

V. P. — Y. M. I. H.
JOHN KIRBY



The Power of Caring

By John Kirby, VP YMIH, Ontario District

The single most important fact that will change the course of a young person's life is that someone truly cares. How many troubled youth might have changed the course of his/her life, if someone had been there to guide and to encourage. It isn't because we are Barbershoppers that we should care, it is because we are human.

We have an excellent vehicle, music, to help bridge the gap in human understanding. All peoples, ages, genders and races respond to the power of music. It is with this in mind that I would encourage every chapter in Ontario to root their individual philosophy statements for Youth programming.

It is easy to make philosophy statements, but it requires work, dedication, desire and heart in order to realize your objectives. Therefore, it is extremely important that we focus our attention and our energy towards providing programs that encourage, enlighten and add that all so important human touch in the lives of our youth.

I personally feel that when one is willing to go out into a High School or an Elementary School to share time, energy, commitment and, above all, to demonstrate this caring attitude, it becomes "Chords whose overtones ring throughout eternity". Students learn more by example than by preaching. They learn more by people who demonstrate, in very tangible ways, rather than by people who simply do a lot of talk but provide little action.

Did you know that students involved in music

- tend to develop learning, and communication skills more quickly?

- have a high correlation between positive self-perception, high cognitive competence scores, self esteem, interest, and involvement in all school activities?

- develop positive self-image, a desire to achieve excellence, and an ability to set goals, cooperate, and excel in group cohesiveness?

- outscore students on achievement tests in reading and mathematics?

- score an average of 21-38 points higher on Scholastic Aptitude Tests?

- are more likely to be sought out by institutions of higher learning?

- are less likely to be involved in criminal behaviour, and are more likely to develop character, and leadership skills?

- have a better understanding, how the arts, integrate the different cultural attributes, and diversities in our society?

Every chapter must have a beginning and sometimes just

getting started, is the hardest thing of all to accomplish. It is imperative that you send a representative to COTS 2003, Geneva Park, Orillia Ontario, January 10-12/2003. **Michael O'Neill** (SouthWestern District), will be instructing the Young Men in Harmony Course. I will make myself available to discuss, and to help plan programs for your chapter. Establishing simple, manageable, straight forward goals, that are attainable, and will meet the needs of your students, and music educators, in order to, "Keep THEIR Whole World Singing," will be my prime objective for the year 2003.

Did you know that the Youth group that performed at our fall convention

- & - are from a core area, high risk secondary school!
- & - rarely have had any formal music education prior to High School entry?
- & - had a grandfather drive three-and-a-half hour, both ways, in order to ensure his granddaughter would be able to sing for you? — She had missed the bus.
- & - had three young men, who had already graduated from High School, come back specifically to be part of this concert because they had participated in three of our conventions as observers and guests?
- & - has a music educator, **Ms. Dath**, that published a wonderful article in *The Trillium* that ended with "My experiences at *Harmony College* was one that I will always cherish. The people there were the most caring, interesting, kind, knowledgeable and friendly people I have met in a long time. They truly embody the wonder, and the joy of singing."?


- gave up 435 man-hours to be with you at convention? Why? Because, as one young person said, "Barbershoppers rock." In today's vernacular, the term is the highest compliment a teen can give to an adult. Need I say more! 



Photo — Waldo Redekop

At the recent *Can-Am Night*, *Graytones* (Oakville Chapter), a seniors quartet, called upon a college student to fill in on baritone, proving once again that you have to involve them while they are young.

Pictured above (L-R) **Grant Goodfellow** (T), **Sam McComish** (L), **Earl Kettle** (Bs), **Eric Deland** (Br). 



Season's Greetings

