

Chippewa Valley choirs sing for autism awareness Wednesday



Chippewa Valley High School choirs will perform in the fifth annual (Mostly) A Cappella For Autism concert on April 18. Jay Callahan sang a solo with the Men's A Cappella Group Lowkey at a prior (Mostly) A Cappella For Autism concert. Photo courtesy of JAMES PECAR

By Nicole Tuttle, For The Macomb Daily

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The Choral Department at Chippewa Valley High School will present the (Mostly) A Cappella For Autism concert on April 18 in the Clinton Township school's Henrichsen Auditorium. Nicole Tuttle — For The Macomb Daily

Choirs at Chippewa Valley High School are tuning up for a fifth year of a concert with a cause, (Mostly) A Cappella For Autism. Students are practicing Joan Szymko's "It Takes A Village" as an anthem for autism.

"One of the songs that we traditionally sing at this concert every year is 'It Takes a Village' by Joan Szymko. Part of the text from this piece is, 'It takes a whole village to raise our children.' We believe that the message of this piece truly encapsulates what the concert is all about," said choir Director James Pecar.

The Chippewa Valley High School Choral Department will host (Mostly) A Cappella For Autism Wednesday at the Clinton Township school's Henrichsen Auditorium. A fishbowl raffle will begin at 6 p.m., followed by the 7 p.m. concert.

April is Autism Awareness month,

"We know the impact music has on people with autism, so we thought it would be a perfect fit," Pecar said. "When I got to CVHS we had our concert calendar set up, but I wanted to make sure our students experienced philanthropy on a large scale, so we brought A Cappella For Autism to our program and we have been doing it ever since."

Funds raised benefit the Autism Society of America Macomb/St. Clair Affiliate and Chippewa Valley Vocal Music.

“I have a connection to the society through my younger cousin who has autism. I approached them with the idea and we have been working with them ever since,” Pecar said.

The show will include over 20 songs performed by vocal music from several different choir groups at Chippewa Valley High School such as the Combined Choirs, Treble Choir and Mixed Varsity Choir, but also guest vocalists from Wyandot Middle School in Clinton Township. More than 130 students from Wyandot Middle School will perform.

“We have a number of ensembles performing, from quartets to a choir of 300. There will be over 10 choirs performing at the event,” Pecar said.

The concert will also feature a “miracle minute” in which students run through the crowd to see how many donations they can collect in 60 seconds and will also offer informative presentations about autism.

“There will be a slideshow/video that we show and there is an awareness table in the lobby with representatives from the Autism Society of America,” Pecar said. “Students have also researched autism and will be hanging decorations on the walls with facts about autism and information for the attendees to read.”

Over the past four years the (Mostly) A Cappella For Autism concert has raised over \$40,000 according to Pecar.

Tickets are \$10 and available online at cvchoirs.seatyourself.biz.