



WILLIE L. BROWN, JR. MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP FOR BOYS

For sixty years the San Francisco Boys Chorus has opened its doors to any talented boy – regardless of his family’s ability to pay tuition and related costs. In fact, ongoing financial aid is provided to approximately 47% of Boys Chorus members annually. Yet, the Chorus struggled to identify and retain minority singers.

In answer to this, former San Francisco Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. and Federal Court Judge Marilyn Patel, both long time supporters of the San Francisco Boys Chorus, approached SFBC’s Artistic Director and then Board President to explore ways to diversify SFBC. The **Willie L. Brown, Jr. Music Scholarship for Boys** was formed, affording SFBC the privilege of actively recruiting musically gifted boys from socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Since Fall 2005, the scholarship has covered tuition, summer camp, uniforms, transportation to and from rehearsal, and parent concert tickets for as many as 26 boys and their families.

LEADERSHIP & OBJECTIVES



Led by Committee Chair and SFBC Board Member, Susan Brown – with input from SFUSD’s Superintendent and Chief of Staff – the pilot program developed partnerships between San Francisco Boys Chorus and five public schools in the city’s Bayview / Hunters Point and Western Addition neighborhoods.

The program recognizes that segments of the Bay Area’s diverse population have previously failed to self-identify to audition through traditional media. Now in the scholarship’s third year, SFBC fosters a multi-pronged diversity recruiting initiative, which includes:

1. Targeted outreach to diverse communities translated into Spanish and Vietnamese;
2. Active relationship building with key players including school principals, music teachers, community donors, and chorister parents; and
3. Print media reflecting photos of SFBC’s growing diversity enrollment.

As the Chorus has diversified, more children from diverse communities have begun to self-identify as they see boys like themselves on stage and in print media.

PHILOSOPHY

SFBC’s diversity initiative is based on these guiding principles:

- Musical gifts cross all socio-economic boundaries;
- Training is not, and has never been at the Boys Chorus, limited to families who can afford tuition;
- One-on-one recruiting by pre-qualifying talented singers is now yielding highly qualified audition applicants; and
- Diversifying the Chorus helps SFBC more accurately reflect the diversity of the Bay Area.
- Actively recruiting singers by holding auditions at their schools requires a different approach to working with youngsters who self-identify through passive media.



LONG-RANGE COMMITMENT

The commitment required to sustain and expand WLB Scholarship recipients continues to include tuition, uniforms, and camp/tour costs, as well as basic costs such as transportation and food.

KEY FUNDERS

Macy's West

Louis Meunier, Executive Vice President

Progress Charitable Foundation

Alvin Dworman, Adco Group, Chairman

Wells Fargo Foundation

Brenda Wright, Sr. Vice President
Community Development Manager

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

Willie L. Brown, Jr. College Preparatory Academy

- Tareyton Russ, Principal

Dr. Charles Drew Academy

- Tamitrice Rice-Mitchell, Principal

Bret Harte School

- Vidrale Franklin, Principal

Dr. George Washington Carver Elementary School

- Emily Wade Thompson, Principal

Cesar Chavez Elementary School

- Adelina Aramburo, Principal

Laurel Dell Elementary School

- Robert Marcucci, Principal

The Willie L. Brown, Jr. Institute on Politics & Public Service

- Willie L. Brown, Jr.
- Susan Brown

African American Arts & Cultural Center

- London Breed, Executive Director

MV Transportation

- Feysan Lodde, Owner

Carmen's Restaurant

- Frances Torres, Manager

Dennis Uniform

- Milagros Schmidt

Rainbow Grocery
