

“FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE”

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### **Representative Craig Lipscomb creates the region's first Gadsden Youth Chorus**

Monday, August 9, 2021, Representative Craig Lipscomb of Alabama House District 30 announces his creation of the inaugural season of the Gadsden Youth Chorus.

Music ignites all areas of child development and skills for school readiness, including intellectual, social, emotional, motor, language and overall literacy. It helps the body and mind work together. When we were young, we were taught music at church in our children and youth choirs, but in this day and age, those have nearly disappeared.

Our community has always been known for producing musical talent. Much of this talent was developed in church and schools but budget constraints and programmatic and stylistic changes have prevented students from having all of the opportunity that they may have once had.

Instrumentalists have band programs within the school systems with fabulous instructors who provide abounding educational and performance opportunity to those who want to learn an instrument. Likewise, some schools offer choral and choir programs to students who's schedules or musical involvement does not necessarily revolve around an instrument. However, while instrumentalists have outstanding opportunity to be involved in extraordinary organizations such as the Etowah Youth Orchestras, there is not a similar opportunity for vocalists.

It is my desire to create, for those students who enjoy singing and want to be part of a more challenging, unique and rewarding music program, a next-level opportunity very similar to the Etowah Youth Orchestras but specifically for vocalists. Therefore, I am announcing the formation of the new Gadsden Youth Chorus.

My hope is that this becomes a place where likeminded students can gather together to share a common love of music and have the ability to showcase their singing talent to our community and the world at large. This will be a music program that is multi-faceted. All genres of music will be studied and performed. Equal time will be focused on classical music and modern music alike. If it's not fun, then the students will not be engaged.

This will become a musical outlet for those who might otherwise not consider themselves musical or not currently be involved in a music program. Perhaps a student athlete who has a conflict with school-based music education can get plugged in. This should be a venue for every student who enjoys singing to get involved with. Some may consider this a female oriented program, but I assure you that young men will be needed in equal part to young women.

I am creating this Youth Chorus for the sake of our children and our music community. While it may have its beginnings with Middle and High School students, my hope is that it grows in such a manner to involve students of all ages. Then one day, these students will graduate and continue their studies in college and perhaps professionally.

The name Gadsden Youth Chorus is truly just a temporary name. This is a program not just for Etowah County but all surrounding counties in our region. This entity is going to be a part of the extensive program of the Gadsden Cultural Arts Foundation and may soon be renamed and or rebranded to reflect its regional intent.

This Youth Chorus will begin to conduct "Interest Meetings" with 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who are interested in the program at the end of August. Those dates are August 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm and August 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am at the Mary G. Hardin – Center for Cultural Arts. The kick-off rehearsal is tentatively scheduled for September 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

Gina Garmon, graduate of Jacksonville State University and choir instructor at Gadsden City Schools has been selected as the Director of the Youth Chorus. She and the Center for Cultural Arts will begin contacting schools in the region immediately to begin the process of recruiting for this first season. While students should receive information from their schools, we encourage everyone to contact the Center for Cultural Arts for critical information and to share this information with their friends and family.

Music education is an important aspect of providing children with a well-rounded education. When allowed to work in harmony with other subjects and areas of study, music helps children grow in self-esteem, build essential skills and prepare for exceptional futures. So, effective this coming school year, I introduce to you the inaugural season of the Gadsden Youth Chorus.

Representative Craig Lipscomb

Alabama House District 30

Attached: photo

