In a world that has so much turbulence and so much trouble right now, if everyone just sang, the world would be a beautiful place.

— Matthew Gifford, Bass, Musical Island Boys Quartet

"THE SOCIETY ASPIRES TO PRESERVE FOR ITS MEMBERS AND FOR ALL FUTURE GENERATIONS OF PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS THE SACRED RIGHT OF MEN TO SEEK HAVEN FROM THE BURDEN OF THEIR DAILY CARES THROUGH INDULGENCE IN OLD-FASHIONED VOCAL QUARTET HARMONY."

— BHS Code of Ethics, 1948

With 22,000 members, the Barbershop Harmony Society is a major arts organization that has a $30 million annual impact across all business units. We leave a far larger impact throughout North America, where nearly 800 chapters and thousands of quartets freely give to their communities, and are often cherished as valuable community assets.

We are far more than hobbyists. We are working with music educators and arts advocates to change lives through singing.

So many of the world’s social problems are rare among the world’s singers. Ensemble singing connects us with others and with our own emotions. Singing makes us better parents, better employees and better friends. Better citizens.

Entire communities are transitioning from being singers to becoming mere spectators. This is more than a sad scene. It’s a true crisis.
LETTER FROM THE CEO ...

In every direction you look, you see proof that NOW is the best time to be associated with the Barbershop Harmony Society. Why now? The world is taking notice and yearning to partner with organizations that have the knowledge and capacity to create authentic experiences and harmony. Consider:

- People are crazy about a cappella singing right now, and the attraction is still growing.
- Youth interest in singing is surging, and educators are discovering our approaches spark delight in their students.
- Barbershop is getting more meaningful media coverage than ever before.
- The Barbershop Harmony Society is financially stable, with strong cash reserves that allow us to invest even more to support the growth of our mission.

We are reaching a tipping point. This is the moment when we are ready to leverage our rich musical history, geographic reach, organizational infrastructure, and dedicated corps of passionate artists to make an impact that was previously the stuff of dreams. We are a group of intergenerational singers who demonstrate every day how singing together in harmony transcends background, race, and socio-economic status. We do this FOR THE JOY that comes from singing. FOR THE JOY that comes from genuine friendships. FOR THE JOY that comes from making a difference in people’s lives.

And … all of these joys are worth preserving and encouraging for future generations.

Let’s answer the call and make a difference!

---

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT ...

2015 was a year in which the impact of the Barbershop Harmony Society reached into the broader music world. We continued to give every member a renewed sense of community. We encouraged everyone to generate opportunities to (re)engage new appreciative audience members and potential singers. Each of our geographically diverse chapters and choruses can find “Gold Medal” occasions to change lives through singing.

Our many volunteers are the key to local engagement and success, right in our own back yards! Continue to challenge each chapter and chorus member to reach out with the JOY of singing.

The experiences that each of us build, share, and enjoy can be life-fulfilling dreams. Giving away our harmonies and helping others improve their own talents, though singing and leadership, is the true basis the mission of our Society. SHARE YOUR MUSIC and make a difference where you live.

How very fortunate each of us is to have this hobby in our lives. Through the joys of singing we are able to reach new friends and build our memories through song! That is a great combination of things to “share freely” as we reflect on the Society’s 2015 year.
District leaders from throughout the United States and Canada gather at a Leadership Forum event. Society members are famously noted for a universal sense of fraternity that transcends titles, geography, age, social class, race, tenure, or skill level.

Barbershop harmony has persisted in part due to a strong organizational backbone. The Society provides essential services to committed artists, including mundane but essential services like insurance, group non-profit exemption for chapters, copyright and show clearance services, convention planning services and tools, communication and marketing resources, and leadership training that eliminates barriers to successful community impact.

Through the medium of Barbershop harmony, we establish lifelong singing as a core community asset.

From opposite ends of Idaho, the Rexburg and Boise chapters alone annually give a combined 1,500 young singers one of the highlights of their school careers—and at no cost to them or their schools. High school and university choral teachers buzz with inspiration while watching their singers’ voices and spirits soar in four-part harmony under the instruction of high-end quartets and clinicians. Young singers float home, high on the ovations they earned alongside Barbershoppers who are living proof that the joy of singing can last a lifetime. Similar events, large and small, take place across North America throughout the year.

Through the medium of Barbershop harmony, we maintain and expand supportive services for a global community of artists.
Through the medium of Barbershop harmony, we elevate artistic and leadership skills through education and best practices.

From free chapter-sponsored community “Learn to Sing” programs, to district schools, to our week-long Harmony University, the pool of knowledge we’ve acquired over the past 78 years is wide and deep: “I’VE BEEN A CHORAL CONDUCTOR FOR 30 YEARS, AND I HAVE LEARNED THINGS THIS WEEK THAT HAVE ESCAPED THE BEST OF THE BEST MUSIC SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTRY. I’M TAKING BACK THINGS THAT WILL MAKE MY CHOIRS JUMP LIGHT YEARS!”

– Dr. Mark Austin

More than a fifth of the Society’s 22,000 members support Harmony Foundation International and Sing Canada Harmony, the two major BHS-affiliated charities dedicated to changing the world by promoting singing in all its forms. As the world’s largest distributor of barbershop music, our new partnership with the world’s largest sheet music distributor (Hal Leonard) is bringing our music to new audiences and helping us sustain and grow our operations.

On top of their singing outreach efforts and charitable contributions, many chapters contribute to local hospitals, food banks, senior centers, school music programs, and other community causes.

We scale our impact by growing social enterprises, individual philanthropy, and institutional philanthropy.
In New Orleans, where Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton and other future jazz legends helped establish the barbershop sound a century ago, Dr. David Wright delivered a major presentation on “The African-American Roots of Barbershop Harmony.” Lynn Abbott became an Honorary Lifetime Member to honor his definitive research on the topic. Throughout the Midwest Convention, top senior quartet competitors and international medalists mixed with hundreds of young barbershop singers who performed in the Youth Chorus Festival. Tunes among songs were written and performed by Dr. Kirby Shaw, co-founder of the Barbershop Harmony Society.

**January**

**GOLD MEDAL MOMENTS**

Leaders of the Society’s 17 districts were asked to provide some of their best moments of 2015. Here are a select few.

**JOHNNY APPLESEED:** Five non-competing choruses in the Maloney Division started learning common songs and performed them at each of their shows as a large chorus.

**CENTRAL STATES:** After a long hiatus, the district restored the Harmony Education Program. At least 120 men, women and young adult singers attended.

**LAND O’ LAKES:** Six Youth Harmony festivals hosted more than 300 youth. 200 men attended their Leadership Academy.

**FEBRUARY**

Hundreds of Singing Valentines quartets spread out across North America in a decades-old tradition that started out as an effective chapter fundraiser, but has since become much more. Never failing to garner extensive local media coverage, these quartets become the highlight of the day for both the recipients and the thousands of onlookers who are eager to learn how barbershop harmony—and Barbershop Singing Valentines—can help them gain more male singers and strengthen their choral programs.

**MARCH**

At the national convention for the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), quartet performances and performances by 2007 International champion quartet Crossroads and Grammy Award-winning gospel quartet The Fairfield Four highlighted a busy outreach season. In several of the largest music educator gatherings, it was striking to see a sea of barbershop harmony music readings. A constant flow of traffic to Society booths resulted in thousands of cases of free sheet music being distributed to music educators who are eager to learn barbershop harmony—and Barbershop Singing Valentines—can help them gain more male singers and strengthen their choral programs.

**JUNE**

**FUNDING**

With the coming of the 20th anniversary of the Youth Chorus Festival, the Society opened up its 501(c)(3) organization to allow its members to apply for grants through the Harmony Foundation. Among those able to access grant monies, the Society was able to support 540 projects and activities for 2015. Over $80,000 in grant money was awarded by the Society for the Harmony Foundation. The majority of these funds were used for educational offerings, with the remainder for grants for grants for outreach, music, furthering the development of the Harmony Foundation, and other initiatives.

**APRIL**

The Society’s rapidly maturing Outreach efforts attracted record applications from Society-affiliated groups who were looking to build their awareness of the intrinsic value of singing and provide inclusive opportunities to participate in the joy of harmony. A new professional-standard application and renewal process, together with grant-writing specific educational resources, ensured that Society groups would have greater success in applying for grants through local funding sources as well.

**JULY**

**97 GRANT APPLICATIONS TOTALING $324,000 AWARDED BY THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY.**

**JULY**

The second largest convention season of the year wrapped up for most of the Society’s 17 districts and for many of the smaller district divisions. Thousands of choruses and quartet competitors, in at least 20 cities, had contingents from all around. In conclusion, quartet and quartet competitors received more than scores to track their musical progress—they receive valuable evaluations and coaching to ensure continued artistic growth.

**DECEMBER (end of year summary)**

The Society’s rapidly maturing Outreach efforts attracted record applications from Society-affiliated groups who were looking to build their awareness of the intrinsic value of singing and provide inclusive opportunities to participate in the joy of harmony. A new professional-standard application and renewal process, together with grant-writing specific educational resources, ensured that Society groups would have greater success in applying for grants through local funding sources as well.
Without further ado, as part of a larger long-term strategy, the Society dropped the requirement that members must belong to a Society chapter and district. By the end of the year, more than 50 new members signed up to the professional new membership part of barbershop.org and many went on to join Society chapters. This was the first small step among many to come that recognizes the realities of an ever-changing consumer landscape. Today’s singers and fans embrace the Society through a variety of new channels, and increasingly demand means and terms that meet their individual needs.

SEPTMBER

NOVEMBER

While extensive member surveys showed general satisfaction with the direction of the Society, polling also revealed that our small, aging, or isolated chapters need more attention and resources. The Healthy Chapter Initiative, underwritten by a major Harmony Foundation grant, is an effort led by a dedicated full-time staff member and a committee of experienced Society leaders. It will transform the ways we define and deliver chapter leadership education, with efforts to connect chapters with the resources that will help them thrive.

In the busiest season of the year for chapters and quartets, Barbershoppers filled hundreds of theaters for holiday performances, then took their songs on the road to under-served areas of their communities. Many chapters also attended a large portion of their concert proceeds to local food banks, children’s hospitals, and other charities.

DECEMBER (end of year summary)

A new strategy was implemented to make all International Convention performances through the Society’s YouTube channel. (Previous concert arrangements only allowed a limited number of performances to be posted.) This was phase one of a larger strategy to get more of our new and archived content digitized and released on YouTube sooner. The largest Harmony University ever ends on August 1 with 30 public performances. Quartets and choirs that had rehearsed throughout the week spread across Nashville in what the mayor declared “Barbershop A Capella Day.”

HARMONY UNIVERSITY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

GOLD MEDAL MOMENT

EVERGREEN

HARMONY COLLEGE NORTHWEST

400 ATTENDEES

WITH

67 FACULTY

RATED, DIVERSE HCNW EVER

WITH

50 CLASSES

677 HOUSTON SPEED CENTER (SWD)

500 FACULTY

RATED

HARMONY UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST

500 ATTENDEES

WITH

100 CLASSES

IN SCHOLARSHIP

$80,000

SOUTH TEXAS ALAMO REGIONAL (SWD)

HARMONY UNIVERSITY SOUTHWEST

400 ATTENDEES

WITH

100 CLASSES

OVER 50% GRANT AWARD GROWTH

HU $540,000

OCTOBER

PAST TWO YEARS

0% DUES INCREASE

22,788 EMAIL INQUIRIES ANSWERED BY STAFF (INCLUDING ALL OTHER SOCIETY STAFF EMAIL COMMUNICATION)

44,916 CUSTOMER SERVICE PHONE CALLS (EXCLUDING ALL OTHER SOCIETY"

HU 687,000

DEC 31)

2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

HARMONY UNIVERSITY 2015

$1,450,000 MEMBERS DISCOUNT SAVINGS FOR HARMONY MARKETPLACE ONLINE ORDERS (JUNE 12-DEC 21)

New Harmony website

200 4 CLASSROOMS

50 FACULTY

RATED, DIVERSE HCNW EVER

WITH

67 CLASSES

AUGUST

WITH

100 CLASSES

OCTOBER

with ambitions for widespread adoption, a joint BHS/Choral Arts Link launched the Barbershop Day Music Program. Initially funded by the Freedonia Group, the project included more than 40% sweet harmony college north west.

The Ragtime Gals quartet proved that it doesn’t take a lot of voice or a lot of time to make a difference, and they underscored how their contributions combine to fund education and outreach, just as their singular voices come together in harmony.

DECEMBER (end of year summary)

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“THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMS INSTITUTED BY THE BARBERSHOP HARMONY SOCIETY ILLUSTRATES THE REAL-LIFE EVIDENCE OF THE NEED FOR CHARITABLE SUPPORT. SIMPLY SAID, THESE PROGRAMS SHOW THE DIFFERENCE THAT CAN BE MADE BY DONORS WITH A REAL PASSION.”
— SHARON MILLER, CHAIR, HARMONY FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

While 2015 was a financially successful year for the Barbershop Harmony Society, accumulating cash was not an option. Our priority was to invest in the resources needed to be in a position of strength for the Society’s next 75 years—an effective 21st Century organization. A chief strategy officer joined the headquarters staff to direct what is already the most thorough and far-reaching long-term strategy effort undertaken by the Society since the 1950s.

2015 also saw unprecedented ties between the Society and Harmony Foundation International. Never before has there been such great alignment between Society program priorities and the areas that generous donors want to promote. Far greater outreach and chapter support efforts were made possible largely through the generosity of donors to Harmony Foundation.

**HARMONY FOUNDATION’S 2015 CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY PROGRAMS**

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<tr>
<th>Program Support</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Outreach Grants Program</td>
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<td>Youth Chorus Festival</td>
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<td>Harmony U Scholarships &amp; Support</td>
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<td>Community Engagement &amp; Other</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total HF Contribution</strong></td>
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“YOU GET KIDS IN A ROOM RINGING A CHORD, AND THEY’RE HOOKED FOREVER. IF WE HAD ISSUES, IT WAS FROM THEIR TEACHERS. BUT PEOPLE WHO NEVER USED TO GET BARBERSHOP ARE FINALLY SAYING, ‘NO, THIS IS VERY BENEFICIAL TO MY CHORAL PROGRAM.’ THIS IS NOT ACCIDENTAL. THE BHS HAS BEEN VERY INTENTIONAL AND MADE THIS A MAJOR PART OF THE SOCIETY’S MISSION.”
— Dr. JAMES HENRY, BASS, CROSROADS QUARTET

“BARBERSHOP HAS DONE NOTHING BUT GET GUYS INTO MY PROGRAM. THE BOYS LEARN VERY QUICKLY THAT SINGING BARBERSHOP IS A ‘CHICK MAGNET’—WHEN THEY PERFORM ANYTHING, THE GIRLS ARE ALL OVER IT. AS PART OF MY VOCAL PROGRAM, IT HAS BEEN MORE THAN I DREAMED. THE BARBERSHOPPERS TEACH GREAT VOCAL TECHNIQUE, BREATHING, EAR TRAINING, AND THE REPERTOIRE IS TO DIE FOR FUN!”
— DAVE CAPPERS, SNAKE RIVER HIGH SCHOOL (BLACKFOOT, ID)
**FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

**Revenue: $6,628,455**  
$6,172,525 (2014)

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<td>Shared Services</td>
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<td>Shared Services</td>
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**NOTES**

The financial results highlighted above reflect the ongoing operation of the Society and are before a one-time gift from the Society to Harmony Foundation in 2015, to help strengthen the Foundation’s endowment and leverage philanthropic capacity for the future.

**Membership:** Dues revenue remained stable and growing with no membership dues increase for the second straight year. Stable membership trends, new membership programs and focused expense management efforts will continue to provide critical support for the Society’s Education, Outreach and Events areas.

**Events:** Revenue dropped significantly in 2015 driven primarily by venue selection (and associated costs) and lower-than-planned attendance. Efforts to continuously improve the offerings at the Society’s conventions, including increased education and outreach activities, combined with improved venue selection discipline, will help drive increased contributions from Bands and scaled impact in the communities hosting our conventions.

**Harmony Marketplace:** The operation is shifting focus to our core competencies: musical arrangements (sheet music, digital downloads), learning media, and new music. Other product lines are decreasing in quantity but increasing in quality. Marketplace costs primarily revolve around the maintenance, expansion and modernization of our music library, while improving access and availability of our arrangements to members, music educators, and the general public.

**Outreach:** Programs received a 140%+ increase in funding from Harmony Foundation that has allowed the Society to both increase Outreach staffing and programming while concurrently reducing the funding demands from other BHS program areas.

**Harmony University:** The Society benefited from increased attendance and scale for the week-long Harmony University program. Coupled with increased financial support from Harmony Foundation, we have boosted educational offerings and program support, including the launch of the Society’s Healthy Chapter Initiative. Similar to Outreach, the Society’s educational programs’ reliance on funding from other BHS program areas decreased in 2015.

**Shared Services:** This includes governance (Board) expenditures and other necessary operational expenses needed to operate the Society that are not allocated to the Society’s programs. In 2015, the Shared Services costs increased year over year due to increased investment in marketing, social media and technology spending to scale operations. Concurrently, reduced investment returns and unrealized translation losses on the Society’s Canadian-dollar denominated accounts (due to the stronger U.S. dollar) further impacted Shared Services in 2015.

**Personnel Costs:** Built into 2015 program costs was a $263,000 overall increase (+12%) in personnel expenses. This represented six new full-time positions dedicated to expanded Society programming and activities, primarily in Outreach and Education. The Society continues to rely on these passionate and committed staff to scale Society impact in our communities.

The community impact before, during and after our international convention in Pittsburgh was unprecedented—and the model of things to come in major Society events and beyond. Top Society groups performed multiple educational tours months in advance and helped Society representatives build ties with city leaders. Later, Pittsburgh groups and local Barbershoppers performed together on our stages. Post-convention, Pittsburgh-area chapters report that community ties, morale, and member participation are the healthiest in many years.

Nearly every major music educator convention now has a significant BHS presence. The long-term strategy is to arm music educators with the music and tools they need to get more singers—especially male singers—with the side benefit of a new generation that knows the joy of singing four-part harmony.
Every type of performer can be found within the Barbershop Harmony Society. We range from casual singers who simply want to relax every week to professional-grade singers who attract massive ovations on the world’s most prestigious stages—and everything in between. What we all share is a love of singing and a brotherhood unlike any other. We share a desire to spread the joy of singing throughout the world.

To be bold: Barbershoppers are some of the happiest people in the world. It’s simply because of what we do every week. Why? For the joy that comes from genuine friendships. The joy that comes from joining together. It’s more than the joy that comes from singing. We’re Barbershoppers because of the joy that comes from making a difference in people’s lives.

We start off as singers, but then we become more—we become Barbershoppers. Join us in our mission to make a better world through singing!