



**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**23-24**

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**TEACHING  
THE NEXT  
GENERATION  
OF CREATORS  
& CHAMPIONS  
OF THE ARTS**

# WHO WE ARE



youthsingers.org

## VALUES

YSC, the place where learning, safety, and a sense of value come together to help you grow, both personally and as a performer. Our commitment to respect and kindness sets the stage for a supportive community where we hold each other to high standards.

Every rehearsal, workshop, and event is a chance to dive into hard work and unwavering focus. At Youth Singers, our classroom dynamic is built on collaboration, goal achievement, and a healthy dose of fun along the way.

## OUR VISION

To be an innovative and inclusive performing arts company that fosters personal and artistic excellence, elevates Calgary's cultural fabric, and drives personal growth in youth.

## OUR MISSION

To develop lifelong skills in leadership, teamwork, perseverance, and self-confidence through high-quality performing arts instruction and experiences in a safe and supported environment, where young people are given the opportunity to grow, express themselves, and develop their potential through singing, dancing, acting, and performing.

**Excellence**  
**Inclusion**  
**Performing**  
**Community**  
**Collaboration**

## CORE VALUES

### Excellence

- We provide an environment where the freedom to strive, fail, try, and persist leads to the fulfillment of each singer's highest potential.
- We bring experienced and credentialed staff, a strong foundation of music education, and professional teaching standards to every classroom and program.

### Inclusion

- We provide a place that offers a path to unlimited opportunities for growth as a performer to children and youth with any skill or experience level in singing.
- We believe that every voice is worthy and valuable, and we strive to create and maintain a culture of belonging, safety, and acceptance.

### Performing

- We design performing opportunities that support children and youth to develop resilience, risk-taking, and confidence
- We value the process of creating, and prioritize the well-being and development of our learners as integral to this process.

### Community

- We engage performers, families, volunteers, and staff to support each other respectfully in a shared sense of purpose and joy.
- We build leaders and engaged citizens who contribute to our city and beyond.

### Collaboration

- By coming together and sharing our expertise with each other and the greater artistic community, we enrich our understanding, create as partners what we could not do alone, and expand the possibilities for artistic expression.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

The Youth Singers of Calgary Board of Directors is honored to be able to continue to work with such a dedicated and talented group of individuals at YSC all led by our CEO Megan Emmett. The 2023-2024 season was another successful year with over 500 singers benefiting from the high-quality performing arts instruction offered across all our divisions and programs. Congratulations to everyone for their successes in 2023-2024.

This past season, we made significant progress across several focus areas from our strategic plan. These areas include:

- Expanding our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility work to ensure that all performers feel at home within YSC.
- Launching the YSC Alumni Office to provide opportunities for YSC Alumni to reconnect with the organization and each other.
- Updating and refining our Human Resources Manual to ensure that all our fulltime and contract staff are being supported in the best ways possible.
- Transitioning our financial management system to a new structure and platform to improve reporting and lessen the overhead.



Progress in these areas would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts from several members of our Board together with our talented administrative staff. Thank you to everyone involved in these successes / achievements.

## Additional Thank-Yous

Thank you to Catherine Clynch and Patricia McGauley, whose terms have expired and will be leaving our Board. We thank them for their immense talents and dedication to YSC during their time on the Board.

Thank you to all the Board members for their ongoing dedication, insight and leadership that they provide to our organization.

Finally, a special thank you to the Office and Artistic Staff who continue to go above and beyond to deliver an amazing program for all our participants. Your tireless efforts and dedication are truly appreciated.

## ERNIE ABBOTT

CHAIR, YSC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chair

ERNIE ABBOTT

### Treasurer

TEO BLACKBURN

### Directors

EUGENE BEAULIEU  
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RENEE FAGNOU  
J.P. HERMANO

KARRI QUAN  
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MEGAN THOMSON  
PATRICIA MCGAULEY  
STEVEN WEIMER

### Vice Chair

LAURA HAMBLEY LOVETT

### Secretary

ROD GAROSSINO

### Past Chair

CATHERINE BARCLAY

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The 2023-2024 season was one of incredible accomplishments and continued growth at Youth Singers. The Youth Singers community of dedicated staff, artistic professionals, volunteers and performers worked together to embody our values and provide life-changing skill development and opportunities for children, youth, and young adults.

Thank you to all of the volunteers, without whom none of the magic happens. There are strong volunteer teams everywhere at Youth Singers, and we are privileged to have so much time and talent co-creating the next steps in our shared mission. The Alumni Committee is our newest volunteer department, working together to keep connections strong - and their karaoke nights are legendary!



Youth Singers administrative team is a small but mighty force; their passion and commitment cannot be overstated. This year was the first with new staff in several key roles, which brought a few challenges, new ways of thinking, and a lot of joy. The admin staff work behind the scenes, supporting all of our work, and keeping the lights on. Thank you, team!

The Board of Directors supported YSC tremendously through a transition year of new staff and new systems. Their work is also often unseen yet critical to a healthy organization. Thank you!

And finally, thanks to all of our supporters, sponsors, and donors for believing in our mission and in the Youth Singers artistic and administrative teams. With your support, we had a tremendous season, and we look forward to many more to come.

## MEGAN EMMETT

CEO - YOUTH SINGERS OF CALGARY

### MEMBERSHIP STATS

Division	Members	Returning Members
KIDS & MUSIC	72	34
KIDAZZLE	22	17
KIDZXPRESS	62	50
JUNIOR HI	52	50
SENIOR HI	28	24
ACT3	22	21
STAR	40	37
ONCUE/SHINE	32	32
ADULT DIVISIONS (SECOND CHANTS/ENCORE/PHYSICIANS CHOIR)	40/35/16	35/33/15
SHOWBIZ KIDZ (Summer Camps)	99	34
<b>Total Members</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>382</b>

# YSC STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITMENTS



## Our People

YSC aims to value and maximize the skills of its board, staff, and volunteers. Key actions include formalizing HR policies, creating clear job descriptions, developing a volunteer engagement framework, implementing succession planning, and focusing on professional and personal development.

## Our Programs

With the challenges of reduced registrations and diversity gaps, YSC plans to enhance program relevancy and reach. Initiatives include developing an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) plan, leveraging technology, creating inter-divisional learning opportunities, expanding the Residency Program, and exploring strategic partnerships.

## Our Finances

To support program growth and facility maintenance, YSC focuses on diversifying revenue streams. This includes developing a comprehensive fund development program, engaging alumni in philanthropy, maximizing facility usage for revenue generation, and executing a long-term financial plan.

## Our Profile

YSC aims to enhance its community profile and position itself as a leader in the choral industry. This involves developing a communications plan, establishing consistent messaging, increasing public awareness of its facilities, and strengthening community partnerships.

## Our Operations

As YSC evolves, it will strengthen its operational foundation. Plans include adopting a governance model, developing a building plan for the APAC, implementing a program operations management system, conducting risk assessments, and enhancing IT systems.

# MESSAGE FROM FOUNDER & CDO

Much of my effort and time is spent on stewardship with past, current, and prospective donors and sponsors. It was a challenging but successful year in Fund Development. We received a grant that enabled us to focus on our alumni development goals.



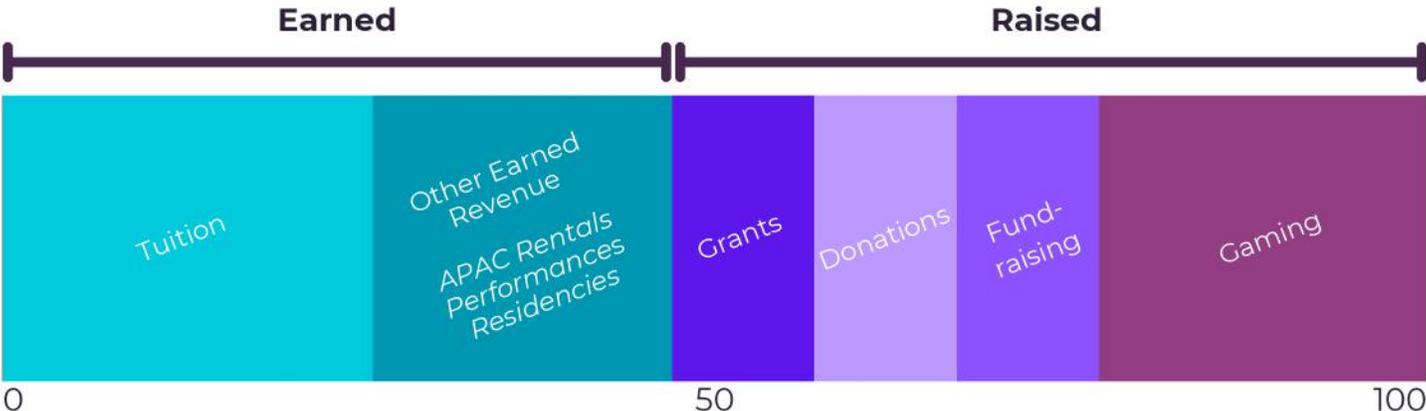
We established a volunteer alumni committee to continue building our YSC alumni opportunities and activities. Grantsmanship and grant reporting continued successfully with the Government and the Foundations.

Our Fund Development committee met regularly, and we added several YSC parents to the team under the leadership of Dr Laura Hambley. We focussed on revenue generation for the HEARTS OUT Gala and were thrilled with the final amount raised. The committee also assisted in several other fund-generation activities. The Gala continues to give us a vehicle to contact corporations for financial assistance. Individuals and businesses give generously to our outstanding auction. We are back to pre-pandemic levels of funding in most areas.

Our Annual Giving Campaign, launched in December with Giving Tuesday, allowed all of you to support YSC, an amazing charity that focuses on youth but also serves all ages and abilities. Gaming, both Bingos and a Casino, raised substantial funds for YSC this season. None of the above much-needed revenue could have been raised without YSC's host of committed volunteers, who made it all happen with the assistance of professional staff at the office. Several smaller fundraisers also helped us reach our total revenue goals for the season.

We have more work to do next year to build our raffle revenue. Imagine we raised over \$800,000 (not including earned revenue from tuition, rentals, and performances). THANK YOU TO EVERY ONE OF YOU!! We have balanced our books once again. Our continued challenge is to support capital costs. We have \$1.2 Million to complete paying for our building. Once that has occurred, YSC can use the current interest payments to operate our fantastic programs. A little detour for capital is our current need for a new roof, which must occur during this season. All detailed financial information is included in our '23-24 Financial Statements.

## SHIRLEY PENNER FOUNDER & CDO



# SEASON SNAPSHOTS



Launched Calgary Carolers Enterprise

**99**  
registered singers in SHOWBIZ KIDZ summer camps, including 16 singers in the half day camp for K - Grade 2



**SENIOR HI & ACT3 Tour To California**

Awards:

- Show Choir - Superior Rating
- Concert Choir - Superior Rating
- Outstanding High School Soloist - Nate Bercsenyi
- Esprit de Corps Award (for overall positive spirit, showmanship, and attitude)



JUNIOR HI goes on a mini tour to Edmonton for the Korora Festival




Recorded Music Videos of ACT3's "Paint it Black" and SENIOR HI's "Green"

YSC teamed up with Radio Station C97.7 for the Pride Parade



140

Volunteers helped paint the beautiful Mural on the side of APAC

10 Hearts hidden within the design. Can you find them?



15

Original arrangements

Alumni Engagement Committee Organized "HUB at the Jubilee" With YSC Alumni and Guests. Directed by Malcolm Edwards



133

Performances Across All Ages, Featuring Divisional Shows, Summer Gigs, Festivals, School Tours, Downtown Live, & More!

Residencies in 6 schools across 9 weeks, with 7 residency staff members, and reaching almost 3000 students.



Launched "Raise The Roof" Crowdfunding Campaign with the Government of Alberta



**KIDZXPRESS School Tours**  
6 Schools. 2000+ kids entertained by their peers!



# ATCO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE (APAC)

## APAC Welcomes New and Returning Renters

The 2023-2024 season was an exciting one for APAC, with fifteen new organizations renting our facility. These included:

- Fencing competitions
- Spelling bees
- Performing arts groups
- Immigrant Association
- Choral Associations

Several long-term performing groups continued to use APAC as their rehearsal space, and the building remained busy every weekend with rentals or division workshops. We also created a new practice room with a piano to support one-on-one lessons, expanding our offerings.



## Building Community Through Rentals

APAC's studios, practice rooms, and board rooms have not only generated income but have also created a strong sense of community. Calgary's arts organizations often struggle to find affordable, high-quality spaces for their work. APAC offers a professional environment where:

- Creativity can flourish
- Connections are made
- The arts community can thrive

In a city where renting community centers or church basements is often the norm, APAC provides a vital space for the performing arts to grow and develop.

## Office Space Renovations

Thanks to a generous donation of office furniture from Office Concepts, APAC received a much-needed update. Staff and volunteers worked hard, painting and preparing the space for the arrival of new desks, chairs, and supplies. This renovation helped refresh the workspace for the season ahead.

## Crowdfunding Success for “Raise the Roof” Campaign

In partnership with the Government of Alberta, we launched a successful crowdfunding campaign to repair leaks in the APAC roof. Thanks to overwhelming community support, we reached our matching fund goal and continue to seek additional donations to complete all necessary repairs.

Media coverage from CTV and CityTV helped highlight how important APAC is to Calgary's performing arts community, and we were thrilled by the outpouring of support.



# MESSAGE FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## A Miraculous Year

Thanks to our amazing Artistic Team, our incredible volunteers and our very talented singers, we experienced a very successful year. As a creative team, it was a fun and memorable journey for us to plan a parade and re-envision our Prisma show.

Our first semester focused on the planning, preparation and performance of our December mainstage show, "A Miracle on Mainstreet". We loved incorporating all of the aspects of a parade - the route, the dancers, the music and the characters. This theme inspired our music, choreography and wardrobe. Our actors tied it all up with a bow.

Our spring season's goal was to revisit Prisma, the show that was never performed in 2020. Very quickly in the process, we realized that the show we created was no longer relevant to our youth. After revisiting the music and the theme it very quickly became 'Primsa NOW- Light Up The World.' It became a relevant, inspiring original production that had a huge impact on our performers.

We continue to create original arrangements, music, choreography, themes and scripts in order to inspire the creativity of our young artists. The production team is committed to support our Artistic team in providing our singers with relevant, meaningful and essential artistic experiences within our Youth Singer yearly program.



**TRICIA PENNER**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



# HEARTS OUT GALA - APRIL 19TH, 2024

This year's HEARTS OUT Gala, held on April 19th, 2024 at the Westin Hotel, was a resounding success. The ballroom was buzzing with energy as 34 full tables of Youth Singers supporters and sponsors gathered for an evening of fun, fundraising, and community spirit.

## Engaging Hosts and Entertainment

The event was hosted by the lively duo of Ken Lima-Coelho and Donovan Jones, who kept the audience laughing and fully immersed throughout the night. Guests participated enthusiastically in both the silent auction and the exciting live auction, helping us raise critical funds for our programs.



YSC Founder; Shirley Penner.  
Minister of Culture and Status of Women;  
Tanya Fir.  
Ward 7 Councillor Gian-Carlo Carra.  
YSC CEO; Megan Emmett

## Special Guest Appearance

We were honored to welcome Minister of Culture and Status of Women, Tanya Fir, who delivered an inspiring speech on the importance of the arts in shaping the future of Albertans and enriching our communities.

## A Heartwarming Performance

A highlight of the evening was a special performance from Youth Singers' STAR division, a group dedicated to individuals with cognitive delays. Directed by Jen and Dave Morton, the STAR performers wowed the audience with their music and movement, leaving everyone smiling and applauding their incredible efforts.

## A Night to Remember

As the night came to a close, guests danced the night away and went home with fabulous prizes and goodie bags filled with sweet treats and surprises. We are thrilled to announce that we raised over \$120,000 this year and are already looking forward to an even bigger, better HEARTS OUT Gala in 2025.



# THE HEART OF YSC: OUR NEW MURAL

Thanks to a Public Art Micro Grant from Calgary Arts Development, Youth Singers of Calgary is proud to share a vibrant new mural at the ATCO Performing Arts Centre. Designed by artist Scott Clark, and brought to life by 140 volunteers over 200+ hours, the mural celebrates the spirit of YSC and adds colour to our Hastings Crescent neighborhood.



**Scott Clark, Mural Lead Artist**

## Scott's Youth Singer Inspired Vision

Inspired by ideas from YSC members, Scott's design reflects themes of Home, Acceptance, Community, Safety, and Love. The mural captures the joy of making music and the magic of voices singing together.

Volunteers were encouraged to let the design unfold naturally, making it truly a collective creation.



## The Meaning Behind the Art

"I wanted the overall image to evoke the exuberance and energy that fills this building," says Clark. On the left side, he "peeled away" the outer layer of the wall to create the illusion of peering inside, revealing musical elements and motifs. As the design evolves into abstraction, whimsical characters perform with love and joy, symbolizing the strength of the YSC community.

- Butterflies symbolize transformation, confidence, and growth.
- A rainbow-winged bird represents the harmony of a "community of voices."
- A gift box reminds us of the friendships and rewards of being present and involved.





## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**CEO**  
MEGAN EMMETT

**Founder & CDO**  
SHIRLEY PENNER

**Operations & Facility**  
JOCELYN SMITH  
CAROLE TSANG  
BRYAN CLARKE\*  
KEITH HEILMAN\*

**Finance Administration**  
CHRIS HENDERSON-MCDADE

**Marketing & Communications**  
KAELA CARON  
CHRIS THOMPSON\*

**Production & Technical**  
BRIANNA RUDOLFSSEN  
COLIN LOWE  
DESIRI JONES\*

**Fund Development & Sponsorship**  
JANICE SCHNEIDER\*  
BETH MACLEAN\*

**Alumni Engagement**  
LOIS MAFRICA\*  
JOCELYN JONES\*

\*PART TIME

## ARTISTIC STAFF

**Artistic Director**  
TRICIA PENNER

**Principal Director**  
KATHRYN PARROTTA

**Principal Choreographer**  
DONALD JONES

**CREATIVE TEAM**  
CHRIS THOMPSON  
JOCELYN JONES

**Lead Creator**  
KATHERINE BURROWES, ILLFX

**Theatre Arts Director**  
CONRAD BELAU

**Choral & Vocal Directors**  
JASON ERHARDT  
DEANNA HENDERSON MCDADE  
MALCOLM EDWARDS  
DAVE MORTON  
JUDIT SZANTO  
KATHEY SEIBEL  
DEAN LAUDERDALE  
JEN MORTON  
MEGAN EMMETT

**Resident Choreographers**  
JESSICA ECKSTADT  
LISA RYAN  
LAUREN THOMPSON  
KIRSTEN WILLIAMS  
JULIE THIESSEN  
ALICIA MOLINSKI

**Assistant Directors**  
MADISON MCNEES  
LLOYD ANDERSON

**Assistant Choreographers & Coaches**  
SERENA MAZIL  
JENHENE MORGAN  
NATHAN SNYDERS-BLOK  
DESIRI JONES

**Accompanists**  
JULIANNA JORGE  
BRENT KRAWCHUK

**STAR Assistants**  
JESSE DEHAAN  
PAULA BRASH

**Arrangers and Sequencers**  
KRISTIAN ALEXANDROV  
JOE SLABE  
REID MCLEAN WIEST

**Sound Designer and Technical Director**  
JOHN HILDEBRAND

**Lighting Designer**  
KRIS MISH

## VOLUNTEER STAFF MANAGEMENT TEAM

### Divisional Council Leadership

**New Family Liaison:** HEATHER LAUBENSTEIN  
**KIDZXPRESS Acting President:** KIM WATKINSON  
**KIDZXPRESS Volunteer Coordinator:** KIM WATKINSON  
**JUNIOR HI President:** TAMARA SAMPSON  
**JUNIOR HI Volunteer Coordinator:** LINDA PETERS  
**SENIOR HI President:** KARA JOHNSON  
**SENIOR HI Volunteer Coordinator:** KIM BERCYNSKI  
**ACT3 President:** DANICA STROCEN  
**SECOND CHANTS President:** BETTY POWERS  
**ENCORE President:** JENN GORDON

### Heritage & Archives

**Heritage & Archives Manager:** AICEE HAGEL

### Gaming

**Bingo Captain (Grey Eagle):** MARGE RUSNAK  
**Bingo Co-Captain (Bingo Barn):** TRACEY ABBOTT  
**Casino Chair:** JENNIFER PETERS  
**Raffle Chair:** MEGAN THOMSON

### Production

**Hospitality Manager:** TAI HOANG  
**Music Library Manager:** JAN RUSNAK  
**Set Design Manager:** HEATH KAI  
**Wardrobe Manager:** ALANA LUCIER  
**Props Co-Managers:** KRISTIN MILLER, GILLIAN WEBBER  
**Wardrobe Support:** VAUGHAN LILICO  
**Logistics Manager:** JOHN WANG  
**Facility and Shop Support:** LORNE LILICO

### Fundraising & Special Events

**Hearts Out Honourary Chair / Sponsorship & Donation Chair:** LAURA HAMBLEY LOVETT  
**Hearts Out Honourary Chair:** SCOTT LOVETT  
**Gala Event Planning Chair:** LISA GRAY  
**Auction & Prizes Chair:** STACEY SCHAUB-SZABO  
**Volunteer Chair:** DANICA STROCEN  
**Marketing Chair:** KENDRA NEMETH  
**PR and Sponsorship Support:** SIERRA BEAULIEU

### Board of Directors Representative

**BOD Representative:** EUGENE BEAULIEU



# THANK YOU TO OUR MAJOR SUPPORTERS



**ATCO**



## SPONSORS - \$10,000+

Anonymous  
Alberta Foundation for the Arts  
ATCO  
Baytex Energy  
Calgary Arts Development  
The Calgary Foundation  
CH Financial  
Government of Alberta, Community Facility Enhancement Program  
Kinsmen Club of Stampede City  
McDaniel & Associates  
Prosser Charitable Foundation  
Rogers Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink  
Shirley Penner & Don McLean  
Spruce Meadows  
Werklund Foundation