



**General Information, Policies and Handbook
2009-2010**

Email: info@grgc.org

Website: www.grgc.org

Roswell United Methodist Church:

<http://www.rumc.com/page.aspx?id=79224>

The Georgia Regional Girls Choir is a nonprofit, non-denominational organization dedicated to developing choral skills and producing professional quality music performances.

General Information

Mission Statement

The Georgia Regional Girls Choir aspires to:

- develop a lifelong appreciation of music in choristers,
- expose choristers to challenging, multi-cultural, multi-part choral music,
- build the confidence and self-esteem of the young women choristers by exposing them to positive role models, and

produce high quality recordings and live performances for local, national, and international communities that showcase cultural diversity and engage audiences in the beauty of choral artistry.

The GRGC is for all girls in the 3rd through 12th grades and includes Tour, Apprentice and Training Choirs. The GRGC rehearses throughout the school year. The Touring Choir performs throughout the year, including a summer tour. All choirs perform two major concerts each year -- one during the winter holiday season, and one in the spring.

Members are selected via audition with the Artistic Director, Jennifer Rawson or the appropriate director for their age group. Selection and choir placement criteria include vocal maturity, accuracy of pitch, tonal memory, vocal experience, age and sight-reading skills.

Our directors choose music selection carefully, and the music selected is specifically arranged or composed for young women's voices. The repertoire of music explores a wide range of musical styles, including some of the world's greatest composers. Gershwin, Debussy and Copland are but a few of the many composers frequently performed by the girls. The GRGC is a nondenominational organization. As such, the literature for all performances is chosen strictly for the qualities inherent to the music and never intended to promote a particular religion or belief.

The GRGC focuses on developing more than just the vocal skills of these special girls. It stresses the development of ear training, the ability to read music and overall musicianship. The repertoire is carefully selected to challenge the girls, expose them to literature from the Renaissance to the Contemporary periods, and, of course, to entertain audiences. Through the experience of learning, rehearsing and performing, the girls grow musically and emotionally. They learn about hard work and working together. Ultimately, many talented individuals are combined to create one beautiful voice. In addition to the exposure to great music, skill development and emotional growth, these girls have fun.

The Georgia Regional Girls Choir is a nonprofit organization registered in Fulton County, Georgia. The Artistic Director, Executive Director and the Board of Directors manage the choir. The Artistic Director selects the musical repertoire and schedules performances, serves as the Director of the Touring choir and supervises the Apprentice and Training Choir Directors, and Accompanist. The Executive Director coordinates administrative functions including finances, marketing and public relations, concert and tour management, volunteers and fund raising. The Board provides business direction, approves the general rules and policies, and makes key decisions regarding the overall management and direction of the organization. All voting Board members serve in a volunteer capacity.

In March 2008, the Georgia Regional Girls Choir (GRGC) Board of Directors (BoD) approved a Strategic Plan for the GRGC from 2008 – 2011. This Strategic Plan may be found on the website at: <http://www.grgc.org/GRGC-StrategicPlan08-11.pdf>

GRGC Choirs

Training Choir

The Training Choir is comprised primarily of girls in the 3rd through 5th grades. The Director concentrates on the training in and development of fine musical skills including proper vocal production and music theory knowledge including the mastery of basic rhythms, sight reading and ear training skills. When the choir member has demonstrated a mastery of these skills they will be invited to join the Apprentice Choir.

Apprentice Choir

The Apprentice Choir is comprised of primarily girls of Middle School age. The Director concentrates on the fine tuning and further development of proper vocal production and music theory knowledge including the mastery of basic rhythms, sight reading and ear training skills and introduces the singer to more complex literature. In addition, the singer must demonstrate initiative and self discipline. When the choir member has demonstrated a mastery of these skills at this more advanced level they will be invited to join the Tour Choir.

Tour Choir

Tour Choir boasts some of the finest young High School talent in the North Georgia area. Tour Choir members are dedicated to excellence in all aspects of music making and musical performance. Membership in this choir requires the highest level of musicianship, maturity and commitment. All Tour Choir members are expected to participate in all performance opportunities throughout the year including our summer tour.

A Word about Travel

The Tour Choir is a traveling choir, and all members are expected to participate in all performances, both in town and out of town. We anticipate some traveling every year and are committed to a major trip every summer. By accepting a position in the Tour Choir, members and their parents make a commitment to travel in-state, out-of-state and possibly abroad. Financial assistance is available for tour through fund raising and scholarships.

Auditions

The Georgia Regional Girls Choir invites girls in the 3rd through 12th grades to audition for membership in the choir. The audition takes approximately 15 minutes and consists of an evaluation of music fundamentals (ability to read and understand music) and an appraisal of vocal ability.

There are three levels in the Georgia Regional Girls Choir. The girls are auditioned to determine which level of Choir is appropriate. Typically, girls in 3rd to 5th grades are in the Training Choir, girls in the 6th to 8th grades are in the Apprentice Choir, and girls in high school are in the Tour Choir. In addition to audition requirements, girls and parents must read, agree to and sign the GRGC code of conduct, the GRGC dress code, and agree to abide by GRGC policies and procedures when representing the Choir.

The primary factors in deciding a girl's readiness for the choir are:

❖ **A pleasing voice**

The girl auditioning must have a song to perform, preferably one she is both familiar with and has sheet music for. If not, she may sing a well-known song such as "The Star Spangled Banner."

❖ **Mastery of pitch and rhythm**

The girl auditioning must be able to exhibit tonal memory to the satisfaction of the Choir Director.

❖ **Mastery of music fundamentals**

The Choir Director will test for site reading of music. To be accepted in the Tour Choir, the girl auditioning must be able to site read to the satisfaction of the Tour Choir Director.

❖ **An indication that the child wants to sing with the GRGC enough to make the necessary commitment of time and effort.**

If a girl is not accepted as a member of the choir after her first audition, she will receive suggestions for skills to work on. It is not uncommon for a girl to improve her musical abilities over a period of a few months, re-audition, and be accepted into the choir.

Auditions for the Georgia Regional Girls Choir are held in August/September each year, with mid-year auditions in January. Auditions are usually held before or after Choir rehearsals and as agreed to by the Choir Directors.

Rehearsal Information

Choir members are expected to attend one rehearsal each week throughout the school year. All three choirs rehearse on Tuesdays in Marietta and on Thursdays in Roswell according to the schedule below. The GRGC does not practice on most school-recognized holidays with a few exceptions, which will be announced as needed. Additional rehearsals are added prior to special events and concerts. These rehearsals usually take place at the concert venue, but parents and singers must take care to check the website to verify times and locations of all rehearsals.

2009-2010 Rehearsal Schedules:

Choir	Thursdays in Roswell
Training	5:30 - 7:00 pm
Apprentice	6:30 - 8:00 pm
Tour	5:30 - 7:30 pm

Each rehearsal is an important one. It will consist of vocal instruction, music reading skills, basic musicianship and choral training. Because of the high quality of performance expected, attendance at all rehearsals is expected. It is essential that every minute of our rehearsal is used wisely. We request that GRGC members get into the habit of arriving in plenty of time to accomplish the following before rehearsal starts:

- Check in with the administrator and turn in any forms, payments or paperwork that is due.
- Use the restroom.
- Be in your seat when rehearsal begins with music and pencil ready.
- GRGC members are reminded that food, drinks and gum are not allowed within the rehearsal space. Members can eat and drink in “The Rest” area.

Extra Rehearsals and Cancellations

Depending on the performance schedule, extra rehearsals may be required. Parents will be notified in advance of the additional rehearsal. When area public schools close due to inclement weather, GRGC will not meet. Parents will be notified in advance of any other canceled rehearsals.

Announcements and Communications

From time to time correspondence will be sent home with the singers or mailed to the home. Parents are responsible for reading this information thoroughly. In addition, changes in times, locations, etc. may be announced at rehearsals. Each girl will be instructed to place these announcements in her notebook, to be referred to by her and her parents. Handouts from preceding weeks will be available at the check in desk. Please check the website or email csandhage@charter.net if you have questions or need clarifications.

Attendance Policy

EXCUSED absences are granted in cases of illness or death in the family. Other EXCUSED absences will be considered on a case by case basis. An excused absence, other than death or illness, must be requested in writing as early as possible. Three personal absences are permitted per year for rehearsals only. After the second personal absence, the Choir Director will call the singer's parents. After the third personal absence occurs, the Director will call the parents and the singer may be asked to re-audition to hold her place in the group.

If you know that you will be unable to attend a rehearsal, your parents should notify your choir's conductor in writing as early as possible. When an absence occurs on short notice, please email csandhage@charter.net before 4 pm on Thursday. Any excessive absences, excused or personal, may result in further review.

ATTENDANCE AT ALL PERFORMANCES IS ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED. Singers must request to be excused from performances and parents must do this in writing well in advance of the performance. Those whose absences are unexcused may be asked to withdraw.

A calendar of GRGC activities is posted on the website at the beginning of the year. Because additional performances and rehearsals may be added during the year, amended schedules will be posted from time to time. Please expect possible changes and know that your attendance is expected.

Sick Policy

If a singer has a contagious illness and is running a fever, she should not attend rehearsal or a performance, but MUST notify the director and csandhage@charter.net before the rehearsal or performance.

Choir Music Accountability Policy

We realize the importance of music study and practice and would like to encourage members to study their music at home. Each choir member is issued a music binder. She is responsible for all copies of music checked out to her. At the end of the semester, when music is collected, the borrower will be billed \$5.00 for each individual title that is missing, and \$20.00 if the binder is missing. IT IS MOST IMPORTANT THAT CHORAL MUSIC BE BROUGHT TO EVERY REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE. If you lose or misplace your music, please notify the administrator as soon as possible. Extra music folders are available from the administrator and may be borrowed during rehearsal. They must be returned at the end of rehearsal.

Tuition Policy

The full season is August through May for all choirs, the fall semester is from August through December, and the spring semester is January through May. Each choir member is assessed a

Supplies Fee to cover the cost of buying music for the concert season. Tuition and supply fees are paid each semester according to the following schedule:

	Training	Apprentice	Tour
Tuition	\$185	\$185	\$210
Supplies	\$35	\$35	\$40
Total	\$220	\$220	\$250

The entire fee (tuition and supplies) must be received by GRGC by the first of September for the fall semester and the first of February for the spring semester. There are two methods of payment, online with a credit card at www.grgc.org (includes a 3% fee for PayPal processing), or by check or cash. Make checks payable to GRGC and drop them off at rehearsal with the administrator or mail them to the GRGC Executive Director:

Catherine Sandhage
645 Abbeywood Drive
Roswell, GA 30075
770-722-3656
email: csandhage@charter.net

Special arrangements for payment of fees are possible when requested in writing to the GRGC Executive Director with a brief description of the special circumstances.

Family Discounts

A tuition discount of \$25 per semester is available for additional girls from one family. No discounts are allowed for the supply fee. To qualify for the discount, the fees must be paid by check by the due date.

Late Payments

All fees owed are considered late one week after the due date. When an account is 15 days late, the parents will be contacted in order to arrange for immediate payment of past due fees. If fees are not received within 30 days the girl may be suspended from the choir until all fees are paid in full.

Financial Assistance

General Financial Assistance, Tour Financial Assistance and Scholarships

It is the policy of GRGC to do its best to ensure that any singer can participate in GRGC and its sponsored events. Financial assistance is available to any singer who may have a need. Financial assistance is available for tuition, uniforms, supply fees, tour expenses, and end-of-year events. Families in need of financial assistance should contact any Board member. Singers and parents should make an application to the Executive Director before fees are due each semester. All general applications will be considered as soon as possible. There are specific deadlines for tour applications. If a family's financial situation changes during the year, they should let the Executive Director know so that the Board can address individual circumstances.

Financial Need

Financial assistance will be awarded mainly on financial need. Financial need will be determined through the review of the information provided in the application. Financial assistance is for the singer only. In the event of a request for assistance that would allow a singer to participate in choir, assistance will only be awarded when the singer will participate without a paying family member. Example: Assistance will not be awarded if that singer will be accompanied by parents who pay their own way on a tour.

Choir Commitment

Financial assistance will be reserved for singers who have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate an appropriate level of commitment to GRGC. Commitment will be measured based on rehearsal attendance, concert participation, fund raising participation and other such factors deemed as appropriate by the committee.

Revocation of Financial Assistance/Scholarship

GRGC reserves the right to revoke any financial assistance or scholarships rewarded, at any time, if the singer fails to continue to satisfactorily meet the above criteria. Girls who submit applications for general financial assistance, financial assistance/tour scholarship will be evaluated based on the following selection considerations, listed in priority order:

- Financial need or personal hardship
- The demonstrated commitment to the choir of the singer, as noted by behavior, effort, fund raising, etc.
- The musical ability of the singer and the number of years in the choir.
- Absences from rehearsals and performances.
- Limitations that tour accommodations may place on the size of the tour group (Tour only).
- The vocal balance (among voice parts) of the choir (Tour only).
- Previous tour experience (Tour only).

The applications for assistance and scholarship require name, address, and a brief explanation of need and the amount of assistance requested. The form is submitted to the scholarship committee. If needed, a member of the committee may contact the family to discuss the request in sufficient detail to make a recommendation to the committee. The committee submits their recommendations to the GRGC Board of Directors. The recommendation only includes the

amount requested and a brief description of the need. Typically, only the Chairman, Treasurer and the appropriate committee members are aware of scholarship details.

Fund Raising

GRGC will provide fund raising events which will directly benefit the each singer's individual account. Fund raising proceeds will be used to defray the cost of travel expenses and/or tuition.

These policies govern credit toward the "Individual Accounts":

1. The Treasurer and Administrator will record credit for each individual participant.
2. Credit may be retained from one choir year to the next and when switching from one choir to another.
3. If a singer leaves GRGC, her credit may be transferred to a sister still enrolled in GRGC.
4. If a singer has more credit in her account than is needed for a trip she may retain the excess credit for a future trip or share funds with a sister if needed to cover trip expenses.
5. Credit may not be transferred from one singer to another except as stated in # 3 and #4 above.
6. When a singer leaves GRGC, any remaining credit not transferred to a sister will revert to the "GRGC Scholarship Fund". In no instance may a singer receive money she has raised on behalf of GRGC, except as credit towards travel.

All money deposited in the fund raising account will be the property of GRGC. All money collected will be deposited into the GRGC bank account and the Treasurer will account for the funds and maintain records of Individual Accounts.

General Behavior and Appearance

Depending on the situation, a member may be a musical ambassador of the United States of America, the GRGC, or the State of Georgia. The choir member must agree to conduct and dress herself at all times in such a way that she will not bring harm, embarrassment, disgrace or discomfort to herself or to any member of the Georgia Regional Girls Choir. The choir member must agree to cooperate with the Choir Directors, GRGC Board and other facility staff personnel in obeying all the rules, procedures and regulations set for the group.

GRGC enjoys an excellent reputation both in our community and on tour due to the high standards of professionalism our members exemplify. To ensure this standard is maintained, all members are expected to exercise professional discretion and sound judgment in personal behavior, appearance and habits, and to project the proper GRGC image.

As a non-profit organization looking for corporate and other sponsors, donors, or benefactors, GRGC needs a completely professional image. GRGC needs to convey an image that causes people and organizations to invite the Choir to perform. Inappropriate or rude behavior, use of tobacco, alcohol or non-prescription controlled substances, and use of weapons, threatening behavior, swearing, cursing and uncontrolled loud behavior, are not consistent with the desired image of GRGC. Inappropriate hair color (any hair color that is not naturally occurring) and unusual hair styles, excessive or gaudy jewelry, excessive body piercing, unbecoming tattoos, inappropriate dress and revealing clothes are not consistent with the desired image of GRGC.

The behavior and dress code guidelines listed are meant to be explanatory and are not necessarily all-inclusive. The guiding factor in our dress code is to present a professional image. Choir members agree to abide by the behavior and dress code rules as interpreted by the Choir Directors and GRGC Board. Failure to comply may result in suspension from the choir.

Dress Guidelines

The GRGC dress code calls for formal uniforms. Singers are required to perform in a formal concert dress and closed-toe black shoes. To ensure uniformity, concert dresses must be purchased through GRGC. The cost of the dress is \$75.00 (subject to change) and is due at registration. Each singer is required to obtain appropriate closed-toe black shoes. In addition, there are specific requirements concerning hair color, style, jewelry, piercings, tattoos, etc. as described above. A member who does not follow the formal dress code will be asked to change to the appropriate uniform.

Our casual dress code consists of the appropriate GRGC t-shirt, dresses/skirts of medium length, khaki pants, khaki shorts, blouses, t-shirts and polo shirts. Comfortable walking shoes for extensive walking, such as tennis shoes or casual sandals, are acceptable. Articles of clothing that are not appropriate include: mini-skirts, short shorts, tops with plunging necklines, and revealing tops. Offensive or inappropriate clothing will not be permitted consistent with our GRGC Code of Conduct. A member who does not follow the casual dress code will be asked to change to appropriate dress. The Choir Directors will clearly specify the appropriate dress code for specific events.

Code of Conduct

All singers are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct they sign as part of their Application:

“I understand that the Georgia Regional Girls Choir is a professional organization and as such demands the highest standards of behavior and dress. I will dress appropriately and conduct myself in a manner that will contribute to a sense of community among fellow choir members. I agree that I will not use tobacco, alcohol, or non-prescription controlled substances during Choir activities, to include the Tour. I will not bring or use any items reasonably considered a weapon and I will not engage in any threatening behavior or physical altercations while participating in Choir activities or on the Tour. I also agree to follow the instructions of the Choir Directors, Board of Directors and Tour Chaperones at all times, participate in all Choir and Tour activities, not leave (without permission) the Choir Group at any time during Choir activities or the Tour, and abide by the Tour curfew. I agree to follow the dress code as specified for Choir and Tour events. If I am asked by Choir Directors or the GRGC Board to change into appropriate clothing or modify my appearance (consistent with the image of GRGC), I will comply. I understand that an infraction of these dress code or behavior rules may result in my immediate dismissal, return home at my expense from the Tour (to include fees for a chaperone, if necessary) and forfeiture of all Choir and Tour fees.”

Board of Directors

	Position	Phone	Email
Linda Green	Accompanist and Training Choir Director in Roswell (nonvoting)	770-720-6820	green.piano@hotmail.com
Beverly Meerbach	Board President	770-345-2954	mee338@comcast.net
Catherine Sandhage	Executive Director (nonvoting)	770-722-3656	csandhage@charter.net
Jennifer Rawson	Artistic & Tour Director (nonvoting)	770-998-8163	djrawson@mindspring.com
Donna Weaver	Training Choir Director (nonvoting)	404-384-7725	donnaweaver7@yahoo.com
Sandy Adams	Apprentice Choir Director (nonvoting)	770-823-2732	sandyadams0628@aol.com
John Snuggs	Board Member	770-579-1062	snuggsj@bellsouth.net
LaShawn Joyner	Board Member	239-822-3331	lashawnjoyner@yahoo.com
Stephanie Harrell	Board Member	678-781-5734	kukandstevie@comcast.net
Emily Christensen	Board Member, Choir representative	770-928-4940	emilymae@bellsouth.net

Committees and Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer Requirements

All Board members serve in a volunteer capacity and are ultimately responsible for the management of the choir. In order to ensure smooth operation of the GRGC, the Board has established a volunteer program to help manage the many details of the day-to-day business of the group. The success of the group will only be guaranteed through the commitment of parents. Therefore, parent must agree to help through participation in our volunteer program.

Marketing and Public Relations

Develop and distribute press releases, maintain lines of communications with local press and choral community, solicit advertisers for concert programs, deliver artwork/copy from advertisers for the ads.

Social Events Committee

Coordinate and manage Choir Team Building events and parties, arrange for refreshments at concerts, plan and manage special events, such as parent meetings, year-end parties, etc., as requested by the Board of Directors.

Fund Raising Committee

Develop and manage effective fund raising programs to help defray expenses associated with tour trips, develop and manage a program of parent and community sponsor/patron opportunities, work with the Board of Directors in preparing grant applications and in seeking corporate sponsorship.

Historian

Archive choir mementos such as videos, clippings, photographs, press releases and concert programs.

Special Events Committee

Plan and coordinate special travel/tour opportunities for the singers, conduct parent meetings to explain travel policies and procedures, handle collection of all forms (permission slips, medical information, insurance information, etc.) prior to travel, secure chaperones for trips.

Performance Committee

Arrange for chaperones to assist at performances. Duties include checking singers as they arrive for proper wardrobe, assisting with emergency repairs (hems, straps, etc.) and handing out pearl necklaces to each singer.



GRGC Singer Registration

Date: _____

Training Choir

Apprentice Choir

Tour Choir

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, Zip _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Parent's Cell Number: _____

Parent's Email Address: _____

School & Grade: _____

Parent(s) Name(s): _____

Girl's Cell Number: _____

Girl's Email address: _____

GRGC Registration and Contract Form

Attendance Policy: I have read and understand the GRGC Attendance Policy. I accept responsibility for abiding by this policy and understand that I must obtain advance approval for any absences that are not directly related to my health or the health of my family members. (If your child is ill on rehearsal day, please send a message to csandhage@charter.net) _____ Initial

Volunteer Time: I understand that volunteer time is required to ensure the successful operation of the choir. I agree to volunteer to work when called upon to do so by the Board of Directors. I prefer to help in the following capacity (circle those that apply):

Marketing Social Events Fund Raising Historian Special Events/Tour Performances
_____ Initial

Fund Raising: I understand the need for fund raising events and agree to participate and/or pay funds directly to GRGC. _____ Initial

Tuition and Supply Fees: I understand that tuition and supply fees are due the first of September for the fall term and the first of February for the spring term. If past due fees are not paid in 30 days the choir member will be suspended until full payment is made. _____ Initial

Tuition and Supply Fee Schedule for Each Semester

	Training	Apprentice	Tour
Tuition	\$185	\$185	\$210
Supplies	\$35	\$35	\$40
Total	\$220	\$220	\$250

Make checks payable to GRGC and drop them off at rehearsal with the administrator or mail them to the GRGC Executive Director (Beth Judson, 2840 Windrush Lane, Roswell, GA 30076, 770-442-5236, email: csandhage@charter.net) Note that payment may be made with credit card securely using PayPal at www.grgc.org. PayPal charges a 3% transaction fee that is reflected on the website.

Leaving the Choir: I understand that the GRGC is a one school-year commitment. However, should it become necessary for my child to leave the choir, I understand I am responsible for giving one month advance notice, and I will receive a pro-rated return of tuition fees. I also understand that Supply Fees are not refundable since the GRGC must purchase music at the beginning of each concert season and is not reimbursed by the music publishers. _____ Initial

General Behavior and Appearance: The Choir member understands and agrees to conduct and dress herself at all times in a way that will not bring harm, embarrassment, disgrace or discomfort to herself or GRGC. I understand that my child will not be permitted to participate in GRGC sponsored events if she does not comply and may be dismissed from the choir for failure to comply. _____ Initial

Dress Code: I understand that a uniform is required for all performances. Our dress code calls for formal uniforms. In addition, each singer must meet the specific requirements (shoes, hair, jewelry, etc.) of the formal dress code. Our dress code also calls for a casual uniform. Each singer must meet the specific requirements of the casual dress code. The formal concert dress is available through GRGC, at a cost of \$75.00, payable upon signing this agreement, if such dress has not already been purchased. I understand that my child will not be permitted to participate in a GRGC sponsored event if she is not dressed in the appropriate uniform or does not meet the requirements of the GRGC Dress Code. _____ Initial

GRGC Code of Conduct: Every Choir member who participates in a Tour event is required to sign the “GRGC Code of Conduct”. I understand my child will not be permitted to participate in a Tour event if she does not comply and may be returned at the singer’s/parent’s expense (to include fees for a chaperone, if necessary) and forfeiture of all Choir/Tour fees. _____ Initial

It is preferred by the GRGC Board of Directors that parents of new singers meet with either the Choir Director or a member of the GRGC Board. It is imperative that new parents and singers fully understand the policies and procedures of the GRGC. Each of the above-referenced policies is considered vital to the continued success of GRGC. If you are not comfortable with any aspect of this contract, please feel free to speak with any Board member. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge your understanding of these policies and do, hereby, agree to abide by them.

Signature and Acknowledgement of Parent(s)

Signature and Acknowledgement of Singer

