



The Joy, a community newsletter

Feb 2015

Volume 4, Number 1

In This Issue

- Welcome to the Joy
- Upcoming EOJAS Performances
- EOJAS CD - Joy
- A Message from Dr. Leach
- From EOJAS – Kiena Williams
- From EOJ – Ashley Lope
- EOJ FTK!
- EOJAS New Members
- Board of Directors: Who's Who?
- Recent EOJAS Performances
- Give Us This Day Benefit Concert
- Supporting EOJAS

Welcome to Issue #6 of The Joy!

Welcome to the sixth issue of The Joy, the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers (EOJAS) community newsletter. Founded in 2005 and comprised of alumni from Pennsylvania State University's Essence of Joy Choir, the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers® perform sacred and secular music from the African and African-American tradition in an effort to entertain, inspire, affirm, and unify the worldwide community.

This newsletter is available on our website, www.eojas.org, and via email subscription to our Friends of EOJAS email list. We welcome your comments on what you'd like to see included in this newsletter.

EOJAS Performs

Here is the latest information on upcoming EOJAS events. We hope you will be able to join us. As always, please consider this information tentative until formally announced by the VP of Business Management.

Performance Weekend: March 8, 2015 (Bethlehem, PA)

On March 8th, EOJAS will meet at Wesley Church (2540 Center Street) in Bethlehem for a morning worship service; the service will begin at 10:00 am. We may have an opportunity for choir members to gather earlier in the weekend for a retreat and reunion, so please be on the lookout for updates.

Performance Weekend: March 28-29, 2015 (Mechanicsburg, PA)

At the end of March, EOJAS will collaborate with Voices of the Valley (formerly the Alumni Chorale of Lebanon Valley College), directed by Gregg Mauroni. Our Saturday evening performance will begin at 7 pm, and will be held at Mechanicsburg Presbyterian Church (300 East Simpson Street). The following morning, EOJAS will perform during the church's two worship services held at 8:15 am and 11:00 am.

Performance Weekend: May 9-10, 2015 (Reading, PA)

A weekend in Berks County, PA will include collaboration with the Reading Choral Society *Berks County Choir Games* and a Sunday worship service at First Church of Christ.

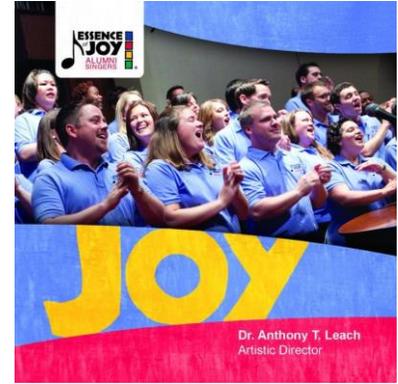
EOJAS is also preparing to host a reunion and homecoming performance, during which all Essence of Joy alumni are invited to join us! This "Y'all Come" event will take place the weekend of June 13th and 14th, and additional details will be provided in the upcoming months.

About EOJAS

- Founded in 2005 and comprised of alumni from Pennsylvania State University's Essence of Joy Choir, the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers perform sacred and secular music from the African and African-American tradition in an effort to entertain, inspire, affirm, and unify the worldwide community. Under the artistic direction of Dr. Anthony T. Leach, the group has performed extensively in the United States, Europe, and the Caribbean. The choir is a non-profit corporation registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and a 501 (c)(3) tax exempt organization.

EOJAS CD - Joy

You can take EOJAS home with you! Physical copies of the CD are available at all EOJAS events for \$20 cash/check. For those of you interested in a digital version of the album, we are also selling Download Cards for \$15. These cards allow anyone to download one copy of the album for enjoyment on their computer or MP3 device.



For those who can't join us in person, you can purchase your copy today at www.eojas.org/audio. From this storefront, friends, family, and fans will have the opportunity to order CDs for home delivery or permanent digital downloads. All profits from the CD project go back to the choir to use in funding our future activities.

2015: Year 10 in the Life of EOJAS Tony Leach, artistic director

Greetings all!

In October 2005, almost seventy-five former members of Essence of Joy returned to campus on a Sunday morning as we launched the first edition of what has become the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers. I sent an email invitation earlier in September to everyone for whom I had contact information to share in a rehearsal and performance during Homecoming 2005. My heart skipped a beat when I walked into room 110, and I actually turned around and went back to my office to collect my emotions so that I could move the music process forward. Nothing but joy occurred during that day as many of us reconnected for the first time since you graduated or left campus. I knew that this first effort was going to be pivotal in us growing together as the final entity in the EOJ family. What I did not know then, I surely know now that EOJAS has carried itself onward while establishing itself as a significant member of the community of singers within the USA that performs at a high level of choral excellence while celebrating the accomplishments of its members.

Some of the highlights of our shared journey since 2005 include the following performances:

- Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts
- Moses Hogan/Glenn Burleigh Tribute Festival, Pittsburgh, PA
- Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association
- Y'all Come Concerts, Philadelphia, PA
- Born To Die (2007) with EOJ and Essence 2, University Park, PA
- Release of Joy, CD Project

Our Mission

- The Essence of Joy Alumni Singers is a family of singers whose purpose is to learn, present, and promote African and African-American sacred and secular music in an effort to entertain, inspire, affirm and unify the worldwide community.

- Hallelujah To The King, Stan Spottswood, Recording Project
- Concert Tour of Belgium, Luxembourg, and France, 2006
- Concert Tour of France, 2009
- Concert Tour to US Virgin Islands, 2010
- Concert Tours to Naples, FL; Mobile, AL; Norfolk, VA; Washington, DC; New York, NY
- Emancipation Proclamation Tour – Williamsport, PA; Bellefonte, PA; Steelton, PA; Christiana, PA
- Noah Ryder Society, Norfolk State University
- ACDA Eastern Division Urban Coalition Events, Philadelphia, PA and Washington, DC
- Festival of Voices, Lancaster, PA
- Give Us This Day (EOJ, EOJAS, Essence 2), Bellefonte, PA

As our performance agenda has emerged, so has our organizational structure and we've been blessed to have expert and professional leadership from each edition of our administrative team. Thank you Tim Abraham, Josh Edwards, Brandon Miller, and Brian Victor who have served as presidents of EOJAS. You are extraordinary men who have been patient, prepared, and personable in all that you have done to get us to this level.

To each singer who has attended rehearsals, traveled on planes, buses, and trains to help EOJAS to become the wonderful talented singing aggregation that we are, Thanks. My special thanks go to those members who have been with us since Day 1 and are still in place today. A few of these exceptional individuals are Melanie Gerald, Hadiyah Muhammad, Josh Edwards, Josh Womer, Brandon Miller, Brian Victor, Channie Waites, Ingrid Perez, Ashley Godshall, Tom Bonsaint, Linda Hoffman, and Jen Heller. Neal Holter and Darrin Thornton have been anchoring the accompaniment of EOJAS, EOJ, and Essence 2 for longer than a moment. I don't know where we would be without their support.

As we launch events during 2015, I want to encourage all of you to make time for EOJAS especially when we are close to your home turf. The only reason that we are able to sustain high standards in our choral performance is due to the wonderful and positive attitude that each singer brings to rehearsals and performances. EOJAS always comes ready to sing! Two special events that will celebrate our community in 2015 are the following:

Y'all Come Concert, Saturday, June 13, Penn State Great Valley

Tenth Anniversary Weekend, October 9 – 11, University Park

Y'all Come literally means "Y'all Come!" Singers have come from San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and points in between for the past two spring events in Philadelphia. All of the musical prep occurs on site so if you cannot be with us at any other time during 2015, this is one event that should not be missed. Dues are not required for singers to participate so come on down!

The Joy

- The mission of The Joy is to inform and to entertain. Contributions are always welcome. Please note that contributions become the property of EOJAS and may be edited for length or clarity.

Plans for the Tenth Anniversary Weekend will be announced as soon as possible. This Homecoming Concert will also be shared with EOJ since this is their normal Fall Campus Concert. My goal for this gala weekend will be to have as many original members of EOJ present (1991 – 1992) along with singers who graduated in 2015. Please do not feel left out of the plan if you graduated between 1993 and 2014! Your presence is required and most welcome. Let's get the word out.

When all is said, sung and done, just know that my life is rich beyond words because so many singers in EOJAS have shared their time, talent, and treasure to help us grow over the past nine years. As I start the process of wrapping up my full-time role in the Penn State School of Music, my artistic leadership with EOJAS will receive even more of my time this side of heaven.

From EOJAS - Kiena Williams

In this issue, we're delighted to feature Kiena Williams, a recent addition to EOJAS. Thank you Kiena!



1. What made you choose PSU?

I was born and raised in New York City, and I attended a specialized high school in Midtown Manhattan. As a first generation college student, I tried to pick a school that was totally different from where I grew up. Penn State was the right dose of "collegiate" for me. After meeting the faculty of the School of Music at my audition, I knew Penn State was for me.

2. What did you study and what have you been doing since graduation?

I studied Voice at Penn State with Professor Jennifer Trost. I have been working in an After School Program in the East Village, teaching step and working with the school-wide musical. I also serve as a praise and worship leader at my Local Church and will be acting as the Youth Choir director.

3. What made you decide to audition for EOJ? Tell us about your audition and/or when you found out you were in the group.

I had been in contact with Dr. Leach prior to actually coming to Penn State. I needed some help choosing a voice studio to enter into once I got to Penn State, and my high school choir director suggested that I contact Dr. Leach. She raved about EOJ and Dr. Leach's work. I didn't plan on joining freshman year, but I ran into Rachel Dungan in the lobby of the Music Building and she pretty much talked me into at least going to the audition. I was terrified to sing in front of Dr. Leach at first but eventually settled down. In the 6 minutes that I was up in front of everyone alone, I found out that Dr. Leach knew my former choir director and that he was familiar with my high school. (The pressure was

The Big Caveat

- The views expressed in this newsletter are the views of the authors alone and not necessarily those of the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers Board, its membership, or the Pennsylvania State University Alumni Association.

definitely on now.) The singing went by quickly and we moved to learning some choreography. All in all it was actually more fun than stress, and I got pretty excited about singing with EOJ.

4. You've performed frequently at home and on the road with Essence and with other groups. Can you share a memorable experience with our readers?

In May of 2013, we traveled abroad to Spain and France for 12 days. This was my very first trip abroad, and it was an unreal experience. We've sung for many different audiences at home and on the road who had been excited to host us and even more receptive to our musical offering, but the response that we received at our very first concert in Barcelona was incredibly overwhelming. I remember not feeling 100% health-wise and being a bit tired after traveling. All things considered we delivered an awesome high energy performance and the crowd went nuts! The already roaring applause turned into a synchronized series of quarter note claps among the audience. It was then that it sunk in that I was actually in Barcelona, Spain, sharing this precious gift of music with people that I absolutely adore. I sang *Anticipation* with tears in my eyes and gratitude in my heart. What a blessing to start out an amazing trip with such a great concert. The rest of the trip continued on the same route. It's an experience I'll never forget.

5. Many members of the choir have mentioned a favorite Dr. Leach quote and/or bit of advice. Can you share your favorite?

"Present and Accounted For." Among the many signature TL greetings, this is one I use on a daily basis when asked how I am doing. People usually welcome it with a chuckle of some kind, and I understand why. It's definitely not what you expect to hear when you ask how someone is doing. But I've learned the importance and value of your presence from Dr. Leach. It is our individual Presence that makes EOJ the special entity that it is. All of those personalities fueling and inspiring one another creates this unique space to make music in. Not only that, but being "Present and Accounted for" speaks volumes in an age where it is so easy to be physically in the room but missing mentally or emotionally on account of distractions (social media, technology at your fingertips etc.) That being said, it's with sincerity that I say that I am indeed present and accounted for, because it's a standard that I set for myself and it is a reminder of what was expected of us as students under Dr. Leach's direction.

6. Do you have a favorite EOJ song? Why is that one of your favorites?

I would have to say that I am in between *Jesus is King* and R. Nathaniel Dett's *Ave Maria*. Both are BEAUTIFUL pieces and stir something up in me emotionally every time I sing them. *Ave Maria* is really a work of art. The history alone of the song is so impressive. I appreciated having the opportunity to perform it on a number of different occasions in a number of different spaces.

7. I've often felt that Essence is like a family. Can you share a time when you felt the family dynamic?

I've always felt comfortable being myself when I am around people in Essence of Joy. Your Essence family appreciates you for who you are and are genuinely glad to see you and want to be around you. That being said, literally every Sunday night in college, the 10 minutes before rehearsal as we waited for Dr. Leach to stroll in was like a mini family reunion. After a long 4 days of being apart you could feel the love in the room as we gathered to rehearse and begin another jam-packed week. The rehearsal room just erupted with laughs, hugs, chit chat and everything else. It's definitely something small but it's that moment that I've felt closest to my Essence Family and I miss the most. Genuine Fellowship.

All Rights Reserved

- All content in this newsletter is the property of the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers unless otherwise specified. The content included in this document shall not be duplicated, used or disclosed, in whole or in part, for any purpose, without the express written permission of the Essence of Joy Alumni Singers.

EOJAS fan?

Join us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/EssenceofJoyAlumniSingers

From EOJ - Ashley Lope

This issue we speak with Ashley Lope in the EOJ Resident Choir. Ashley is pictured center with her sister Courtney (left) and Kelsey (right), who are both EOJ alums. Ashley took some time from her busy schedule to chat with us.



1. What made you choose PSU?

I spent the majority of my childhood in State College, and I guess I always knew I was destined to be a Nittany Lion! The further I searched for other colleges, the closer I came to choosing PSU. Call me biased, but this campus is practically impossible to beat.

2. What are you studying?

I am studying Elementary Education, with a minor in Human Development and Family Studies.

3. What made you decide to audition for EOJ?

My two older sisters, Kelsey and Courtney, were both a part of Essence during their time here at Penn State. I watched admiringly for years, knowing how much of an impact this family had on them, and was totally ecstatic when I, too, was welcomed into the family.

4. You've performed frequently at home and on the road with Essence and with other groups. Can you share a memorable experience with our readers?

Last year, our Spring Tour took us South, where we visited the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. As we approached the home church of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his family, we quickly realized that nothing could have prepared us for an experience such as this. On this morning, we had the honor of singing alongside the church's choir. Afterwards, we had the even greater honor of meeting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s sister, Christine King Farris. We visited Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s tombstone, alongside Coretta Scott's and made our way over to the original church. After a service full of raw emotion, fellowship, and worship, we took a moment to sit silently in the pews of the original church. Speakers surrounded us, echoing the voice of Dr. King, preaching the Gospel. At this moment, although no words were spoken, our choir became one. The lessons we learned that day were invaluable as we joined together in unity. I remember getting back on the bus, completely lost for words.

5. Many members of the choir have mentioned a favorite Dr. Leach quote and/or bit of advice. Can you share your favorite?

One of my favorite pieces of advice from Dr. Leach is a classic: Trust the process. As a baby in the choir, I remember thinking, "What the heck does he mean when he says that?" As I grew, I learned the importance of having a deep sense of trust in what cannot be seen. To trust the process, completely, is to not need to know what is unfolding or why, but to simply be here in the present

Contact the Board

Brian Victor (President)
president@eojas.org

Kristen Mowery
(Secretary)
secretary@eojas.org

Alan Honig (Treasurer)
treasurer@eojas.org

Rachel Dungan (VP of
Business Management)
vpbm@eojas.org

Sean Griffin (VP of
Production and
Operations)
vppo@eojas.org

Joshua Edwards (VP of
Development and
Fundraising)
vpdf@eojas.org

Heather McMunigal (VP of
Advertising, Marketing and
Public Relations)
vpampr@eojas.org

Dr. Anthony T. Leach
(Artistic Director)
artisticdirector@eojas.org

EOJAS Board
board@eojas.org

and to experience it. These simple three words have helped me to be a more intentional person and to *be present*.

6. Do you have a favorite EOJ song? Why is that one of your favorites?

I really don't know if I can think of just one favorite! However, there are a few that come to mind. *Total Praise* is up there, because it gets to my heart every time! *There is No Failure*, because this was a song I learned on stage during my first semester in the choir, and I have been in love ever since. And, of course, *Anticipation*. The way we end every concert is powerful. It is unexpected. It is impactful. Now those are experiences one cannot get tired of.

7. I've often felt that Essence is like a family. Can you share a time when you felt the family dynamic?

I had the honor of attending a funeral for a former Essence of Joy member. In attendance were multiple generations of the choir, from the very first edition all the way up to the current edition. Dr. Leach tells us all of the time that we stand tall on the shoulders of those that came before us. As we all gathered together as one choir, I realized that Essence is bigger than me, and it is bigger than the current edition of the choir. It truly is a family, and I learned that day that this family does not disappear when we leave Penn State.

8. Aside from joining EOJAS, what are your plans after graduation?

I hope to teach in a kindergarten through fourth grade classroom. I don't know where I'll be one year for now, but I am learning to *trust the process*.

EOJ - FTK!

Please take a moment to review the message below from Carly McCann, a member of the EOJ Thon Team.



Hello Essence of Joy Alumni Singers! My name is Carly McCann, and I am the 2015 Canning Chair for EOJ benefiting THON! For those who are not familiar with THON, it is a 46 hour no- sitting, no-sleeping dance marathon that raises millions of dollars every year for the Four Diamonds Fund and the Hershey Medical Center. EOJ is fortunate enough to have a wonderful Four Diamonds family that we support: The Keeners! Our THON child, Abby Keener, is battling leukemia. She is a bundle of joy! Abby and her family greatly appreciate having the support of EOJ. If you would like to send the Keeners a letter showing your support, please contact Maddy Mulert, the 2015 Overall Chair of EOJ THON (maddymulert@gmail.com). **If you would like to donate to the Four Diamonds Fund through Essence of Joy, please go to thon.org, click the donate now button, scroll down to the general organization tab, and click Essence of Joy. Thank you for your support!**

Do you Tweet?

Follow us on Twitter:
<http://www.twitter.com/EOJAlumni>

Life News

Got married? New baby on the way? Just graduated? The Joy would be happy to include your news and a photo in an upcoming issue. Just email vpampr@ejas.org.

Welcome New Members!

Please join The Joy and the EOJAS Board in welcoming our newly registered members. We're thrilled to have 6 recent graduates and 4 older alumni join our ranks.

Phil Bugaiski
Jessica Crawford
Karen Jones
Courtney Lope
Rebekah Mackley
Russell Poole
Emile Rochon
Lachele Vaughan
Kiena Williams
Eric Williamson

EOJ alum who have not yet registered can visit <https://members.eojas.org> to register today.

Board of Directors: Who's Who?

Meet the EOJAS Board of Directors!

President:
Brian Victor



What do you do in your board position?

My job is to keep the organization as a whole running smoothly. I make sure what we're doing is in line with our mission and strategies, and that our board communicates their activities to each other and to future board members. I'm also responsible for organizing the annual scholarship we give to an Essence Of Joy member.

When did you graduate?

2002

Where do you live?

New York City

What do you now do?

I music direct and play piano in musical theater, and program mobile apps and websites when music work is slow.

Contact Us

Essence of Joy Alumni
Singers
PO Box 15970
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Email: info@eojas.org

Vice President of Advertising,
Marketing, Public Relations:
Heather McMunigal

What do you do in your board position?

Lead the promotion of concert weekends,
manage EOJAS social media and email
campaigns

When did you graduate?

May, 2010

Where do you live?

Annapolis, MD

What do you now do?

I am the Business Manager for the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra.

What is your favorite piece that we perform?

Anything from Glenn Burleigh's *Born To Die* cantata



Vice President of
Development and Fundraising:

Joshua Edwards

What do you do in your board position?

Raise funds for current projects and
develop strategy for future endeavors

When did you graduate?

May 2001

Where do you live?

Philadelphia, PA

What do you now do?

I work as a medical technologist in the Molecular Pathology Laboratory at the
Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania

What is your favorite piece that we perform?

Jesus is a Rock because it can really get going with a lot of energy!



Vice President of Business
Management:

Rachel Dungan



What do you do in your board position?

Coordinate logistics while serving as the connector between the membership and the Board, the choir and our hosts, etc.

When did you graduate?

2012

Where do you now live?

New York City

What do you now do?

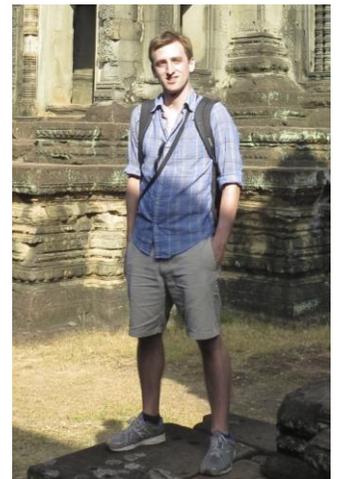
Finished an internship with UN Women, and working as a strategy consultant for organizations that operate at the intersections of civic engagement, community health, arts advocacy, and social impact work

What is your favorite piece that we perform?

Tough question... "Sweet By and By" (Diane White-Clayton) is easily among my favorites of all time. "Abide with Me" (Moses Hogan) and "Striving After God" (Undine Smith Moore) are up there too.

Vice President of Production
and Operations:

Sean Griffin



What do you do in your board position?

Support concert production

When did you graduate?

2009 (International Politics and Economics)

Where do you live?

Washington, DC

What do you now do?

In my second year of a Masters in International Development at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies

What is your favorite piece that we perform?

Glenn Burleigh's *Jesus is a Rock in a Weary Land* (in which I would prefer to be an alto).

Secretary:

Kristen Mowery

What do you do in your board position?

Record minutes and host recruiting events

When did you graduate?

2008

Where do you live?

Alexandria, VA

What do you now do?

Account Manager for a landscape company

What is your favorite piece that we perform?

It Is Well With My Soul. Kenneth Louis explained the meaning/story behind the text of the men's verse at a performance weekend in DC which changed my opinion on the entire song.



Treasurer:

Alan Honig

What do you do in your board position?

Try to maintain fiscal solvency!

When did you graduate?

2009

Where do you live?

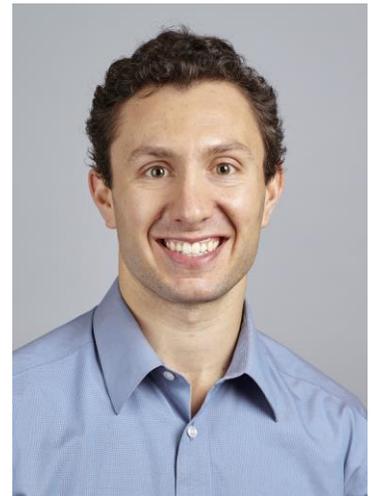
Philadelphia

What do you now do?

Risk Consultant – PwC

What is your favorite piece that we perform?

There Is No Failure - loud, energetic, fun



Recent Performances



Things are as busy as ever for EOJAS. We hope you will enjoy a short summary of some of our engagements from the first half of this season. The photo to the left shows EOJAS performing in November 2014. Photo courtesy of Gene Miller Photography.

Rehearsal Retreat: August 30, 2014 (Berwyn, PA)

We started off our 2014-2015 season with a gathering at St. Monica's Church in Berwyn, PA (where we'd had our final performance of last season). The retreat gave us an opportunity to meet new members, introduce new officers, and establish the musical foundation for the rest of our season. Thanks to support from our host, Frank Orman, EOJAS had another opportunity to perform at St. Monica's on January 24th and 25th.

Performance Weekend: September 20-21, 2014 (York, PA and Washington D.C.)

On Saturday, September 20th, EOJAS visited Zion United Methodist Church in York and was joined by the church's adult choir for an evening concert. The next day, we traveled to Washington DC, for an afternoon performance at the Church of the Redeemer in the celebration of their 56th anniversary.

Performance Weekend: October 18-19, 2014 (State College, PA)

EOJAS had a chance to visit friends at Trinity Lutheran Church in State College, for a weekend of music and worship. We participated in Trinity's Saturday evening worship service on the 18th and joined the church for two morning services the next day. Our host, Ron Miller, arranged for us to then enjoy a wonderful meal and time of fellowship.

Give Us This Day Benefit Performance: November 30, 2014 (Bellefonte, PA)

EOJAS celebrated Thanksgiving this year with the help of friends from Essence of Joy, Essence 2, and Faith Church. EOJAS member, Linda Hoffman, coordinated a joint effort on behalf of the three choirs that resulted in a wonderful shared performance! The Essence family came together to share a musical offering, with the help of talented soloists and musicians. We spent the afternoon with an enthusiastic audience of friends and family, who packed the Bellefonte Area High School auditorium. With their help, we've been able to raise over \$10,000 to support our friends at the Mogoshi Elementary School of South Africa and the United Methodist University project in Sierra Leone.

Performance Weekend: January 24-25, 2015 (Berwyn, PA)

EOJAS was back in Berwyn, early this year, for a weekend of performance and worship at St. Monica's Church. The choir performed for Sunday morning Mass at 11:00 am and offered an afternoon concert at St. Monica's at 3:00 pm. Many family members and friends were in the audience.

Give Us This Day Benefit Concert

We thank EOJAS member Linda Hoffman who coordinated our recent *Give Us This Day* Benefit Concert in Bellefonte, PA. You can read more about the collaborative event and what it benefitted below!



What a joy-filled day it was on November 30, 2014, at the Bellefonte High School in Bellefonte, PA! It was a day of firsts for the family of EOJ choirs-- Essence of Joy, Essence 2, and EOJAS. November 30th was the first time the three choirs had collaborated in a benefit concert. It was the first time we had sold tickets exclusively on-line, and we weren't sure what to expect. But we were excited to see the totals go all the way up to 500, and another 100 tickets sold at the door! The net proceeds benefited the Mogoshi Primary School in South Africa and the Sierra Leone University project in Pa Loko, Sierra Leone.

It was a shared vision that brought all three choirs together for music, fellowship, laughter, and hope. Many months prior, director Tony Leach and choir member and colleague Linda Hoffman conceived of an event that would feature the strengths of each of the choirs and respond to the previous warm



Photo courtesy of Gene Miller Photography

welcome that the Bellefonte community had offered in the past. As a member of the music ministry team at Faith United Methodist Church, located adjacent to the Bellefonte High School, Linda knew of the church's recently established relationship with a sister-church in Pa Loko, Sierra Leone. Faith Church had hosted Bishop John Yambasu from Sierra Leone the previous summer and was touched by his

sincerity and passion for his people. A bond of caring and support was created between the two churches, particularly in the months following the outbreak of ebola in that country. The Mogoshi Primary School in South Africa had been the recipient of funds from Essence 2 since the choir's trip to South Africa in 2008. It made sense to designate these two worthy causes as the beneficiaries of the Nov. 30 concert "Give Us this Day."

The event would not have been possible without the time, talent, and support of choir members, Faith Church members, and the Bellefonte School District. Mr. Luke Skerpon, director of Middle and High School choirs, served as liaison between the choirs and the school, recruiting student ushers and videographers, doing what needed done in a timely fashion. Dr. Cheryl Potteiger, district superintendent, welcomed the audience and introduced the pastor of Faith Church, Andy Morgan. A team of theater ushers from Faith Church and the high school assisted in seating patrons. Another Faith Church team prepared and served a delicious roast beef dinner to choir members following the concert. And last, but certainly not least, the choirs prepared music, shared information, circulated promotional materials and solicited ad sponsors.

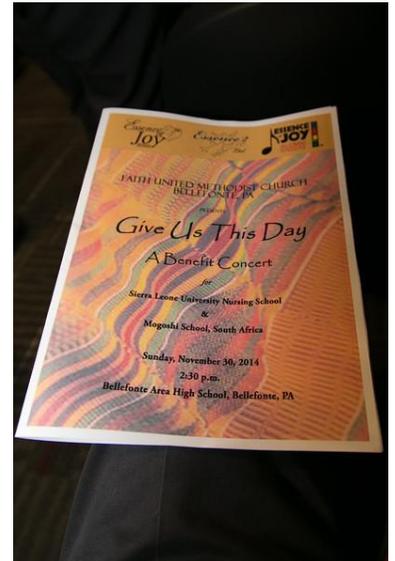


Photo courtesy of Gene Miller Photography

Indeed, it was a JOY-filled day! The singers were engaged, prepared and energized! The audience filled the theater with expectation! Music filled the air, and the hearts and souls of those who came to listen, and watch. Including generous financial contributions from each of the three choirs, a total of nearly \$10,000 was raised. Thank you, Dr. Leach for the vision. Thank you, Essence of Joy family, for the music. Thank you, ticketholders, for your presence! Together we were able to make a difference in the lives of others a world away -and yet as close as the harmonies that unite us!



Photo courtesy of Gene Miller Photography

Supporting EOJAS

On stage, EOJAS inspires our audiences by sharing the experiences of the African and African-American history and culture through exceptional music-making. In the classroom, we provide students and directors the opportunity to learn the meaning behind this music and the toolkit to express this meaning through performance. As an organization, we are highly committed to our vision and mission: to entertain, inspire, affirm, and unify the worldwide community.

Our membership of singers and our community of supporters help us provide world-class experiences, bringing singers from a wide distance an immersive experience. Supporters like you help bridge the gap between ticket sales and the cost of operation. You increase our reach and help us provide these exceptional offerings. Join us in making these goals a reality.

If you are able to support the efforts of EOJAS, please visit us at www.eojas.org/support.

Come See About Us

- Most EOJAS performances are open to the public. Aside from subscribing to 'The Joy,' you can also check the News section on [ejas.org](http://www.eojas.org) for information about future performances.

Follow EOJAS Online

- You can become a Fan of EOJAS on Facebook at: <http://www.facebook.com/EssenceofJoyAlumniSingers>
- You can follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/EOJAlumni

Tell Your Friends

- If you enjoyed your EOJAS performance, please invite your friends and family to join you for a future performance. Please encourage them to become a Friend of EOJAS by going to www.eojas.org and entering their email address to join our mailing list.

Support EOJAS With Your Time

- EOJAS is always eager for pro bono assistance. If you have skills in a particular field that you feel could be of assistance to the choir, please email info@ejas.org. If you are a lawyer who can assist with 501(c)3 issues, contracts, etc. we can use your help! If you are a graphic designer who can assist with marketing materials, we would like to hear from you. Do you have skills in grant writing or fundraising? We need that help too! Professional photographer or videographer with some extra film? Accountants and tax lawyers are always in need. Instrumentalists? We'd like to hear from you too. Thank you!

Stay tuned for the next issue of The Joy!