

Shari Moore - Fwd: Cultural Star Support -- Minnesota Boychoir

From: Patricia Lindgren
To: Lantry, Kathy; Moloney, Trudy; Moore, Shari
Date: 5/17/2012 2:53 PM
Subject: Fwd: Cultural Star Support -- Minnesota Boychoir
CC: Iverson, Alexandra

Shari,
Please add this into the record for the Cultural STAR agenda item for next week.
Pat

>>> Margaret Flanagan <flanagan@iphouse.com> 5/17/2012 1:59 PM >>>
Dear Mr. Thune:

The recent Cultural Star grant awardee list has come to my attention, and for the third time (since fall 2010) **the board has failed to grant any funds whatsoever to the Minnesota Boychoir.** It seems increasingly the case that Cultural Star program decisions have become dominated by an inner circle of those who serve their own personal/commercial interests; and I think it wholly inappropriate that the board includes members whose organizations are funded handsomely year after year.

My hope is that the board's decision is not final, and that with your positive intercession, the Minnesota Boychoir could indeed receive the (matching) funds they requested to help improve their systems infrastructure, aligning well with the objectives of the Cultural Star's Organizational Development Program.

Organizational Context:

The Minnesota Boychoir trains and nurtures boys and young men ages 7-18 to perform at an exceptional level of musical excellence through study and performance of traditional and contemporary choral works from around the world. A Saint Paul-based cultural treasure for FIFTY YEARS, they are headquartered in Landmark Center, reach 26,000 people annually through free community concerts, commissioned performances, education and outreach activities in area schools; and reach additional young audiences through their co-ed summer arts experience at Concordia College. They partner and collaborate with leading arts organizations including The Minnesota Orchestra, St Paul Chamber Orchestra, TigerLion Arts, U of M Symphony and Chorus, and Zenon Dance Company. They will perform free 50th Anniversary Commemorative Concerts at both Orchestra Hall and the State Capitol this summer, commemorating their long history as a top quality youth/arts organization serving thousands of boys and young men. Many former members (including current board members) cite their participation in the Minnesota Boychoir as having had a transformative effect on their later lives, helping them to focus during important formative years, affecting their subsequent life success.

The Minnesota Boychoir's FY12 organizational budget is \$346,281. Administrative expenses (i.e., payroll and benefits) are \$164,145 which supports 2.25 FTEs and staff salaries for the "Sing Minnesota" summer program. The attendance at Boychoir events last year was 26,000.

Cultural Star Program Recent History:

In 2011 the Minnesota Boychoir advanced a STAR application for a community celebration titled "Vive Italia" a collaboration with Maria Jette and Dan Chouinard, expected to reach 500 patrons of all ages for two concerts at the Ordway's McKnight Theater. This event was conceived as a public send-off to the Minnesota Boychoir's 2011 Italian tour, where they performed by prestigious invitation from the Vatican (at St Peter's Basilica), among other venues. The proposed collaboration, designed to showcase the vocal talents of the Boychoir, Ms. Jette and Dan Chouinard – (all of whom have a substantial local following, and have demonstrated their ability to bring audiences downtown) was turned down for funding by the Cultural Star Board. **The project was shelved, as a result.**

In August 2011 the Boychoir advanced an application for organizational development funds to purchase a customer relationship management tool to strengthen its operations and develop the technical infrastructure necessary to ensure its long term, successful growth. With 2.5 FTEs managing artistic outreach, marketing, donor relations, parent communications, etc. this would have greatly improved the Boychoir's ability to:

- Build and diversify audiences;
- Promote a broad range of cultural offerings;
- Produce a long-term impact; and
- Leverage additional financial support --

As this application was turned down, Amy Felice encouraged us to re-apply in spring 2011. Migrating the existing database to an integrated Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution would consolidate office systems and accounting applications, and improve all aspects of donor/member relationships and management communications. Installation of an integrated CRM system would be of enormous value during the 2012 50th Anniversary Season -- as try to attract new patrons audiences, and manage relationships that will help us grow responsibly in the months and years ahead. As you are aware, the Boychoir has again been turned down for funding

Mr. Thune, the Boychoir does not have the resources of the Ordway, the SPCO -- indeed its budget is a *fraction* of most of the Cultural Star Program's current awardees. The Minnesota Boychoir manages an art organization that reaches 26,000 people annually, with 2.5FTEs. Given this ratio, it is essential that the Boychoir's office systems are functional and effective, and serve the organization and its many different constituents in a cost effective way. For this reason, the Minnesota Boychoir seeks funds from Cultural Star to strengthen its operations and develop the technical infrastructure necessary to ensure its long term, successful growth: a central objective of the Cultural STAR organizational development program. **Please help the Cultural Star Board realize their positive decision to fund the Minnesota Boychoir would make an enormous difference -- and seriously impact the Choir's ability to grow responsibly in the future.**

Thank you.

Margaret Flanagan
Minnesota Boychoir Development

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