You can go on and make your dreams come true even if it's not in the form you want at the present (if that makes sense). There will always be more opportunities you just have to keep your eyes open.

2. As far as staying in choir I only have two words to say: DO IT. Seriously. I don't for a second regret it and you won't either. I learned so much that I used everyday in my life from choir and made some of my best friends. DO IT, stay in choir.

3. I graduated THS in 2007. I just graduated college this last June so now I work in a Mental Health and Chemical Dependency office while finishing up my paralegal certificate at UW. I'm anxiously awaiting June because I'm moving to Washington DC and will have time to join a new a cappella group again.

Lauren Jimenez, 2012:

1. Taking choir through junior high and high school gave me enough musical knowledge to talk to musicians, and convince not musically inclined people that I could be a rock star if I wanted to. I learned how to work with others and to not be afraid to stand out at times and blend in at others. I also learned how to be a leader, whoop-whoop section leaders!

2. You made the decision to stay in choir when you were young. What would you say to students currently facing the same decision. If your sole reason is to take an easy class to get an easy a, then don't stick with it. If you love choir or enjoy it remotely, continue it. And if you're like me and find those talkative people in the back row who don't care about choir annoying then stick with it! High school choir is so much better, and don't be afraid to try out, especially if you're a freshman.

3. Please include your graduation year, what you are currently doing (occupation, school, etc.), and whether or not you are still involved with music in some way.

I graduated in 2012, I am currently going to Green River Community College and I am going to transfer to Western Washington University after next year. I also hold a part time job and work thirty hours a week on average. I participated in Community Choir this past year and would love to still be in choir, but it doesn't apply to my degree. I pretty much just sing in the car and shower and to myself at this point.



Senteara Orwig, 2009:

1) Impact: Choir was often a balance for my classes in Jr. High and High School, made friends, strengthened my musical skills, the skill and motivation to constantly make revision, patience, and I have been able to apply my experience with music into my belly dance skills. (ex. staying

with the beat as I dance and recognizing the different layers of rhythms within a song)

2) Not only was choir a balance for classes, but it offered experiences that academic classes can't provide. There is a lot of teamwork and discipline in becoming a great choir and a strong individual musician. All the hard work pays off and offers a collaborative achievement to be proud of. Also, music is such a huge part of our culture, taking choir for all 4 years not only shows commitment to something for Colleges and future employers but also provides a method for connecting to multiple communities. Music is cross-cultural and a tool we can use to break boundaries. This element kind of shows up in the popular TV show Glee but without all the crazy drama.



3) 2009 Graduate of THS

Senior at University of Washington- Seattle, Double Major in History & Anthropology with a minor in Diversity (Will Graduate June 2013)

Student and Performer of Belly Dance since Spring of 2010

Treasure Harris, 2004:

Choir was the bee's knees; that and sports was the only thing I miss about junior high/high school. And it was fun because it was one of the few classes you could take where you kind of stayed with the same group of people for up to 5 years depending upon when you got into it. By your senior year everyone seemed to have a unique sort of bond, so, socially, it was awesome. Skills-wise, you continue to learn and grow, 1) because you're working with the same cohorts, 2) you have the same amazing and experienced teacher to help mold your skills.

I loved choir. I loved the experiences and memories I took from it my years being a part of it.



I would say, stick with it, absolutely. Once you're done with school, unless you pursue music seriously as a career or hobby, there aren't many chances to do anything quite like it. I'm not sure how things have changed, but when I was a part of choir we put on concerts (of course), we sang at other schools, we sang with other choirs, we went and sang in Disneyland, etc... I can't say that I've had the chance to do things like that since I graduated. So, stick it out! Mr. Riggs is wonderful at helping people find their musical strengths. Embrace it, and just have fun. Worst case, consider this: while you're in choir class hanging out with the cool kids, your friends are in math or science or something. At that very moment, you're winning.

Graduation year: 2004

Occupation: Interventional Radiology Technologist at University of Washington Medical Center
Am I still involved in music?: Why yes, actually. My boyfriend and I just recently started recording and uploading music. We're starting with covers and we'll be recording some original stuff soon! I sing lead vocals and play guitar. Will sings and plays lead guitar. Check us out on Youtube or Facebook!
The name: Gold Stache.

Allison Stillmaker, 2009:

I think that choir has greatly impacted me in every aspect of who I am now. I used all that Mr. Riggs taught me to get a 4.0 in my first quarter Music in the Humanities class. It has allowed me to connect well with the people around me. I have a better attitude about being around people in general. Being in choir is something that you should continue with even if you only want to a little bit. It could greatly impact you as you decide what you want to do with your life. (plus colleges like to see it on your transcript because it shows you are well rounded).



There was a point when we had a 47 girl class for choir and I wanted to quit. There was another point when I thought about quitting after not getting into chamber. It was a good lesson in sticking with something you are passionate about despite the circumstances that surround it. I'm really glad I continued on in high school choir where I was in treble, chamber, and jazz. You'll do yourself a favor if you have a music class where you can just relax and de-stress from the rest of the day. I'm glad I didn't quit when I wanted to. It would've been easy and would've cleared up my schedule for other classes but it was best for me to stay in choir.

I graduated from Tahoma in 2009. I have graduated from Eastern Washington University with a BS in Applied Developmental Psychology and currently work part time at Starbucks and part time in children's ministry at church. I plan to go back to grad school Fall 2015 and become a certified school counselor or academic advisor. I currently am not directly singing for anything in particular but music has always been a part of my life and will continue to be.



Jaclyn Shorter, 2008:

1) Choir has impacted my life by making singing one of my passions in life. Before I joined choir in middle school, I didn't think that I was that great of a singer, and I struggled with self confidence. However, choir gave me the confidence and the belief in myself to excel in the real world. Now I find

myself singing whenever I can.

2) If you enjoy singing, stay in choir. Do not worry about what other people say, go after your passions. Staying in choir was one of the best decisions that I made in school.

3) I graduated in 2008. I graduated with my BA in social work from PLU in 2012. I currently work at Hopelink and provide intakes and referrals for low income clients who are seeking financial assistance and food bank services; my job falls under the category of social services. I am currently not involved in a choir, although I still enjoy singing. I try to participate in Community Choir every fall.

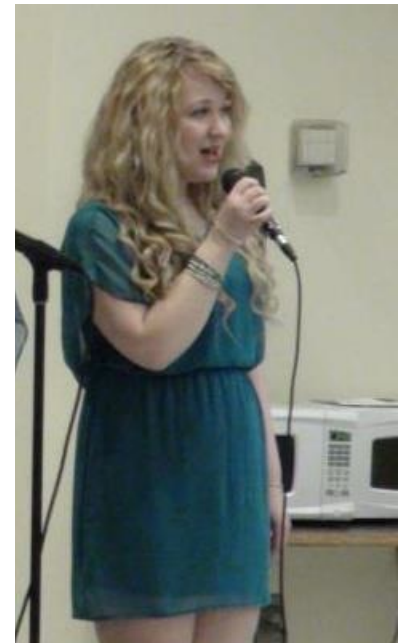
Sarah Herman, 2013:

1. Being in choir was the most influential factor of both junior high and high school.

In choir I met my best friends, that are still there even after graduation. Being in both chamber and jazz choir my senior year, allowed me to learn a lot about different styles of music, and the different ways in which they are performed. Overall, if it was not for choir, my high school experience would not have been as great as it was, nor would I have the friends I have today.

2. Stay in choir!!!! The longer you are in choir, the better it is! Nothing is better than growing up with your choir. Although there are different choirs in high school, musically watching your peers grow since 9th grade to 12th is magical, and allows bonds that no other class could provide. Plus who wouldn't want Mr Riggs as their teacher, over and over again?

3. I graduated in 2013, and am currently attending Washington state University, majoring in Elementary education. I plan to audition for the university's choir this fall, as my freshman year did not allow choir in my schedule. However, whenever possible I will always make time to be involved with music, as it shaped me into who I am today.



Payton Babb, 2014:

Being in choir is what made my high school experience into a positive one. Everyone was supportive of each other, friendly, and it was obvious that all the choir directors cared about every individual student and their experiences. I became friends with people that I never would

have met otherwise, and learned how to work as a team through each person's strengths and weaknesses.

I am so glad I stayed in choir as long as I could! I joined choir in 5th grade and was in it up through 10th grade until I did Running Start full time. It is what made me feel comfortable when beginning each new school year. I know a lot about music, but I always learned so many new things! I would recommend to anyone that they stay in choir as long as they can, and it will be so worth it! I laughed and had a good time in THS choir more than any of my other classes because the students in it were so amazing, and Mr. Riggs was so great at making the class enjoyable and he is the funniest person ever. (Even though he doesn't know it and would never admit to it).



I graduated in 2014, and I am going to school at BYU-I to hopefully someday become a pediatric nurse. I have played the piano for about 10 years, and I still teach piano lessons and am involved in my church choir. I will always love music and I will never forget the amazing experiences I had in the THS choir!

James French, 2013:

1: It opened up a whole new world of music for me and made me really love choral/classical music. Now I love to sing whenever and where ever!

2: Stay with it! I've been able to participate in many amazing things because of choir and I've traveled to some awesome places to perform with my college choir such as DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Arlington!

3: Class of 2013, I attend Mount St. Mary's University. I sing in the university chorale, the university chapel choir and a men's acapella group.

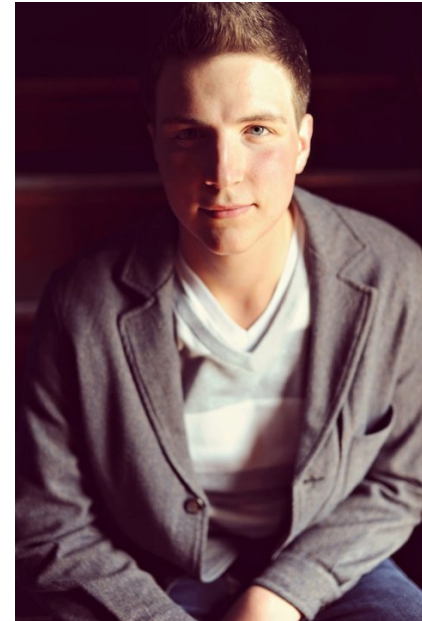


Braden DenHerder, 2011:

1. During the 5 years I had the pleasure of singing under the direction of Mr. Riggs, I had some of the most amazing growing and learning experiences. I was able to meet people from all walks of life, I developed close friendships I still hold dear to me to this day and I still have a passion for singing and all things music. Between choir festivals, competitions, concerts, and class, I know for a fact that choir made me a better student, gave me a unique outlook on life and certain challenges, and reaffirmed my passion for the arts.

2. To those students who are questioning whether to stay on choir or not, I just want them to know that they will never be able to build a family or participate in some of the most amazing experiences during their time in Jr. High or High School like they can in choir. The music only gets better, the passion only grows stronger and the choir family and friends you make will be supportive throughout all the hardships school brings.

3. I graduated from Tahoma in 2011 and from Central Washington University in 2014. I am currently a Freelance Public Relations Consultant working with a wide variety of local and national clients in the Western Washington area. While I am not currently in a choir, I make sure that I attend every concert, recital and music event I can.



Brad Sant, 2007:

I chose to start choir in 7th grade because my brother (Jeremy) told me that I would be good at it. I thought it would be easy. At first, I liked the social aspect and didn't care much about the music, but it later became more than that. In the end, I found that I was impacted by the "feel" of when a chord locked tight or when movement, dynamics, and all the juicy details mixed just right. It became more than "just a class", it became part of who I was (and still am), and now music is part of my sanity.

To those wrestling with staying or leaving choir, I offer the following advice - think about WHY you do choir. Does it have meaning other than the grade or friends? What role does music play in your life? What would you do without it? I strongly recommend sticking with it - the relationships I've built in vocal groups have been some of the strongest and most lasting of friendships. And there's almost nothing better than a tightly-knit 8-part acapella jazz chord.



I graduated in 2007 (best class yet!) and am currently a senior at BYU-Idaho (graduation Dec '14) studying Graphic Design. I have been a part of a vocal jazz group called Vocal Union for 5 years, and we have traveled to the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and many of the States on jazz tours. Music is a huge part of my life, I don't know how people get by without it.

Haley Hansen, 2014:

1. Being in Mr. Riggs' choir from junior through high school has impacted my life in different ways. I have increased my knowledge and understanding of how to read music and learning new skills and techniques along the way to help me become a good singer and a better musician. I learned how to "fit in" with different choir groups each year with our different weaknesses and strengths. I would always work hard and tried my best.

2. In my family there are a few people that love music and that's who I am. What made me stay in choir was knowing I would continue to become a better skilled musician and singer. Students that are facing the decision to stay in choir: if you know you love to sing stick with it. If you feel you are not the best singer keep staying in choir and know you will get better.



3. Haley Hansen- 2014

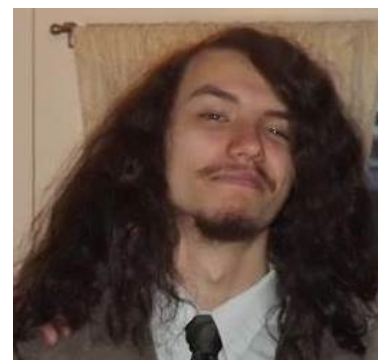
Attending BYU-Idaho fall of 2014. I am still practicing music by playing the piano and guitar on my own. Also, I am still in my church choir. Hope to find a choir at BYU-Idaho to continue to grow musically.

Alex Jimenez, 2014:

Being in choir is what kept me in high school, for one thing. The choir was kind of like a family to me while I was in it, and I can't think of a time when I wasn't happy to be a part of it. Everything I've learned as a result of being in choir has helped me to grow as a musician, as a performer, and as a person, and I couldn't be happier with the way it was structured and designed. To the younger students considering choir, don't take it for an easy A, take it for the wealth of experience and knowledge, and take it so it can open new doors for you in life.

Class of 2014

Occupation: Music teacher/student at Green River College



Amy Johnsen, 2004:

1. I loved being in choir in high school. I did it for two years--11th and 12th grade. It really brought me out of my shell when I had been uncomfortable singing in public, so much so that I auditioned for and got a solo at our first concert. I also learned to LISTEN to others, adjust my own voice accordingly, and how the different parts came together as a whole.

2. Choir was a really enjoyable experience for me and taught me that I would have to work hard for what I got. My second year, I auditioned for jazz choir and was accepted. I loved the different style of music and our trip to Disneyland is still etched in my mind. If you enjoy music, stick with the class. You will get out of it exactly what you put in.

3. I graduated from Tahoma in 2004 and am currently a criminal court clerk for a small municipal court and a dance instructor. I am also a graduate student working toward my Master in Teaching and plan to teach elementary school. For the past two years, I have been active in the Maple Valley community choir, which is an open group that meets for about 6 weeks out of the year for a Christmas concert.



Ian Salish, 2005:

I really think that choir made a large impact on my life and I would hope that future children get the same experience. The choir experience gave me a large base of musical knowledge and appreciation. I also learned to work with a variety of personalities towards our performance goals. By the end of the several years of high school choir that I enrolled in, I felt a greater sense of self-worth and happy that I had developed an invested interest in music.

To the younger students, I would say that I had a difficult experience in 8th grade choir. I didn't like my teacher at the time and I almost quit choir because of it. After talking with my parents, who were very supportive, I decided to try for another year. Now looking back, I had a lot of fun times and great experiences because I decided to stick with it. I kept growing in my ability, made friends and I truly appreciate the learning experience I had from my 9th-12th grade choir.

I graduated in 2005 and I'm currently going to Shoreline Community College for nursing. I will graduate in December and become a



Registered Nurse. I am currently not involved in music, other than appreciation, but choir drove me to complete a vocational school sound engineering program. I didn't make a career out of it, but it furthered my appreciation of good music and I still feel that it's an important, growing part of my life.

Janelle (Waldram) Holman, 2011:

Now that I have been out of high school for 2 years I have forgotten about a lot that happened during high school honestly. However the memories I think about or miss all have to do with choir or drama club. I find myself missing choir more than any other part of high school. Music has always been important to me. Listening to music, dancing, playing the piano or, my personal favorite, singing all help me relieve stress. I believe music makes people better, including myself.

Most of the friends I have actually kept in touch with are from choir. I still talk about the airplane ride to Disneyland or when we all went out to Olive Garden after a tour. These memories still put a smile on my face whenever I think about them. I didn't get any of that from my other classes. With choir the whole class has to work together. You can't really hide and be antisocial (that's a huge bonus for someone who is shy like me :)). Every person there works together. Whether I was best friends with someone or I didn't talk with them a lot I still have a relationship with almost every person from choir.

Without a doubt I would advise that you stay in choir. That class was no doubt the best class I took in high school. You forget about a lot of details from core classes. I basically forgot how to solve every math equation or I don't remember how exactly I am supposed to use ALA format (I had to text my high school teacher while writing a college paper...not my proudest moment!). However I do remember the words to songs we sang, when I hear a song we sang in choir I get all excited and start singing! When I have to solve a math equation I don't get all excited. Not once. You will remember choir. You will remember the laughs, disappointments, moments of victory and most importantly, the people. So pick choir, give yourself something to remember when you leave this phase of your life. Put in the effort and you won't regret it. See, I would give anything to switch places with you and take choir again.



I graduated in 2011. I am working as a waitress and as a Zumba Instructor to put my husband through school, and I plan on going back after he is done with school. Though I may not be studying music I am still singing, playing the piano and loving music more than I ever have. I use music in Zumba and I have learned not only about dancing but how to feel the music. It's awesome!

Elizabeth Burianek, 2012:

Being involved in Tahoma choirs for seven years has taught me many skills, both musical and non-musical. The musical skills are just those you would expect out of a choir: rhythm, keys, vocal range, and some other general music theory. It is the non-musical skills that stick out in my mind. When I think of choirs at Tahoma, I don't really remember all of the songs or music, I remember the friendships formed with others I wouldn't have normally talked to. I remember the leadership skills I was encouraged to develop. I remember the peace I felt singing in a choir, even under the spot light and in stressful situations. Music has always been an outlet of emotions for me. When I was younger, I stayed in choir because it was a chance for me to see my friends more, but as the years went on it became a place where I could express myself without being judged, only given constructive feedback. When I graduated from Tahoma in 2012, I was sad that I had not spent the last year in choir, due to multiple scheduling conflicts preventing me from being in choir. I am currently about to start my junior year at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. I am studying to be a math teacher - so a Bachelors in Mathematics and a Secondary Education Certificate. I will be starting my second year in the Gonzaga Women's Chorus, and love it.



Mindi (Zeleznik) Sneed, 2006:

I took choir all the way from elementary school through high school. Some of my best friends, who I still see on a regular basis, were made in choir classes. I enjoyed the singing but the social/group unity was something I've held onto all these years. I was a shy kid so being around people and performing in front of others really helped me to open up and overcome some stage fright as well.

Keep going, choir is a sport! If you put your heart into it, you can get a lot out of singing and not just a superb voice but some lifelong friends as well. And you don't have to haul around any heavy sports or band equipment your skills and talent are right there inside of you always.



I graduated in 2006 and went on to get my AAST in pastry & specialty baking and then my BAS in hospitality management. I currently work at Rylie Cakes gluten free bakery in Kent, WA as an assistant pastry chef. Sadly I'm not involved in choir anymore, unless you want to count singing along to songs on the radio at work. I would really like to get back into singing but sometimes

life gets in the way but the nice thing about choir is that it isn't going anywhere and there will always be groups singing.

Kevin Davis, 2010:

Being in choir was a growing experience for me. I have always enjoyed participating in music, but had never been part of a vocal group or received any training as to singing. Participating in choral performances were different than an instrumental performance, such that I felt like my body had more of a direct emotional impact on the audience. Having grown in my confidence to sing in a group, it opened up a lot of opportunities for me. I graduated from high school in 2010 and am in the middle of my B.A. of music, and plan on going to get my masters in Music Therapy. My singing has made it easier for me to pick out intervals and pitches as I analyze music. I would only recommend choir to students who take their education seriously. Those who seek social comfort are better off having fun in a different class, and ultimately can be a frustration to those who are in the choir program. Music should be studied by those who want to discipline their minds and connect with the law's of nature by focusing their efforts in creating a beautiful experience for others. Those who are musically gifted should try doing at least one choir class so as to expand their abilities.



Rebekah (Froese) Larsen, 2003:

I was in choir from the end of 9th grade to 12th grade. Music has always been an outlet for me even when I was in jr high/high school. When I went to college I also joined the choir for my first two years and did voice lessons. Taking the classes prior to college gave me the confidence to try out where I had to read music and have a piece prepared. I felt very comfortable in the audition because of the knowledge and skills I learned prior. After college I worked in education with students with severe special needs where music was an important part of their day. I ran circles with music and felt comfortable doing so. As an adult being in choir helped me learn to get out of my comfort zone. While in high school I was push out of my comfort zone by trying out for different choirs, or a solo part, and wrote a song for my senior project. By being challenged in high school I was able to know how to deal with feeling out of my comfort zone



and push through.

If it is something that they love to do then it is worth fighting for. Honestly some of my best memories are from those classes and experiences.

Graduated: 2003

I am a teacher in the Renton School District – Resource room k-5th grade

I try to stay involved in music with my students, my own children, and church. I would love to be a part of a choir again but the time commitment is just too much.

Kelly Nelson, 2008:

1) Being in choir throughout junior high and high school helped me to develop a group of strong friends. It allowed me to work on my social skills as well as teaching me a good work ethic. Through working on songs to get them performance ready, I developed persistence and learned to collaborate effectively with peers.

2) Although it caused me to take a class in the summer, staying in choir was the best decision I ever made in high school. My love of music and the community that was created in the classroom provided me an outlet to the stress I faced during the day. The relationships I developed in choir were supportive and helped me through hard times in high school.



3) I graduated in 2008 then went on to attend the University of Washington. I participated in choir my freshman year at UW but was unfortunately unable to continue as my work load became too stressful. I just finished my Master's in Teaching at UW and will begin teaching first grade at Shadow Lake in the fall.