



September 22, 2020

The Board of Directors of MDYC have determined that our previous Music Director, Jason DeBandt, will not be returning. Sara Berger will be the new Music Director moving forward. Billy Nichols Jr will also be working with MDYC as the Halftime Director and Assistant to Sara Berger.

Sara attends the Brighton church of Christ and was a member of MDYC from 2012-2015, she had several solo's and sang with Halftime. Sara was in several other singing groups at Howell H.S. where she also assisted in directing a couple of them. Sara attended the Detroit institute of Music Education from 2016-2020, she has been a private vocal music teacher and coach since 2017. Sara is exceptionally talented and is looking forward to helping MDYC in this important role.

Mr. Billy Nichols Jr attends the Romeo Church of Christ and will be working with Halftime as mentioned above, a job he has held twice before! Billy will also assist Sara as needed. Billy has been an MDYC Assistant Director working with Tim Meixner and has served in the past on the MDYC Board. He is happy and excited to step in and help us make this season a success for the members of MDYC.

August 31, 2020

We know you have questions. *What will the chorus season look like? Will my child be safe? Will there even be a season?* The truth is we don't have all the answers. This year will look different, but we believe in the chorus's mission to provide our members the opportunity to grow in Christ and their relationships while encouraging one another, and our audience, in song. We are preparing for concerts and our spring tour, and praying that things settle down for that portion of the season. We have faith that, even though it's not a "normal" season, we're going to make the best of it and work to glorify God through what we do.

Philippians 2:3-4 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of others." Our current circumstances require us to remain flexible as we make thoughtful choices and take care of each other.

To keep everyone safe, we are following [Michigan guidelines](#) for group activities. Our current plans include:

- Meeting on the first and third Sundays (instead of every week) and including more social, spiritual, and service-minded opportunities to our music rehearsal schedule
- Requiring face coverings while together
- Rehearsing outdoors whenever possible
- Adhering to indoor gathering guidelines and using social distance during indoor rehearsals within our large, open, practice facility
- Providing proper air circulation while rehearsing indoors
- Splitting the chorus into smaller practice groups when necessary
- Asking all chorus and board members to complete a symptom and exposure screening before each gathering, with the expectation that members stay home if they have possible symptoms or exposure to someone with Covid
- Providing online rehearsal materials (livestream, audio, etc) when members are unable to rehearse with the group, or when the group is unable to rehearse together
- Limiting our rehearsals to chorus members only and asking that families not enter the building (except on parent meeting days)
- Thinking outside the box about how/when/where we perform as a group

Additionally, we have hired new chorus and halftime directors. We are excited to announce them when our season begins.

The MDYC board is committed to making the decisions necessary to keep our chorus family safe, so these plans will likely change as the situation evolves. We appreciate the continued support and flexibility from our members, their families, and our faith community. That said, we are looking forward to making the best of what this year brings. We look forward to a year of spiritual, musical, and emotional growth. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with questions!

August 22, 2020

MDYC Family,

To say that 2020 has been full of unexpected twists and turns may be an understatement. It was truly heartbreaking to not finish the 2019-2020 season the way we had intended. We know that many of you have had to personally alter your plans and life over the past 5 months in ways that have been both difficult and disappointing. Through all of this, however, we are reminded of a few very important things: 1) God is still in control, and, 2) We only ever have the illusion that we are in control.

James, the brother of Jesus, reminds us that we should, *“Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.”* We believe that God CAN and WILL use this time to help us become more mature and complete Christ-followers as we persevere in our faith under these challenging times.

As the Board of Directors for MDYC we love watching our students come together, build a ‘forever family,’ sing together, put on concerts, and participate in tour. But above all of those things, we recognize that we have two main responsibilities: showing Christ to those we come in contact with, and providing a safe place for our students. For us, this is paramount.

It is for this reason that, due to the current circumstances, the Board believes it best to push back the official start of our season. This means that we will not be having our auditions and parent meeting as scheduled in September. Those who have applied will be notified when a new date is determined. We want you to know that it is our intention to have an altered 2020-2021 season, and are continuing to meet and plan how best to accomplish that and should have some more specific dates and times to you within the next few weeks. We promise to keep you informed and are open to your feedback along the way.

In addition, we want to inform you that the Board is supporting our MDYC Music Director, Jason Debandt, in taking a leave of absence. Over the past 24 hours the Board was made aware of serious workplace allegations posted on social media about Jason. Jason was willing to meet and discuss those issues with the MDYC Board of Directors. While these allegations are serious in nature, it is important to note that at this time no allegations of misconduct have been received for MDYC. We, the Board of Directors for MDYC, have procedures in place to prevent any private one-on-one contact between students and adults. In addition, we have continued to enforce the practice of students and adults gathering in groups no smaller than three. Again, one of the paramount responsibilities for us is to ensure the safety of our students.

In conclusion, we want to remind you that our trust and hope is in Christ! While we do not know what tomorrow holds, we do know that God has never forsaken us! In addition, it is our belief that challenging times can either make a person bitter or better - and the choice is ours! We can choose to look at the situations that we are faced with as defeating, or in the words of James the brother of Jesus, we can allow them to make us more mature and well-developed. We are praying for you and hope that you will allow these difficult times to deepen your faith in God and grow your spiritual walk with Him! We also want to encourage you to “not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs” and to remember to “be kind and compassionate to one another” (Ephesians 4:29,32). All around us are opportunities to hurt people with our words, tear down, gossip, slander, and build walls. We are praying that you will continue in building everyone up during a time when many feel torn down. Please join us in praying for the entire MDYC family.

We know that many of you may have questions, concerns or thoughts regarding: the 2020-2021 season, COVID precautions, Jason’s leave of absence, who might serve as an interim Director, etc. We ask that you address those concerns or suggestions with Philip Brackney, our Board Chairman. Thank you for your patience with us as we do our best to point people to Christ while maintaining the safest and wisest situations as possible for our students.

In Christ,
MDYC Board

August 17, 2020

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To keep everyone safe, we are following [Michigan guidelines](#) for group activities. Our current plans include:

- Requiring face coverings while together
- Providing alternative face coverings (such as face shields) during rehearsals to make singing easier
- Rehearsing outdoors whenever possible
- Proper distancing during indoor rehearsals within our large, open, practice facility
- Providing proper air circulation while rehearsing indoors
- Splitting the chorus into smaller practice groups when necessary
- Changing our Fall weekend camp into two day camps (first and last Saturdays of October)
- Asking all chorus and board members to complete a symptom and exposure screening before each gathering, with the expectation that members stay home if they have possible symptoms or exposure to someone with Covid
- Providing online rehearsal materials (livestream, audio, etc) when members are unable to rehearse with the group
- Limiting our rehearsals to chorus members only and asking that families not enter the building (except on parent meeting days)

The MDYC board is committed to making the decisions necessary to keep our chorus family safe, so these plans will likely change as the situation evolves. We appreciate the continued support from our members, their families, and our faith community.

We look forward to a year of spiritual, musical, and emotional growth. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with questions!