

**A FOND FAREWELL FROM SAL DIANA, BOARD CHAIR (2005-2010)**

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Dear High Performers and Profound Impacters,

10 years go by in a flash and 5 years disappear in the blink of an eye. It was actually 11 years ago that I stepped into the parish house of St Michael's Church to audition for a choral group that I heard about through a former church music director and SCH singing member. I had no idea that this moment would launch a journey through all manner of first-ever artistic experiences, a crash course in non profit leadership, and the opportunity to make music and work alongside some of the most creative, dedicated, and generous individuals with whom I've ever crossed paths.

Standing in front of the sixty or so participants of the Chorus Management Institute as first-time faculty member at the Chorus America conference two weeks ago, crystallized for me the unique and enviable position that the organization has achieved in a relatively short period of time. Organizations with a longer track record than ours were only just beginning to grapple with issues that we had either already addressed or were at the very least on the docket. How gratifying to receive the tangible and palpable validation of our own work in such a prestigious venue in front of a highly-respected organization. I must have been beaming with joy and walking with a spring in my step for the rest of the weekend.

Indeed, we have had a precocious child on our hands---a child with an eagerness to grow, an aptitude to learn and fortunate to have had attentive parents to encourage and support. As many who have seen the organization go through its various stages can attest, the "appetite for challenge" that is a hallmark of this group---and documented in the press---springs from a greater hunger to make an appreciable impact in a way that extends beyond any one person and certainly more than just making "pretty" sounds.

In this final hour, I reflect upon a few excerpts of the texts sung in the "Day Is Awakening," concert, the final concert this season, which to me say so much about all of us, what we do, what we believe in, what we practice and teach, what we hope to achieve, and ultimately, what we think about the future:

"The promise of living with hope and thanksgiving is born of our loving our friends and our labor...The promise of living, the promise of growing, the promise of ending is labor and sharing and loving"

"Tis you that are the music, not your song."

and...

"I can see the light of a clear blue morning, I can see the light of a brand new day...Everything's gonna be alright, it's gonna be okay..."

As I move into this next stage of my own personal and professional journey, I carry with me a profound sense of fulfillment, but most of all, gratitude. To the artists, the thinkers, the workers, the dreamers, the beautiful minds, the generous hearts, the kindred spirits, the stirrers of souls; to these and to all I say a deep and profound---thank you.

Yours in this most important work,

Salvatore (Sal) A. Diana
Board of Directors, Chairman (2005-2010)