



# Member Handbook

2024-2025

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## **Our Mission**

The Ann Arbor Youth Chorale’s mission is to transform young lives and enhance the cultural life of Southeast Michigan through music education, performance of quality choral music, and collaboration at the highest level of artistic expression – all in a safe, inclusive environment. This Handbook details the program and policies that go hand-in-hand with our artistic goals.

## **Core Values**

### **Personal and Social Growth**

Foster leadership, self-worth, a cooperative spirit, commitment, and teamwork among young singers as they work together to achieve a common goal.

### **Musical Growth**

Nurture a sense of pride and professionalism through disciplined study, practice, and performance at the highest standard of excellence. Develop healthy vocal techniques while experiencing the joy of ensemble singing.

### **Diversity and Accessibility**

Make membership accessible to children and youth of all religious, racial, cultural, gender, and economic backgrounds.

### **Outreach**

Lead throughout the community and region in pursuit of excellence in music education and choral music performance.

## **Introduction**

The Ann Arbor Youth Chorale (AAYC) is a non-profit organization, composed of two treble (unchanged) voice choirs, representing different levels of vocal ability and experience.

Approximately 65 children and youth from Washtenaw and neighboring counties participate in one of two auditioned choirs: Descant Choir is our younger, entry level ensemble; Concert Choir is the older, more experienced group. Each is dedicated to excellent musicianship and age-appropriate development of musical and vocal skills. Choir members range in age from 9 to 18 years and represent diverse ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds.

Since 1987, AAYC’s purpose has been to teach and perform great choral literature from a variety of cultures, styles, and musical periods. The ensembles rehearse weekly throughout the school year, and present annual Winter and Spring concerts in Ann Arbor. The choirs often appear with distinguished performing arts organizations, and every two years Concert Choir travels regionally and/or internationally. In addition to musical training and performances of the highest caliber, AAYC members engage in enjoyable social activities within a friendly community of like-minded peers.

## Ann Arbor Youth Chorale History

In 1987, Ruth E. Datz, Richard Ingram, and Donald Williams founded the Ann Arbor Youth Chorale to provide a choral experience for area youth that complemented existing school vocal programs. In 1991, Shayla Hottinger Powell established the Descant Choir. Bonnie Kidd has directed the Concert Choir since 2006.

Through the years, AAYC has partnered with a long list of prominent performing arts organizations, including UMS, the Ann Arbor, Detroit, and Flint Symphony Orchestras; Arbor Opera Theater; Joyce DiDonato's EDEN Project; Canadian Children's Opera Chorus in Toronto; Evanston Children's Choir; International Advent Festival in Prague; Peter Sparling Dance Company; UMS Choral Union; and University of Michigan choirs, orchestras, and opera productions. As these collaborations attest, AAYC choirs are highly valued for their professionalism, careful preparation, and beautiful singing.

## Goals

The Ann Arbor Youth Chorale's goals are to:

- Help children and youth experience the challenge of personal achievement through musical training, performance, high expectations, critical thinking, professionalism, and teamwork - all within a safe and nurturing environment.
- Cultivate members' maturity by broadening their cultural, artistic, and social horizons through collaborative events with other organizations.
- Maintain membership that is open to children and youth of all backgrounds.
- Encourage social and personal growth, and promote members' sense of self-worth, accomplishment, and pride.
- Contribute to the cultural life of Ann Arbor, Southeast Michigan, and beyond.

## Program Instruction and Goals

AAYC consists of two separate ensembles: **Descant Choir** and **Concert Choir**. Each choir is dedicated to excellent musicianship and developing a wide range of skills at appropriate stages of singer's learning and vocal ability.

### Descant Choir

Descant Choir is our entry-level ensemble. It prepares younger singers for performances and for the requirements of our more advanced ensemble. Members must demonstrate a desire to sing and the ability to match pitch. They improve their unison singing and begin to sing in two- part harmony. Note reading, basic score reading, and rehearsal techniques are emphasized.

Descant Choir may travel locally to perform.

### Concert Choir

Concert Choir is our advanced ensemble. Members are vocally prepared for the rigors of this choir when they can sing comfortably in multiple parts and master basic solfège skills. Members are also able to sing at larger and more dissonant intervals. Emphasis is on sight-reading, part-singing, challenging repertoire, foreign languages, and advanced choral technique. Concert Choir often tours locally, and every two years travels nationally or internationally.

## Curriculum

Members learn musical concepts (melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre, dynamics, form, and style) and skills (singing, breath management, diction, music theory, sight-reading, and performance practice) through choral singing, listening, and analysis. They also gain an appreciation for great choral literature from a wide variety of periods, styles, languages, and traditions.

Singing is a powerful and personal means of musical expression and is the foundation of AAYC's curriculum. Through membership, we hope that our singers and their families will form a lifelong, positive relationship with music.

## Membership Expectations

A strong commitment from each member and their parent/legal guardian is required for the choirs to reach their highest level of excellence. Participation in AAYC is a **weekly** responsibility for 9 months, September through May. AAYC members are required to participate in their school vocal music (elementary) and choral music programs (middle and high school), as available. If a middle school does not allow a singer to sing in the choir and play in the orchestra or band, the singer should discuss this with their AAYC director so that all parties, including their school music directors, are aware. One of the founding principles of AAYC was to supplement school music programs, not replace them. Members should also demonstrate excellent citizenship and attendance at school. Minimally, they should be a dedicated participant in their school choir and are encouraged to enroll in instrumental music as well since these programs reinforce the concepts taught at AAYC.

## Auditions / Return Invitation

Auditions for AAYC are held in the spring (May and June) and later in August, as choir capacity permits. Renewal of membership each year is by invitation from the conductor to members who have successfully fulfilled AAYC membership requirements during the previous season. Promotion from Descant Choir to Concert Choir requires audition and subsequent invitation from the Concert Choir conductor.

## Mandatory Workshop Day

Workshop Day is our season's mandatory kickoff event. **Every member and at least one (1) parent/legal guardian must attend.**

## Tuition and Fees

### Non-refundable registration deposit / Registration forms

If a singer is invited to join AAYC or to return for the upcoming season, a **non-refundable** deposit is required at the time the registration materials are submitted to permanently secure registration in AAYC for the season. The deposit is applied toward tuition fees. Registration materials are emailed to the singer's family.

### Tuition and Installment Fees

Tuition is paid as either a one-time total payment or in three installments. The family's desired payment schedule is selected on the *Tuition Agreement Form*. The pay-in-full option, or first installment, is due by September 1st. An administrative fee per installment has been added. See payment schedule below.

**No refunds are issued after Workshop Day.** In the event of resignation, dismissal, or any other circumstance that prevents a member from completing the season, the member's parent/legal guardian is obligated to pay any unpaid tuition balances in full.

### Uniform Fees

Members of each choir are required to purchase their formal concert uniform which they will own. The cost is \$80. This is a two-piece uniform, and each member will have a choice as to which uniform each member would like to purchase. Each member will be measured on Workshop Day and the uniform will be ordered. If a returning choir member has a uniform that is in good condition and is still the correct size for the singer, they will be asked to bring it, and try it on for approval by the uniform chairperson on Workshop Day. If approved, the uniform fee of \$80 will be waived. If one of the uniform pieces does not fit, a replacement piece will be ordered for the singer at the cost of \$40.00. Families may donate their pre-owned formal concert uniform back to AAYC if it no longer fits the singer. This is a donation to AAYC and no monetary returns will be made. The uniform fee will be billed to your account when uniforms are delivered.

## **Long-Sleeve Red T-Shirt Fee**

Members are required to purchase a red AAYC long-sleeved casual shirt for each season. This shirt will serve as our non-formal uniform top and will be used for photos, trips, and other singing opportunities. Members will be measured on Workshop Day and the shirts will be ordered for them. The cost of this shirt is \$25. This shirt fee will be billed when the shirts are delivered.

## **Travel Fees**

Concert Choir travels national or internationally every two years. Fees for travel are in addition to tuition, uniform, and incidental fees. All members of the Concert Choir are expected to participate in the trip. All families with a member in this choir are expected to pay for the trip, or a portion thereof, of the associated travel costs for their member. AAYC ensures that each member of the ensemble can attend the trip regardless of their ability to pay. Financial need and scholarship awards will be determined prior to each trip.

## **Incidental Fees**

Uniform pieces that are lost, unreturned, or irreparably damaged are assessed the vendor's retail cost for replacement.

Music and/or folders that are lost, unreturned, or irreparably damaged are assessed a flat rate replacement fee.

Fees will be charged for returned checks. In such instances, AAYC reserves the right to request cashier's checks, money orders, or other forms of payment.

## Fee Schedule

MANDATORY FEES		
TUITION	DESCANT CHOIR \$750.00	NON-REFUNABLE REGISTRATION FEE \$200 <b>DUE JULY 15</b> PAYMENT 1 \$200 <b>DUE SEPT 1</b> PAYMENT 2 \$200 <b>DUE OCTOBER 1</b> PAYMENT 3 \$150 <b>DUE NOVEMBER 1</b>
	CONCERT CHOIR \$975.00	NON-REFUNABLE REGISTRATION FEE \$200 <b>DUE JULY 15</b> PAYMENT 1 \$275 <b>DUE SEPT 1</b> PAYMENT 2 \$250 <b>DUE OCTOBER 1</b> PAYMENT 3 \$200 <b>DUE NOVEMBER 1</b>
UNIFORM FEE	\$80.00	BILLED TO ENROLLSY ACCOUNT UPON DELIVERY
LONG SLEEVE SHIRT FEE	\$25.00	BILLED TO ENROLLSY ACCOUNT UPON DELIVERY
DAMAGED LOST OR UNRETURNED MUSIC	DAMAGED LOST OR UNRETURNED MUSIC	BILLED TO ENROLLSY ACCOUNT ON FILE
RETURNED CHECK FEE/ACH OVERDRAFT FEE	DETERMINED BY ENROLLSY	BILLED TO ENROLLSY ACCOUNT ON FILE
<p><i>*All registration, tuition, and other fees can be paid by credit card or ACH on our Enrollsy Registration Platform. Enrollment in the Enrollsy system must be completed with registration by <b>July 15th</b>. Installment Payments will be auto deducted from your payment method on the dates above.</i></p>		

## Scholarships

A limited amount of scholarship aid is available to AAYC members, based on demonstrated financial need. Completed scholarship applications and supporting documentation must be postmarked by the date specified on the online application form, which is July 15. Incomplete or late forms will not be considered. Scholarship funds are awarded in partial and full sums and granted at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee of AAYC's Board of Directors. Parents/legal guardians will be notified of their award status no later than July 31.



# Rehearsals and Performances

## Weekly Rehearsals

Rehearsals are held on Tuesdays at:

First Presbyterian Church, 1432 Washtenaw Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI, 48104.

- **Descant Choir** - Call: 5:50 p.m.; Rehearsal 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- **Concert Choir** - Call: 5:50 p.m.; Rehearsal 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Attendance is taken weekly. Arrival any time past 6:00 p.m. is considered tardy. Concert Choir takes a break during rehearsal.

## Drop Off and Pick Up

Drop off and Pick Up is coordinated on the south side of the church. Descant Choir Parents are asked to park, get out of their cars and check their student out with the coordinator.

## Season Calendar

Rehearsals and performances follow the *AAYC Season Calendar*. Dates and times on the calendar distributed on Workshop Day override previously published calendars. Any additions or revisions to the calendar are announced as early as possible to help families plan accordingly.

AAYC shall not be held responsible for failure or delay to perform all or any part of the season calendar due to natural disasters, war, or any other events constituting *force majeure*.

## Performances

AAYC minimally performs two (2) annual concerts: Winter (early December) and Spring (early May).

**Concerts and their associated dress rehearsals are mandatory for all members.**

Additional local or travel tour performances may be scheduled in each season and may include additional rehearsals. (See *Attendance Policy*)

## Rehearsal Conduct

- Members must be actively engaged and respectfully attentive to conductors and coordinators during all AAYC rehearsals, performances, and activities.
- Members must show respect for each other, for volunteers, and for the facilities.
- Cell phones or other noise-producing electronic devices must be turned off and stored out of sight for the duration of rehearsals and performances. No exceptions.

## Transportation

**Regular rehearsal and local performance transportation** is the responsibility of parents/legal guardians. Consult the carpool listing in the 'Member's only' section of the AAYC website to connect with other members in your neighborhood. Parents/legal guardians are expected to pick up their members at scheduled conclusion of rehearsals and performances. Supervision is not provided beyond the normal rehearsal/performance times.

**Out of town rehearsal and performance transportation** is provided by AAYC and may be in the form of bus, plane, or train. Parents/legal guardians will be notified of drop off and pick up times and locations. Members must ride with the group for both the outgoing and return trips to the rehearsal or performance venue. This is to ensure each individual member's safety, as well as to preserve and enhance the travel experience for all members.

## Attendance Policy

AAYC requires commitment to faithful, consistent, and punctual attendance. The attendance policy is rigorously enforced to help ensure rehearsals and performances are of the highest quality for all members.

- **Workshop Day:** Attendance at Workshop Day (annual kickoff) is **Required** for participation in the upcoming season.
- **Absences:**
  - Members may not be absent from performances or dress rehearsals.
  - Members may not be absent from more than two (2) rehearsals between September and May, as detailed on the AAYC Season Calendar. Members are expected to attend the full length of each rehearsal and performance.
  - The two Tuesday evening rehearsals preceding the Winter or Spring Concert are required — Noted on the Season Calendar.
  - Singers that must be absent due to a required school event, such as a curricular choir, band, or orchestra concert are expected to provide documentation such as a copy of the school-provided document or calendar as soon as it is announced/provided by their school.
  - If a member misses a dress rehearsal prior to a concert due to extreme illness or family emergency, the singer may sing in the performance only with the express permission of the choir conductor.
  - If a member misses a dress rehearsal prior to a concert for any reason other than a documented extreme illness or documented family emergency, the singer will not be permitted to sing in the performance.

- **Tardiness:** Members are expected to be on time to all rehearsals and performances.
  - Rehearsals: Members should arrive ten (10) minutes before rehearsal start for attendance and rehearsal preparation. Members not present at the designated rehearsal space and prepared to sing at 6:00 p.m. are considered tardy.
  - Performances: Members must be present and ready to warm up at the performance location by the arrival/call time indicated on the *AAYC Season Calendar*.
- **Notification:** The parent/legal guardian should email their choir coordinator and conductor at least 2 hours, and preferably 24 hours or more, prior to the start of rehearsal/performance with the reason for an absence or tardiness.
- **Implication:** A personal conference will be required between the conductor and parent/legal guardian for singers who establish an excessive or erratic attendance pattern or frequent tardiness. Potential implications for continued absence/tardiness issues include, but are not limited to, inability to perform in an upcoming concert/event, and/or dismissal from AAYC.

## Concert Attire

Being well groomed and having a wonderful uniform are key components of a professional ensemble.

Formal concert attire consists of the black top and black bottom purchased by families at the beginning of each season. Black socks are required for those singers who wear black pants and black tights, or hosiery is required for all skirts. Black flats or dress shoes are required. Hair should be groomed away from the face and can be fastened with black or hair-colored accessories. All uniform pieces should be wrinkle-free and clean. Small stud earrings and AAYC pins are the only permitted form of jewelry.

Informal Concert Attire consists of the AAYC red shirt, black pants, or bottoms that the director suggests, and socks and shoes. This uniform will be worn at the request of the director for more informal events.

Red Stoles: AAYC-embroidered stoles will be given to each singer prior to each concert. At the conclusion of each concert, the stoles will be collected and returned to safe storage for the next event. AAYC red stoles are the property of the Ann Arbor Youth Chorale and are not included in the uniform purchase.

## Personal Appearance

Hair should be groomed away from the face and can be fastened with black or natural hair color accessories. All uniform pieces should be unwrinkled and clean. Small stud earrings are the only permitted form of jewelry.

## Home Practice

Descant Choir members are expected to practice at home every day for a minimum of 15 minutes. Concert Choir members are expected to practice at home every day for a minimum of 30 minutes. Weekly practice assignments are clearly communicated during rehearsal and reiterated by email. Performances are given from memory (no music).

The AAYC website (<http://a2yc.org>) contains practice recordings of upcoming concert selections, which are essential to home study. Members and parents/legal guardians will receive instructions by email for logging into the 'Members only' section of the website to access practice recordings. Contact [aaycadmin@a2yc.org](mailto:aaycadmin@a2yc.org) with login questions.

## Music

### Music distribution

Music and folders are the property of AAYC and are on loan to members. It is the member's responsibility to care for them throughout the season.

### Music collection

Music and folders must be returned to AAYC at the end of each season, upon early resignation, or in the event of early dismissal from AAYC.

## Resignation

We hope that by providing clear, detailed information to prospective members, each family makes a well-informed decision when committing to a season with AAYC. If, however, a member is unable to fulfill those commitments due to unusual circumstances, such as family relocation, family crisis, or chronic illness, we ask that a parent/legal guardian contact the conductor *before* submitting a written letter of resignation. Resigning members must arrange with the Administrator to return all loaned materials, including music, music folder, and name badge.

# Communication

## Email

Email will be used to distribute AAYC's weekly InCHOIRer newsletter, deliver weekly rehearsal assignments, and send alerts of schedule changes, deadlines, special notices, and weather cancellations or other uncontrollable factors. Email correspondence is sent via compiled 'Descant-' or 'Concert-' specific email groups to de-identify individual email addresses of members or parents/legal guardians.

## Weekly InCHOIRer Newsletter

InCHOIRer is our primary communication for events, deadlines, and reminders for AAYC. InCHOIRer is distributed by email to AAYC members and parents/legal guardians weekly from September through May except during holidays. Careful review of InCHOIRer content is essential to a member's success. Please alert AAYC immediately if you or your singer are not receiving the weekly InCHOIRer.

## Website

The AAYC website (<http://a2yc.org>) contains news and information, schedule changes, severe weather cancellations, calendar of events, audition information and requests, tuition and scholarship information, and performance videos. Donations to AAYC can also be made via the website. Contact [aaycadmin@a2yc.org](mailto:aaycadmin@a2yc.org) with website questions.

## Handouts

Members are periodically given hard copy forms/handouts at rehearsal. Advanced notification of their distribution is provided in the InCHOIRer. Parents/legal guardians should routinely review these important materials.

## Social Media

**YouTube:** Visit (<http://youtube.com/user/a2youthchorale>) for AAYC concert performances.

**Facebook:** Search, "like," and share our Facebook page at 'The Ann Arbor Youth Chorale.' You'll find event photos (members de-identified) and updates about concerts, fundraisers, and other social events.

**WhatsApp:** Concert Choir uses this app for communication between the director and the singers. All singers will need to download this app, or have a parent or guardian be the go-between if a singer does not have a data-enabled mobile phone. It is a private group chat platform that only the director and invited members can use.

## Volunteering

AAYC depends on volunteers to support its annual events. Volunteer opportunities include a broad range of tasks; interests can be indicated on the *Volunteer* section of the *Registration Form*. Volunteers sign up will occur on Workshop Day and all parents/legal guardians are expected to volunteer throughout the season. Most volunteer opportunities occur at times when members are otherwise engaged in AAYC activities. Interest and commitment by parents/legal guardians inspire the singers.

## Staff

### **AAYC Administrator / Main office**

Our AAYC Administrator can be reached at [admin@a2yc.org](mailto:admin@a2yc.org) Emails received will be addressed within 24 hours.

The administrative office is located in the NEW Center, 1100 North Main St., Suite 111, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

### **Conductors**

Ms. Bonnie Kidd conducts the AAYC Concert Choir

Ms. Shayla Hottinger Powell conducts the AAYC Descant Choir

### **Accompanists**

Ms. Sarah Kim is the collaborative pianist for Concert Choir

is the collaborative pianist for Descant Choir

### **Artistic Advisor**

Dr. Richard Ingram is the Artistic Advisor for AAYC

## Board of Directors

AAYC's volunteer Board of Directors oversees the business and direction of the organization, meets monthly, and attends AAYC concerts and events. Parents/legal guardians are welcome to attend meetings and are encouraged to work on committees. Please consider serving on the Board of Directors. We look for creative, hardworking people with a love of vocal arts to help lead, promote, and fundraise for our organization. If interested in attending a meeting or in Board membership, please contact Lynda Berg at [lrwberg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lrwberg@sbcglobal.net) for more information

### 2024-2025 Board of Directors (as of September 2024)

#### **Directors**

Lynda Berg, President

Donna Smith, *Vice-President*

Sara Peth, *Secretary*

Bob Kidd, *Treasurer*

Marilyn Meeker, *Director of Development*

Hannah Berberoglu

Katie Ryan

#### **Voting Members**

Linda Klepaczyk, *AAYC Administrator*

Bonnie Kidd, *Conductor, Concert Choir*

Shayla Powell, *Conductor, Descant Choir*

## **Biographies - Artistic Advisor, Founders**

### **Ruth Datz - Founder**

Ruth E. Datz was a choral director for 45 years, serving Ann Arbor High School from 1968-1993. Miss Datz presented many clinics on choral music interpretation and development of basic choral sound. She served as District Manager for the Michigan Vocal Music Association, Music Department Chairman at Huron High School, and Director of the Junior Girls' Division at the Interlocked Arts Camp. She earned degrees from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and New York University, with advanced study at SUNY Potsdam and Penn State. Miss Datz was interested and involved in the "whole life" of her students, making music her way to encourage and enable them to better themselves.

### **Dr. Richard Ingram - Founder, Conductor Emeritus & Artistic Advisor**

Dr. Richard Ingram retired from public school teaching after an illustrious 42 year career. Since 1978, he was the choral director at Ann Arbor Huron High School and the Music Department Chairman. In addition, he has served as State President of the American Choral Directors Association - Michigan and the Michigan School Vocal Music Association. His academic training was at the University of Michigan (BME 1974; MME, Choral Conducting, 1975; DMA, Vocal Performance, 1985.)

Dr. Ingram has wide experience working with young voices, especially at the high school level. As one of AAYC's founding directors, and one of the AAYC Concert Choir directors for 19 years, his singers appeared throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. In 1997, he was named a United States Presidential Scholar Distinguished Teacher. His high school choirs have embarked on seven international tours. The Huron High School Music Department has received recognition by the Grammy Foundation as a Grammy Signature School five times.

### **Donald Williams - Founder**

Donald Williams was a life-long church musician. From 1963-1995, he served as an organist and choirmaster at Zion Lutheran Church, where he conducted six choirs, including four youth choirs. Dr. Williams also was the organist and choirmaster at Chelsea United Methodist Church from 1995-2005. In addition, he was on the organ faculty at Concordia University for many years. His college study included degrees from Peabody College in Nashville and the University of Michigan. Dr. Williams received the distinguished Palmer Christian Award in recognition of his outstanding accomplishments in teaching, performing, and choral conducting. He was especially dedicated to his work with children. His accepting, loving spirit embraced all who came to know him.



# Biographies - Music Conductors

## Bonnie Kidd, Concert Choir Conductor

Bonnie Kidd began her career with AAYC Concert Choir in 2006. In August 2021, she retired from a long career with the Ann Arbor Public Schools as the Director of Choirs at Ann Arbor Tappan Middle School, and Co-Director of Choirs at Ann Arbor Huron High School. In addition to AAYC, Ms. Kidd is the Sanctuary Choir Director at First Baptist Church, Ann Arbor. During her tenure with AAPS, her middle and high school choirs consistently received outstanding ratings at both district and state level choral events as well as winning national and international choral prizes.

AAYC Concert Choir has performed with major symphony orchestras, including the Detroit Symphony, Flint Symphony, University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra, and Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra. Concert Choir had the privilege of performing with the University of Michigan University Musical Society in their performance of Benjamin Britten's War Requiem as well as the U of M Opera Department's productions of La Boheme and Dead Man Walking.

AAYC Concert Choir has completed domestic and international tours and partnered with other youth choirs in Toronto, Chicago, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland. In March 2022, Concert Choir collaborated with the University Musical Society and Joyce DiDonato in performing with the EDEN Project. This work was performed again in Chicago alongside Ms. DiDonato. In the summer of 2023, a new EDEN anthem was composed with singer representatives from many countries. Five AAYC Concert Choir singers participated in this composition. The new EDEN anthem video "Endless Sky" was released worldwide in October 2023. In February 2024, Concert Choir completed another concert tour of Toronto and partnered with the Oakville Children's Choir, another EDEN choir. Together they performed the new anthem in concert together.

Ms. Kidd studied at the Juilliard School, received her Bachelor of Music degree in Vocal Performance from The Cleveland Institute of Music, and her Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Michigan. Ms. Kidd has been married to Robert for the past 40 years and they have one son, Sam, who sang with AAYC for five seasons. Sam is currently in his first season as an Adler Fellow Young Artist with the San Francisco Opera Company.

## Shayla Hottinger Powell, Descant Choir Conductor

At the invitation of Ann Arbor Youth Chorale founders, Ruth Datz, Richard Ingram and Donald Williams, Shayla Hottinger Powell developed a beginning level choir to meet the needs of the growing Ann Arbor Youth Chorale. For more than three decades, Descant Choir has been a vital component of the AAYC program providing music education and performing experience for our youngest singers. Under Ms. Powell's leadership, Descant Choir has performed with The Carolyn Mawby Chorale, Gemini, The University of Michigan Women's Glee Club, Measure for Measure, Many Voices One Song sounding light, Ann Arbor Civic Chorus, The Hill Singers at Glacier Hills, The Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra, and The Flint Symphony Orchestra, as well as with visiting children's choirs, including the Cincinnati Boychoir, Chicago Children's Neighborhood Choir and Indianapolis Children's Choirs under the direction of Ruth E. Dwyer. Descant Choir has twice appeared at the Michigan Music Educators Association Conference. Ms. Powell was inspired to study music education while studying with her beloved teacher, David Priestap at Swartz Creek High School. Ms. Powell holds a BME from UM-Flint and has completed coursework for a master's degree in Choral Music Education. Ms. Powell is Children's Choir director for the children at First Presbyterian Church Ann Arbor and the Choral Music Director for grades 5-12 for the Milan Area Schools. Her students participate in and consistently earn top performance ratings and are regularly selected to participate in state and all state level Honor Choirs through the Michigan School Vocal Music Association. Ms. Powell taught for UM-Flint Junior Academy of Music under the leadership of her conducting mentor, Carolyn Mawby, for many seasons. In 2024 she will return to the UM-Flint Summer Vocal Academy to conduct the grades 5-7 choir. Ms. Powell was nominated by her colleagues at Barnes Elementary School for the Newsweek-WDIV-TV Outstanding Teacher Award. Many of Ms. Powell's former students now work as composers, teachers, performers, and music business professionals. In addition to her work in music education, Ms. Powell is an active performer both as a singer and pianist, often performing with her husband Gregg, a professional bassist. Powell will appear with the Flint Symphony Orchestra in May 2025 as the soprano soloist for the Mozart Requiem.

**Ann Arbor Youth Chorale  
Business Office**

NEW Center  
1100 N. Main St, Suite #111 Ann  
Arbor, MI 48104  
(734) 996-4404

Email: [aaycadmin@a2yc.org](mailto:aaycadmin@a2yc.org)

Website:  
[www.a2yc.org](http://www.a2yc.org)