



Handbook

2022-23

GenOUT Youth Chorus
c/o Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC
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Washington, DC 20002
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Welcome



Dr. C. Paul Heins
GenOUT Director



Mr. Matty Mitchell
GenOUT Chorus Manager

Welcome to GMCW's GenOUT Youth Chorus! GenOUT is the DC area's only vocal ensemble for LGBTQ+ and allied youth and one of only nine such ensembles in the US. GenOUT is a self-selected choir; there are no auditions to join. We welcome all youth, ages 13-18, who love to sing, who want to raise their voice in support of social justice, and who enjoy working cooperatively with others.

We are committed to making GenOUT accessible to all area youth who want to participate; to this end, we have a robust scholarship program to support those with financial needs. The scholarship assistance helps with the annual membership fee, attire, and other program costs. If you need financial assistance, please reach out to the GenOUT Director so that arrangements can be made.

The 2022-23 season is GenOUT's ninth; the ensemble was founded in the 2014-15 season and began rehearsing in January 2015. This year's highlights include our shows with GMCW, our annual Youth Invasion show, outreach performances around the DC area, and a guest performance at the ACDA national convention in Cincinnati, OH in February. Following the goals of our Five-Year Plan, we will return to Wards 7-8 for regular rehearsals (once a month at THE ARC, starting in November) and our Youth Invasion shows. We aim to become a sustained, positive presence in southeast DC, and by doing so, we hope to attract more youth from this part of our region.

GenOUT is led by Director C. Paul Heins, and managed by Chorus Manager Matty Mitchell, along with a team of GenOUT Rehearsal Team (GORT) members and the GMCW community. All of us look forward to being mentors to GenOUTers as they learn to use their voices through song and connect those voices to the community.

Dr. C. Paul Heins	cpheins@gmcw.org	202-271-2689
Mr. Matty Mitchell	genoutmanager@gmcw.org	609-286-3127

Generally, e-mail is preferred for communication about GenOUT matters. If you are running late or have a question on the day of a GenOUT event, contact Mr. Mitchell by cell or text.



Mission & Membership

GenOUT's mission is "to give young LGBTQ+ and allied youth a voice through song, and to connect that voice to community." GenOUT is open to all youth ages 13-18 who love to sing, who want to raise their voice in support of social justice, and who enjoy working cooperatively with others. GenOUT is a self-selected ensemble; there are no auditions to join.

Guiding Principles

GenOUT's Values:

- **communication**
- **connection and empathy**
- **understanding others**
- **understanding ourselves**
- **being called to action**

In GenOUT, we S.I.N.C:

- S – Show the music in our voices, faces, and bodies**
- I – Inhale quietly, so that the focus is always on the music**
- N – Never sing louder than we can sing with a beautiful tone**
- G – Give our best effort to everything we do**

Statement of Inclusivity:

In GenOUT, we actively strive to make our community a welcoming place for all young people. We commit to anti-racism and to building bridges that invite and facilitate participation in our program. We understand that our message increases in its meaningfulness and power as we include more and more voices representing the full diversity of our Washington, DC home.

Administrative Expectations:

- We keep Chorus Connection profiles updated, including headshots, pronouns, and contact information.
- We use Chorus Connection as our go-to resource for GenOUT information.
- We check e-mail daily. When asked, we respond promptly to e-mails, texts, and other communications.
- We organize all our music in a plain, black, 3-ring binder.
- We return music promptly when asked.
- When we meet by Zoom, we make sure our name and pronouns are indicated in our Zoom profile and we keep our cameras on whenever possible.
- We follow attire guidelines, understanding that these help us look uniform and allow the audience to focus on us as an ensemble.

Personal Responsibilities to the GenOUT Community:

- We understand that the ensemble comes first.
 - We practice self-care, so that we can bring our best selves to the ensemble, and so that our energy can be focused on the ensemble.
 - We participate to the best of our ability, knowing this allows our ensemble to be the best we can be.
 - We are conscientious in our actions in rehearsal and between gatherings, knowing that all of these impact the ensemble's growth and the community's spirit and safety.
 - We honor the schedule, arriving and departing on time.
 - We commit to the entire calendar and do our best to avoid absences, knowing that we sound best when everyone's voice is included.
- We model GenOUT's guiding principles, even when no one is looking.
 - We practice regularly, knowing that a minimum of three practice sessions per week, at 30 minutes each, is expected to facilitate ensemble progress.
 - We write down the director's instructions in our music, using pencil only, knowing that these visual cues help keep the momentum going in our music-learning.
 - We challenge ourselves in rehearsal, in our at-home practice sessions, and in discussions.

- We commit to “being the music,” reflecting what we sing in the way we interact with others.
 - We honor the courage of vulnerability. When we need help, we reach out to our Section Leaders, adult leaders, and our fellow GenOUTers.
 - We are proactive in looking out for each other. We make sure everyone is connected, and we help those who need help or are on the sidelines, including those with differing learning styles.
 - We are proactive in welcoming guests and new members to our GenOUT community.
 - We are inclusive and reflective leaders whenever we can be.
 - We affirm the humanity of everyone in our community (including our adult leaders) and offer one another consistent gratitude and consideration.

Communication Guidelines:

- **ATTITUDE:** We enter all forms of communication with an attitude of cooperation, humility, openness, respect, support, and thoughtfulness. We trust that everyone is doing their best to do the same. We understand that everyone has a different background and we offer grace to those who may have a different understanding or knowledge base. We understand that we bring our own background, biases, and privilege to the conversation, and we are willing to address how those things affect what we know, how we feel, and how we react to ideas.
- **ASSUMPTIONS & CORRELATIONS:** When discussing a difficult topic, we pay attention to assumptions and correlations, knowing that they can sometimes help us organize information, but they can be wrong or discriminatory. We seek to understand and evolve our thinking when our assumption or correlation is a result of privilege.
- **BOUNDARIES:** We understand and respect the boundaries of any discussion, including time and topic. We also understand and respect our personal boundaries and the communicated boundaries of others. We give space (physical space and sound space) to ourselves and to others as needed. If a discussion becomes overheated, we listen more and talk less, and we step away if needed. When we see that someone has stepped away, we understand this to be a sign to refocus on boundaries and revisit our guidelines.
- **LISTENING:** We listen for understanding and with an openness to be changed.
- **SPEAKING:** We understand that words have power, and we consider the results of what we say and how we say it. We use “I” statements, speak for ourselves only, and we use a constructive tone and profanity-free language. We let others finish speaking before we speak. We are conscious of how much we have spoken, and create space for those who have not yet contributed.
- **THE PROCESS:** In discussions, we take respectful risks and we are vulnerable. We understand that the process of communication is as valuable as the outcome.

Leadership in GenOUT:

We believe that everyone in the GenOUT community has the capacity to be an effective leader, and we believe leadership is exemplified in the ABC’s of Attitude, Behavior, and Communication:

- Attitude:
 - Attitude is positive, even when not feeling 100% positive.
 - Attitude demonstrates awareness, respect, and concern for others.
 - Attitude is mission-oriented: always focusing efforts through our mission and guiding principles.
 - Behavior, shown in:
 - Leading through example;
 - Being prepared;
 - Mentoring; and
 - Accepting feedback with grace.
 - Communication, shown in:
 - Proactivity and reaching out;
 - Following up promptly; and
 - Nonverbal and verbal communication in alignment with our Communication Guidelines.
-

History of GenOUT, including notable performances

GMCW's artistic leaders have long had an interest in education of youth and of adults who work with youth. As early as 2003, then-Artistic Director Jeff Buhrman presented a teacher workshop on creating welcoming and trusting environments for gay and lesbian students, parents, and educators. (This workshop took place April 2, as part of the First Annual Educators Workshop, in collaboration with the National Association of Independent Schools and the Eastern Educational Resource Collaborative.) The next year, Buhrman initiated GMCW's school visit program, bringing small groups of GMCW singers to DC-area campuses to meet with students in Gay/Straight Alliances meetings, choir rehearsals, and all-school assemblies. The first visit, in April 2004, was to the Edmund Burke School, where GMCW sang selections from the musical adaptation of Oliver Button is a Sissy. Many school visits included a performance of "Make Them Hear You," from Ragtime, GMCW's signature song. Almost always, the visit would focus on making connections with students: listening to concerns, answering questions, and providing insights into the coming-out process and positive aspects of LGBTQ+ identity.

At the conclusion of a school visit in 2014, a teacher asked then-Associate Conductor Thea Kano if GMCW sponsored a chorus for LGBTQ+ youth. The answer was "no," but the idea was planted. In a conversation with then-Executive Director Chase Maggiano on the way home from the school visit, the idea was fleshed out, and a goal was set to establish a GMCW youth chorus in the 2014-15 season.

Dr. Kano succeeded Jeff Buhrman in August 2014. That same month, she hired Dr. C. Paul Heins as GMCW's new Assistant Conductor, with a charge to create and direct GMCW's youth chorus, to be called GenOUT. In the fall of 2014, Dr. Heins researched other GALA Youth Choruses and interviewed the leaders of these ensembles. (Seattle's Diverse Harmony and then-AD Brayton Bollenbacher provided key input.) He also reviewed and updated GMCW's list of DC-area schools, creating a database that would be used to communicate with teachers about the new chorus.



GenOUT's first GMCW
Holiday Show, 2015

GenOUT

GenOUT's first logo, 2015-2020



One of GenOUT's first outreach
performances, at UUCR, 2015-16

The first rehearsal of GenOUT took place at the Atlas Performing Arts Center on January 10, 2015. The first song GenOUT learned and performed was "Beautiful City," from *Godspell* (music & lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, arr. by Mac Huff). The first class of GenOUTers consisted of nine singers:

- Julia, from James Hubert Blake HS (Montgomery County, MD)
- Ernesto, from Woodrow Wilson HS (Washington, DC)
- Sammy, from George C. Marshall HS (Fairfax County, VA)
- Liza, from Richard Montgomery HS (Montgomery County, MD)
- Matthew, from Accotink Academy (VA private school)
- Fred, from Walt Whitman HS (Montgomery County, MD)
- Evie, from Wakefield HS (Arlington County, VA)
- Julia, from James Hubert Blake HS (Montgomery County, MD)
- Bree, from Edmund Burke School (DC private school)

As of August 2022, 127 youth from 75 schools have participated in GenOUT Chorus and Camps. Our signature song, "I Was Here," was first learned for GMCW's *Boots, Class, & Sass* show (Mar. 12 & 19-20, 2016) and has been featured at every *Youth Invasion* show since 2017, with alums invited to join us onstage to sing.



Singing "I Was Here" at *Boots, Class, & Sass* (Lincoln Theatre, March 12 & 19-20, 2016)



With Pres. Obama at the White House (June 9, 2016)



At GALA Choruses Festival in Denver, CO (July 2016)

Notable GenOUT performances:

- 2015 1st performance: GMCW's Spring Affair (The Mayflower Hotel, 5/2), 1st show: GMCW's *Born This Way*, Lincoln Theatre, 5/15-16), Kennedy Center Millennium Stage (with Rock Creek Singers, 12/5)
- 2016 GMCW's 35th anniversary show (Kennedy Center Concert Hall, 5/8), White House Pride Celebrations (6/9, 18, & 26), GALA Choruses Festival (7/4-6 in Denver, CO)
- 2018 National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce national dinner (11/16 at the National Building Museum), interment of Matthew Shepard's ashes (10/26 at Washington National Cathedral)
- 2019 DC HS Choir Festival (1/30 at Washington National Cathedral), Library of Congress (4/3), Tour of VA & TN (4/13-15), installation of memorial plaque for Matthew Shepard (12/3 at Washington National Cathedral), collaboration with The Washington Chorus (Kennedy Center Concert Hall, 12/22)



Singing "Caitlyn" and "You Will Be Found" on *TransAmerica* (Lincoln Theatre, June 2-3, 2018)



Tour to Tennessee & Virginia (April 13-15, 2019)



Field Trip Day, 2019 Camp (July 17, 2019)

- 2020 Chorus America National Board meeting (1/11), Regional Tour (including DC HS Choir Festival at Washington National Cathedral, 1/29)
- 2021 13 virtual choir recordings made during the COVID-19 pandemic shut-down
- 2022 Washington Wizards game (3/4 at Capital One Arena), Cosmos Club (3/15), Tour of NYC (7/24-26 including first-ever performance by an LGBTQ+ youth choir at The Stonewall Inn on 7/26)
- 2023 ACDA National Conference (2/22-25 in Cincinnati, OH)



Regional Tour performance (Burgundy Farm Country Day School, 1/29/20)



Singing the national anthem at Washington Wizards game (3/4/22)



Taping "Write My Own Story" for NBC4's Pride Month program (5/14/22)

Youth Invasion – GMCW’s annual show highlighting GenOUT – was introduced in 2017. Each Youth Invasion show includes a guest ensemble with whom GenOUT collaborates on several songs. The following is the list of Youth Invasion shows, locations, and collaborating ensembles:

- 2017 show at Atlas Performing Arts Center (2/11) – Arlington Children’s Chorus (Kevin Carr, AD)
- 2018 show at Atlas PAC (2/10) – The MusicianShip’s Washington Youth Choir (Greg Watkins, AD)
- 2019 show at UDC Theatre of the Arts (4/6) – GMCW Small Ensembles (Thea Kano, AD)
- 2020 show at Live at 10th & G (2/22) – Children’s Chorus of Washington (Margaret Nomura Clark, AD)
- 2021 virtual *Youth Invasion* show (streamed 4/24-5/9)
- 2022 shows* at THEARC (4/23) and Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library (4/24) – Mosaic Harmony (David North, AD) * first double performance and highest audience count: 4/23 = 133, 4/24 = 192



Other GALA Youth Choruses

As of August 2022, GALA Choruses (the umbrella organization of LGBTQ+ choruses in North America) lists nine active LGBTQ+ youth choruses in the United States:

- Diverse Harmony (Seattle, WA) – founded 2002 (the US’s first queer youth chorus)
- Youth Pride Chorus (New York City, NY) – founded 2003
- Omaggio Youth Chorus (Phoenix, AZ) – founded 2012
- Bridging Voices LGBTQ and Allied Youth Chorus (Portland, OR) – founded 2013
- GenOUT (Washington, DC) – founded 2015
- Major Minors (Nashville, TN) – founded 2017
- THEM Youth Ensemble (Tucson, AZ) – founded 2018
- San Diego Queer Youth Chorus (San Diego, CA) – founded 2019
- SingOUT KC Youth Chorus (Kansas City, MO) – founded 2019

GenOUT has collaborated with Nashville Major Minors in 2019 and 2022. In April 2019, GenOUT toured the Nashville area with NMM. That summer, NMM joined GenOUT for its annual summer camp in DC. In July 2022, NMM joined GenOUT again for summer camp; afterwards, the two choruses traveled to NYC, where they performed, engaged in community service, and enjoyed sight-seeing.



With Nashville Major Minors in Nashville, TN
(April 2019)



With NMM at the historic Stonewall Inn, NYC
(July 26, 2022)

GenOUT's Five-Year Plan

The 2022-23 season will be Year 3 of GenOUT's five-year plan to make our membership representative of the people of the Washington, DC area. We believe our singing will be more resonant and our social justice efforts will have greater impact when we include the voices, ideas, goals, and energy of the diverse people in Washington. This project will inaugurate a regular GenOUT rehearsal space in DC's Ward 8, providing current members with an opportunity to become part of the Ward 8 community, and providing prospective members from southeast DC an accessible and attractive option to sing in GenOUT. (Ward 8's population is 92% African-American; GenOUT's youth membership is currently and historically largely white-identified.) To ensure sustainability, this project will go hand-in-hand with relationship-building in schools, organizations, and faith communities in southeast DC's Wards 7 and 8. A goal is to find a long-term partner in southeast DC to host rehearsals beginning in January 2023.

This effort is special because it was born out of — and is led in collaboration with — the youth of GenOUT. GenOUTers' interest in understanding their own complicity in systemic racism and their desire to be positive change agents came to a head in January 2020, during rehearsals of "No Mirrors in My Nana's House" (by Ysaÿe M. Barnwell). Discussions about the lyrics to "No Mirrors" sparked us to question who we think we are and who we actually are. We prided ourselves in being an ensemble "for all," but were we accessible to all? We claimed to uplift marginalized voices, but how many pieces of music were we regularly programming by composers of color? Did people of color see themselves reflected in the faces of GenOUTers? These hard questions were asked by our own youth singers, and it was this set of questions that launched our racial justice work, with the ultimate goal of making our ensemble truly welcoming to all, and crucially, to the youth of color whose voices have been largely unheard in GenOUT.

We recognized at the outset that we could not become change agents of anti-racism without first understanding what brought us to this place, and that it would be hubris to make a plan without first hearing the voices of people of color. Our first year centered on developing awareness and identifying goals. In Year 2 (2021), we reached out to potential partners and established a presence in southeast DC, programming our annual Youth Invasion concert at a venue in Ward 8. In 2022 (Year 3), we will build on our relationships by establishing a regular rehearsal presence in southeast DC and planning for the continuation of that presence in subsequent years. Once the COVID-19 pandemic is under control, and we can safely and consistently perform at outreach events (hopefully in 2023, Year 4), we will reserve a quarter of our outreach performances to venues in Wards 7 and 8. In 2024 (Year 5), we plan to take our new GenOUT Chorus to the quadrennial GALA Choruses Festival in Minneapolis, where we also hope to present to the choral community about how we made this plan work and what our next steps are.

At the end of our five-year initiative, we believe GenOUT will be a stronger, more diverse community that will be a model for other ensembles who seek to address underrepresentation. We know that singers and their families benefit both personally and musically from involvement in GenOUT, and we look forward to extending this benefit to even more youth and families around the Washington, DC area.

Timeline of the Five-Year Plan

- 2020 **Identification of the Challenge**, notably the lack of diverse racial and geographic representation in our youth chorus, as well as the systems in place that have prevented us from attracting people of color to sing with us.
- Developing Awareness and Knowledge**, notably through assigned readings, podcasts, and videos and special presentations that built awareness of the people, places, and policies that are part of the racist past and present, and which are major components of our own biases and aspects of privilege. A significant contributor to this process was educational consultant Heidi Ellis, whom we hired to identify resources and steer our discussions.
- Inspiring a Commitment to Change**, notably through the adoption of goals, a proactive focus on composers of color for our repertoire in 2020-21 and thereafter, the addition of racial justice work as an expectation in permission forms (which singers and parents must sign), and the continued investment of 25% of rehearsal time to social justice work and community-building. (Goals, as identified by the community of youth and adults in GenOUT, are: (1) build awareness of the people, places, and policies that are part of the racist past and

present, as well as our own biases and aspects of privilege; (2) inspire and empower GenOUTers to fight racial injustice; and (3) make GenOUT proactively welcoming to people of color.)

- 2021 **Continued Skill Development**, notably the inclusion of social justice work and community-building in regular rehearsals and seeking mentors of color to work with youth (i.e., building infrastructure that reflects the diversity we seek in our youth members).
Scheduling Programs in DC'S Wards 7 & 8, notably selecting THE ARC (in Ward 8) for one of our Spring 2022 Youth Invasion concerts.
Investigating Options for Partnerships, notably researching LGBTQ-friendly faith communities in Wards 7 & 8 and inviting these communities to join our Partners in Harmony program and attend our concerts.
- 2022 **Follow-through with Partnerships**, notably meeting with people connected to venues in Wards 7 & 8: venues that could host GenOUT rehearsals starting in Spring 2023. To demonstrate our commitment to the area, we will seek to rent THE ARC for monthly rehearsals throughout the 2022-23 season.
Becoming a Presence in the Community, notably through our Spring 2022 Youth Invasion concert at THE ARC, through community service such as park clean-up events in Wards 7 & 8, and through rehearsals at THE ARC (pending reservation acceptance) throughout the 2022-23 season. Professional staff will schedule meet-and-greets with music educators in Wards 7 & 8, to learn more about their students and their needs, and to share information about our program.
Mid-point Planning and Evaluation, to study outcomes of efforts thus far, reassess and recommit to goals (reflecting those outcomes), and determine resources needed and youth and adult roles in the next steps.
- 2023 **Continued Presence in the Community**, through the identification of a permanent host in southeast DC for half of our regular rehearsals and through a return to THE ARC (or another venue in southeast DC) for the Spring 2023 Youth Invasion concert.
Outreach to Schools, Organizations, and Faith Communities, assuming that the local health situation permits us to return to outreach performances. (Pre-pandemic, GenOUT performed a dozen outreach performances annually.) In 2023 and thereafter, we will reserve 25% of those outreach performances for venues in Wards 7 & 8.
- 2024 **Performing at 2024 GALA Choruses Festival**, showcasing a youth chorus that accurately represents the racial and geographic diversity of the DC metro area.
Sharing with the Community, notably the choral community, where similar challenges are faced by many choirs. We will request opportunities to present at the GALA Festival, ACDA events, and other professional gatherings about our five-year transformation and about our ongoing efforts and plans to sustain it.
Maintenance, Nurturing, and Development, notably evaluating progress, identifying new or unmet challenges and the resources and leaders needed to meet them, and implementing work on future plans.

Administration

Permission Form

The permission form is required before participating in person in GenOUT. The permission form must be completely filled out, with all necessary signatures included. Permission forms are retained in electronic form in a private section of Chorus Connection, accessible only to adult leaders in emergency situations. The permission form includes:

- General information about the GenOUTer and Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
- Media release
- Emergency medical information, including any information that can help adult leaders keep the GenOUTer safe and respond efficiently and effectively to emergencies

The information in permission forms is used for administrative and emergency purposes, so if your legal name or any of your contact info changes at any point during the season, you are required to complete and submit an updated form and update your info on Chorus Connection.

The permission form includes a release, which parents/guardians must sign. It states: "My child is able to participate in all activities of the GenOUT Youth Chorus without any health concerns. I hereby authorize an adult representative of GMCW/FCPAA/GenOUT to give consent for all reasonable emergency medical, surgical, and/or dental treatment prescribed by a duly licensed physician or dentist for my child in a medical emergency. I acknowledge that even though reasonable efforts are made to provide a safe, accident-free environment, incidents may occur. For myself and for and on behalf of my child-participant, I forever discharge and agree to hold harmless GMCW/FCPAA/GenOUT and its officials and employees from any and all liability, claims, or demands for personal injury, sickness, or death, as well as property damage and expenses of any nature whatsoever which may be incurred by the undersigned and the child-participant that occur while participating in the above-described program."

Membership Fee

GenOUTers joining in September pay \$150 for the year; those joining in January pay \$90; those joining in April pay \$45. Membership fees are due by the first in-person activity and can be paid on Chorus Connection via the Payments Center (under My Account). **No one is turned away from GenOUT for an inability to pay the membership fee; scholarships are available up to 100%.** When paying the membership fee, indicate what you can pay, and GenOUT will pay the rest.

Attire

We take pride in a uniform look that allows the audience to focus on us as an ensemble. All singers are expected to follow attire guidelines. Anyone needing assistance locating or paying for attire should contact the GenOUT Director at the start of the semester, so that there is plenty of time to order what is needed. Financial assistance is available for anyone who needs it, no questions asked. Because financial assistance is available to obtain exactly what is needed, any GenOUTer who appears at a performance wearing the wrong attire may be ineligible to perform. The GenOUT Director has final approval on all aspects of attire.

GenOUT's formal attire is all-black, with these components:

- plain black, long-sleeved, button-down-the-front, collared, dress shirt
 - well-fitting: not too baggy, not too tight
 - must have black buttons
 - no substitute or additional colors or patterns, including interior collar
 - sleeves must be fully extended
 - one button undone from the top, unless wearing a tie, in which case all must be buttoned
 - untucked is okay if the shirt is designed to be untucked
 - undershirts should not be visible
 - clean and ironed
- plain black dress pants or long skirt (no jeans)
 - no substitute or additional colors or patterns
 - clean and ironed
- plain black belt if your pants or skirt has belt loops
 - silver buckle preferred
 - no substitute or additional colors
 - no patterns, studs, or appliqué
- black socks or hose
 - no skin showing between the end of the pants or skirt and the beginning of the shoes

- black dress shoes
 - no boots or chunky heels / platforms / rises
 - if heeled, low heels only
 - you should be able to walk quietly and with good poise in the shoes
- other:
 - the only skin showing should be your head, your neck, and your hands
 - hair should be washed and combed/brushed
 - long hair should be gathered behind your shoulders
 - jewelry should be minimal and not distracting
 - makeup must be limited: it should not draw attention to yourself (i.e., be a "costume")
 - baubles are for Lincoln shows only

GenOUT's informal attire has several options, including:

- GenOUT tee-shirt and blue jeans
 - assigned GenOUT tee-shirt
 - dark blue jeans
 - well-fitting: not too baggy, not too tight
 - no rips or tears
 - see color exemplar below
 - no substitute or additional colors or patterns
 - plain black belt
 - silver buckle preferred
 - no substitute or additional colors
 - no patterns, studs, or appliqué
 - black socks or hose
 - no skin showing between the end of the pants or skirt and the beginning of the shoes
 - black shoes
 - no boots or chunky heels / platforms / rises
 - if heeled, low heels only
 - you should be able to walk quietly and with good poise in the shoes
- GenOUT tee-shirt and tan shorts, skirt, or pants
 - assigned GenOUT tee-shirt
 - tan shorts, skirt, or pants
 - well-fitting: not too baggy, not too tight
 - no rips or tears
 - see color exemplar below
 - no substitute or additional colors or patterns
 - comfortable walking shoes of your choice, but no boots, chunky heels / platforms / rises, or sandals / flip-flops

Color exemplars:



Dark Blue – for jeans



Tan – for shorts, skirt, or pants

Attire exemplars:



All-black formal attire



GenOUT tee-shirt, dark blue jeans



GenOUT tee-shirt, tan shorts

Chorus Connection

Chorus Connection is your go-to resource for all things related to GenOUT. Below is an overview of the different sections of the site:

- **HOME**
 - Upcoming events
 - General information
 - Archive of e-mails sent to the entire membership
 - **MEMBERS** – “FaceBook for GenOUT,” with a profile for every GenOUTer, one parent of every GenOUTer, and all adult leaders
 - All members of the community are expected to post a face picture, to help everyone get to know each other. This picture should show your full face and should not be processed with any filters.
 - All members of the community are expected to keep their profiles updated with contact information, tee-shirt size, birthday, fun facts, and “about me” info.
 - **CALENDAR** – your source for all upcoming rehearsals, performances, and other GenOUT events. Clicking on a calendar entry will reveal more information, including location, call time, schedule, attire, and other pertinent information. You can subscribe to the CC Calendar so that all entries are synced to your computer/cell phone calendar.
 - **MUSIC** – for each title, you will find:
 - A downloadable copy of the music, usually with the extension .pdf.
 - Part recordings for each part, to be used in your at-home practice, usually with the extensions .m4a.
 - Links to other resources, such as YouTube recordings of other ensembles’ performances.
 - **FILES** – including databases for:
 - GenOUT community birthdays
 - GenOUT parents
 - GenOUT roster
 - **BULLETIN BOARD** – a place to post events and information not directly related to GenOUT, such as school plays and concerts, community-building events, and special opportunities.
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GenOUT Policies

The policies outlined here are intended to provide a protective framework for the GenOUT program of the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC.

Overview

1. [GenOUT Policies](#) – outlines how GenOUT protects, directs, and connects GenOUTers, including:
 - a. Guidelines on adult/youth contact;
 - b. Guidelines on dressing rooms and holding areas;
 - c. Guidelines on transportation; and
 - d. Guidelines on participation in GMCW by adults who are listed on Sex Offender Registries.
2. [GenOUT Chorus Rules & Expectations](#) – outlines the behaviors that GenOUTers must demonstrate in order to participate in the program, including:
 - a. Following instructions;
 - b. Respecting others;
 - c. Participating fully in the rehearsal and performance schedule;
 - d. Dressing appropriately; and
 - e. Staying focused on the community by not engaging in intimate relations (a.k.a. "PDA").
3. [GenOUT Rehearsal Team Guidelines](#) – outlines the following:
 - a. Who may participate in the GenOUT Rehearsal Team;
 - b. What GenOUT Rehearsal Team members typically do during rehearsals; and
 - c. Information about Background Checks.
4. [GenOUT Chaperone Guidelines](#) – outlines the responsibilities of adult supervisors at GenOUT events, including:
 - a. Signing youth in and out;
 - b. Promoting youth focus;
 - c. Maintaining youth safety; and
 - d. General supervisory/mentoring responsibilities that may be needed.

1. GenOUT Policies (8/6/18, rev. 8/3/22)

The mission of GenOUT is to (1) give LGBTQ+ and allied youth a voice through song, and (2) to connect that voice to community. The second part of our mission is facilitated in large part by positive, nurturing interactions with members of GMCW's adult community. The goal of these policies is to articulate how GMCW **protects** (i.e., ensures the safety of), **directs** (i.e., imparts knowledge and skills to), and **connects** (i.e., points out resources and opportunities to) GenOUTers.

How does GMCW protect GenOUTers?

GMCW ensures that GenOUT is a "safe space" for all (youth and adults) with regards to:

- the unique expression of self;
- the respect owed to every individual;
- the courteous, thoughtful expression of ideas; and
- the exploration of one's voice and musical skills.

GMCW protects GenOUTers outside of rehearsals and performances

- Any suspected case of abuse or neglect of a GenOUT singer will be reported to appropriate authorities.

GMCW protects GenOUTers in their rehearsal and performance spaces

- GenOUT ensures that access to rehearsal space is limited to participants, parents/guardians, rehearsal team members, and invited guests. Locked points of entry are overseen by receptionists and/or security staff, and entrances to the gathering spaces are overseen by GenOUT Rehearsal Team members and/or chaperones.

- GenOUT ensures that gathering spaces (such as backstage holding areas at performances) are overseen by parent/guardian chaperones and/or background-checked GenOUT Rehearsal Team members.
- GenOUT provides chaperones with guidelines that foster positive adult-child interactions in gathering spaces (such as backstage areas at performances.) SEE: GenOUT Chaperone Guidelines.

GMCW protects GenOUTers and the organization in interactions among GenOUT singers and GMCW

- Policies about background checks:
 - GMCW ensures that all of its staff as well as multiple persons serving on the GenOUT Rehearsal Team have been background checked by third-party vendor Validity Screening Solutions.
 - No GMCW member may participate on the GenOUT Rehearsal Team without first obtaining the approval of the Artistic Director and GenOUT Director.
 - No GenOUTer is ever in rehearsal or at an event without the presence of a background-checked adult and/or a parent/guardian chaperone.
 - As a general rule, at least two adults are in the room/space with the GenOUTers at all times, and one of the adults must be background-checked. Only limited exceptions to the “two adults” rule occur; three examples are individual voice checks, individual tutoring, and leading students from one room/space to another.
- Interactions among GenOUT singers and GMCW members are to be professional and beyond reproach at all times. Interactions include written (including e-mail and text), verbal, and physical forms.
- Written communications to GenOUT students (including e-mails, texts, social media, and letters) are not initiated by GMCW members, nor do GMCW members “follow” individual GenOUT members on social media; instead, these written communications are coordinated by the Artistic Director (Thea Kano) and/or the GenOUT Director (Paul Heins), and are generally limited to:
 - Information about GenOUT events;
 - Information about youth events of particular interest to GenOUT students;
 - Notes and cards expressing get-well wishes, congratulatory wishes, etc. (In some instances, GMCW members may be asked to sign letters or cards to illustrate the community of support.)
- GenOUT singers and GMCW members are prohibited from interacting via dating sites or applications (such as, but not limited to, Grindr, Growlr, Manhunt, Recon, Scruff, and Tinder). In the event that a GMCW member encounters a GenOUT singer on such a site or application, he/she/they are not to engage with the GenOUT singer. If the GMCW member is pursued by the GenOUT singer, the GMCW member should inform the Artistic Director (Thea Kano) and/or the GenOUT Director (Paul Heins), who will address the matter directly with the GenOUT singer.
- Verbal communication with GenOUT students should foster positive, nurturing community. Topics of conversation should never include sex, or be of a subject matter inappropriate to or outside of the mentoring relationship, or contradict a known or obvious parental instruction. Kind words and smiles are ALWAYS welcome!
- In most cases, there should be no physical contact between a GenOUT singer and a GMCW singer, production member, or volunteer except in such limited circumstances as:
 - helping with theatrical blocking or choreography;
 - assisting with outer components of a costume in full view of additional chaperones;
 - assisting students in pedagogical demonstrations relevant to musical and theatrical instruction (e.g., helping a student place his/her/their hands in such a way as to feel the activation of intercostal muscles in a breathing exercise, or helping a student position his/her/their feet for a choreographic move);
 - a handshake;
 - a brief pat on the back (e.g., as an expression of congratulations); and
 - a brief, congratulatory hug if initiated by the student.
- Following up on our Day One Pledge, all members of the GMCW community are reminded that we will tolerate no bullying, no harassment, and no mistreatment of any GenOUT singer by another GenOUT singer, by a GMCW singer, or by a member of the GMCW artistic staff, production team, or volunteers. Similarly, GMCW will also tolerate no bullying, no harassment, and no mistreatment by any GenOUT singer, directed to another GenOUT singer, to a GMCW singer, or to a member of the GMCW artistic staff, production team, or volunteers. These behaviors are

likely to result in immediate and permanent exclusion from the GenOUT program, at the discretion of the Artistic Director.

GMCW protects the GenOUT experience

- GenOUT singers who violate GenOUT Expectations may have his/her/their opportunities limited or may be dismissed from the ensemble. SEE: GenOUT Expectations.

GMCW protects the privacy of GenOUTers in Dressing Room and Holding Room situations

- GenOUT Chorus members will usually have their own green room (i.e., separate from adult GMCW singers) for every mainstage performance with the GMCW.
- Generally, the GenOUT green room is a "holding area;" i.e., GenOUT students should arrive to rehearsals or performances fully dressed in concert attire.
- At least two adult chaperones will be present whenever GenOUT members are in the green room.
- Only those adults who have assigned roles with GenOUT are to be in the GenOUT Chorus green room. Primary examples are:
 - Chaperones assigned to specific shifts;
 - GMCW staff (including artistic staff, production team leadership, and choreographers);
 - GenOUT Rehearsal Team members;
 - GMCW soloists; and
 - Stage crew.
- The primary reasons for an adult to be in the GenOUT green room are:
 - Chaperoning;
 - Reviewing music, blocking, choreography, and/or logistics; and
 - Warming up;
 - Costume fitting (always in full view of another chaperone);
 - Retrieving GenOUT singers for a cue.
- Sometimes, a GMCW member or volunteer may need to pass through to pick up something in the GenOUT green room or an adjacent space. Chaperones are empowered to use their judgment and usher out those who have no reason to be there.

GMCW protects GenOUTers in their arrival to / departure from events and transportation to and from events

- A parent/guardian of a GenOUT singer may indicate in writing if/when their child may leave the venue (and under what circumstances) at the end of an event and/or for breaks.
- No GMCW member may provide a GenOUT singer with private transportation *except in emergency situations at the discretion of GMCW staff* unless both of the following requirements are in place:
 - Two adults must be present in the vehicle; and
 - Advance, written permission must be provided by the GenOUT singer's parent. The note of permission must include the date(s) of transportation and the name(s) of the driver(s).
- When a GMCW member has permission to provide private transportation to a GenOUT singer, he/she will call or text the GenOUT singer's parent(s)/guardian(s) before departing and will indicate an approximate time of arrival.

GMCW protects GenOUTers from interactions with persons known by GMCW to be on a Sex Offender Registry

- GMCW recognizes that successful reintegration into society after a criminal offense usually requires ongoing support structures. For many in GMCW, the Chorus is a significant support structure. GMCW also recognizes the priority of keeping our GenOUT students safe and providing them with a positive, nurturing community in which individual identities are acknowledged and celebrated. In order to maintain the safety of GenOUT students, GMCW requires that any member listed on a Sex Offender Registry must inform the Artistic Director (Thea Kano) and/or the GenOUT Director (Paul Heins) of this status. This information will be kept private.
- Regardless of the parameters of a member's probation, the following courses of action will be in place:
 - The member is prohibited from any written and any physical contact with any GenOUT student.
 - The member is prohibited from any verbal contact with any GenOUT student, with the limited exception of occasional, incidental conversation, such as responding "hi" to a student who has greeted you, or saying "thank you" to a student who has said "that was a great show."
- Depending on the parameters of a member's probation, the following courses of action may be in place:

- The member may be required to submit documentation from his/her/their probation officer outlining protection parameters.
- The member may be required to enlist a mentor (vetted by GMCW staff) who would assist him/her/them in staying within protection parameters AND would report to GMCW staff.
- The member may be prohibited from participating in an event or performance that includes GenOUT.

How does GMCW direct GenOUTers?

GMCW directs GenOUTers in the acquisition of skills in singing and performing through:

- Weekly rehearsals, scheduled from September through June, led by trained music educators and augmented by vetted rehearsal team members;
- Workshops and special presentations, included in many rehearsals, to work with trained specialized instructors in such areas as choreography, American Sign Language, and leadership development; and
- Summer camp and retreats, providing additional opportunities for music/performance instruction.

GMCW directs GenOUTers in the acquisitions of such life skills as effective time management and communication through:

- Workshops and special presentations, included in many rehearsals, which from time to time may be focused on group discussions and special presentations on life skills;
- Schedule coordination, via advance communication of rehearsal and performance conflicts;
- Access to GMCW leaders to communicate questions and attendance issues, along with the expectation that such communication is done in a timely manner that respects the leader, the ensemble, and the guidelines for membership;
- Opportunities for the expression of ideas (through group discussions, etc.) as well as to promote the ensemble (at events such as Youth Pride);
- Opportunities for the development of leadership skills, via Student Leader positions, presentations, and informal roles (such as line-leaders, ASL coaches, discussion leaders, etc.); and
- Summer camp and retreats, providing additional opportunities for skill acquisition.

How does GMCW connect GenOUTers?

GMCW connects GenOUTers to resources and opportunities that:

- Increase their understandings of LGBTQ+ history and their place in it;
- Link their voices to the community (notably including members of the GMCW, our audiences, and GenOUT alums);
- Increase their capacity to understand and appreciate themselves; and
- Increase their skills in relating to others and to new situations.

GMCW connects GenOUTers via such resources as:

- A regular GenOUT communication (e.g., weekly e-mail or newsletter);
- Chorus Connection application; and
- Scholarships, which ensure that every student may participate regardless of his/her/their financial capabilities.

2. GenOUT Chorus Rules & Expectations (7/26/18, rev. 8/3/22)

As part of the Permission Form completed and submitted every season, GenOUT participants and parents/guardians agree to participate in the GenOUT Chorus and to appear in public performances with the GenOUT Chorus and/or the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, DC. By signing the Permission Form, participants and parents/guardians agree to follow the rules listed here and to meet the expectations required for all participants in the GenOUT Chorus.

1. GenOUT Chorus participants will follow instructions as given by chorus staff, adult volunteers, and adult chaperones. Instructions may be provided verbally or in written form (including by e-mail and text).
2. GenOUT Chorus participants will always behave in a way that is respectful to self and to others.
3. GenOUT Chorus participants will not use or be under the influence of any illegal substances (including prescription drugs not specifically prescribed to the user) at any time during GenOUT Chorus events.

Since all GenOUT Chorus participants are under the age of 21, this applies to the consumption of alcohol, either privately or publicly.

4. GenOUT Chorus participants will not use tobacco products at any time during GenOUT Chorus events, either privately or publicly. This applies to all GenOUT Chorus participants regardless of age.
5. **GenOUT Chorus participants are expected to participate fully in the rehearsal and performance schedule.** “Flaking out” (e.g., a late-notice cancellation) is not an option. Punctuality and preparedness for all events are expected. Students with excessive absences or who demonstrate lack of preparation may be excluded from performances, at the discretion of the artistic staff. If a GenOUT Chorus participant is not able to attend an event on the Chorus schedule, the singer must notify GenOUT Director Paul Heins at cpheins@gmcw.org with as much advance notice as possible.
6. Music assigned to GenOUT Chorus members will be protected from damage. Rehearsal markings will be added in pencil only. Music will be promptly returned when instructed. If a GenOUT Chorus member leaves the ensemble, that member must promptly return all music.
7. GenOUT Chorus participants are expected to dress appropriately. For rehearsals, casual attire is expected (unless directed to wear costumes or other specific attire). Modesty is expected at all times. Attire guidelines are precisely described in the Handbook; no deviations are permitted. The artistic staff will announce attire specifics before each show. Any questions or disputes on the appropriateness of attire are determined by the artistic staff.
8. No GenOUT Chorus participant shall engage in behavior that will endanger others or themselves. If someone around a GenOUTer is behaving in an unsafe way, that GenOUTer is expected to leave the situation immediately and tell chorus staff, adult volunteers, or the adult chaperones available at that time.
9. No GenOUT Chorus participant shall have intimate relations with another GenOUT Chorus participant during a GenOUT Chorus event.
10. Private one-to-one interactions between a GenOUT Chorus participant and GMCW staff or volunteers are discouraged. For situations that require personal meetings, the meeting shall be conducted in view of other members or in safe public settings.
11. Any suspected case of sexual misconduct shall be reported to a GMCW staff member immediately. The staff or chorus leadership will initiate contact with the appropriate investigative agencies and offer assistance to the affected individual(s).
12. In the event of misconduct, GenOUT Chorus participants may be sent home early from an event and/or dismissed from GenOUT Chorus. The singer and the singer’s parents will be responsible for any additional costs resulting in an early dismissal.

Additionally, GenOUT participants and parents/guardians sign a Media Release which states:

I grant permission for GMCW/GenOUT to use my child’s unrestricted image – including the display, distribution, publication, transmission, or other use of photographs, electronic images, and/or video recordings taken of the child – for use in materials including, but not limited to, printed materials such as promotional brochures and newsletters, video recordings, and digital images such as those on chorus web sites and other internet platforms. I understand that these images and recordings may be used for a variety of purposes and that these images and recordings may be used without further notifying me. I also understand that my child’s first and last name (indicated in the way that the child prefers) may be included in conjunction with any audio or video recordings or digital images

3. GenOUT Rehearsal Team Guidelines (8/7/18, rev. 8/3/22)

The GenOUT Rehearsal Team (GORT), led by the Director and Chorus Manager, exists to support the GenOUT Chorus in short-term development (e.g., production support, preparation for concerts) and long-term development (e.g., mentoring young people, serving as positive role models).

Who may participate in the GenOUT Rehearsal Team?

GORT members are singers in GMCW and members of the GMCW community who are vetted by GMCW artistic leadership. Any member of GMCW may be considered for membership. If you would like to participate, contact the Artistic Director (Thea Kano) or GenOUT Director (Paul Heins). All GORT members must be background-checked and must complete any documentation required by the rehearsal venue.

What do GORT members do in a typical rehearsal?

- Arrive early to help set up the rehearsal space (GORT call time determined by the GenOUT director);
- Assist with taking attendance, including monitoring attendance throughout rehearsal (e.g., preventing groups from congregating outside of the rehearsal space);
- Distribute materials throughout rehearsal;
- Assist singers in learning parts, choreography, ASL, and other performance elements;
- Participate in discussions;
- Lead sectionals;
- Gently and respectfully refocus a youth's attention as needed; and
- Assist in transitions, including monitoring GenOUTer interactions to ensure that behavior expectations are followed; and
- Stay after rehearsal to restore the rehearsal space.

About Background Checks

Regular GORT members are background-checked at GMCW's expense. Background checks provide our youth and our organization with additional layers of protection. Only background-checked GORT members may be alone with youth, although only in such limited situations as individual voice checks, individual tutoring, and leading students from one room/space to another. As a general rule, at least two adults are in the room/space with the GenOUTers at all times, and one of the adults must be background-checked.

GMCW contracts with Validity Screening Solutions for its background checks. These background checks are focused on criminal records and Sex Offender Registries. They are not credit checks, although in some instances, credit information becomes intertwined with criminal records. The report received by GMCW provide general information about whether an individual has "passed" or "not passed" in various categories, but the report does not list details; thus, your privacy is protected. VSS maintains all of the results of its investigation; none of the details of investigations reside at the GMCW office or with GMCW staff in any form. We believe this system is optimal for protecting your privacy while providing GMCW with the basic information it needs to determine if someone can be in a supervisory role with our GenOUT students.

Individuals who do not pass the background check are prohibited from membership in the GenOUT Rehearsal Team.

To process a background check, applicants request and complete a Disclosure Authorization Acknowledgment from the GenOUT Director (Paul Heins) and return it to him by mail or e-mail. GMCW submits the form electronically to VSS, and typically receives its report within one week. GMCW is obligated to retain the Disclosure Authorization Acknowledgment form for seven years past the signature date, after which it is destroyed. Forms are retained in a locked cabinet in the GMCW office.

Individuals such as teachers and government workers who have completed background checks that include checks of criminal records and Sex Offender Registries may submit to GMCW that already-completed documentation indicating passage. GMCW will securely retain that documentation for seven years. To be eligible, the background check must have been completed within three years of the first event with GenOUT.

New background checks must be completed every three years in order to continue participating in the GenOUT Rehearsal Team.

You do not have to undergo a background check to participate on an occasional basis in the GenOUT Rehearsal Team, but you must be teamed with a background-checked regular GORT member.

In order to maintain the safety of GenOUT students, GMCW requires that any GMCW member listed on a Sex Offender Registry must inform the Artistic Director (Thea Kano) and/or the GenOUT Director (Paul Heins) of this status, even if he/she/they do not intend to participate in the GenOUT Rehearsal Team. This information will be kept private.

4. GenOUT Chaperone Guidelines (12/3/18, rev. 8/3/22)

Adults serving as a chaperone for a GenOUT events typically take on one or more of the following tasks:

- Signing youth in and out;
- Promoting youth focus; and
- Maintaining youth safety.

Signing youth in and out

1. When you are assigned the start of a shift, please arrive at least 15 minutes before the call time, so that you are acquainted with the space, can get oriented to last-minute instructions, and are available to sign in GenOUTers as they arrive.
2. Please make a note if a GenOUTer is late.
3. On Chorus Connection under "Files" is a folder entitled "Permission Forms." Here, you will find a copy of each GenOUTer's permission form. On the form, parents/guardians have indicated authorizations about signing out. Please be aware of whether a GenOUTer has permission to leave the venue on his/her/their own, or if they must be retrieved by a parent/guardian (i.e., you must have "eyeballs on" the parent/guardian).
4. All GenOUTers must sign out with a chaperone when leaving the venue. If the parent/guardian has indicated that the GenOUTer may not leave the venue on their own, make sure you connect with (i.e., have "eyeballs on") the parent/guardian before allowing the GenOUTer to leave.
5. At the end of a shift, please stay until every GenOUTer has safely departed the venue (or you have been dismissed by the GenOUT Director). Please make sure the green room is left clean and attendance records are returned to the GenOUT Director. * NOTE: Chaperones are not the Green Room Maids, so any mess youth make can and should be cleaned up by youth before anyone departs.

Promoting youth focus

1. GenOUTers' primary focus should be on the performance at hand. This means:
 - a. Staying calm;
 - b. Not overusing the voice; and
 - c. Reviewing music and choreography.
2. GenOUT is about community, so working together for the benefit of the ensemble is critical to our success. This means that the backstage environment should have:
 - a. GenOUTers working together to review music, choreography, and/or ASL about to be performed.
 - b. GenOUTers working together to review music, choreography, and/or ASL programmed for a future performance.
 - c. GenOUTers participating in quiet activities that build and strengthen friendships. (Chaperones should encourage and facilitate these activities.)
 - d. All GenOUTers included in the community. (No GenOUTer should feel excluded from group activities. Chaperones should be on the lookout for youth on the sidelines and facilitate their inclusion in group activities.)
 - e. No intimate relations. (This separates out two people from the community, and it is against our GenOUT Expectations. Chaperones should be on the lookout for couples separating themselves out from the group, and steer them back.)

Maintaining youth safety

1. There are many dangerous components to a backstage area (e.g., poor visibility, trip/fall hazards, moving curtains and scenery, etc.). The safest place for youth to be when they are not on stage is the green room or assigned holding area.
2. Make sure youth know where restrooms are (including single-stall options). Before leaving the holding area to use a non-adjacent restroom, a youth should notify a chaperone. Youth should not congregate in the restroom.
3. No one should be in the holding area with youth except chaperones, with a few exceptions (see below). A few people who might stop by:
 - a. GMCW staff (including Thea Kano, Paul Heins, production team leadership, and choreographers)
 - b. GenOUT Rehearsal Team members
 - c. Soloists (sometimes a GMCW soloist who is singing with GenOUT will stop by to wish them well)
 - d. Stage crew

Sometimes, a GMCW member or volunteer may need to pass through to pick up something in the holding area or an adjacent space. We trust chaperones to use their best judgment and usher out those who have no reason to be there.

What chaperones do

Generally, we need chaperones to do what they do best – be a parent/guardian – to a whole group! Chaperoning is an active job, requiring attentiveness and responsiveness. Guide youth in making decisions that honor our Guiding Principles and be there for them if they need help. Chaperones are almost always paired up; they are encouraged to work as a team.

1. Chaperones will gently encourage a GenOUTer to spruce up a bit, or assist with the outer component of a costume, so that they look sharp on stage. When assisting with attire, a chaperone should be in full view of another chaperone.
2. Chaperones will remind GenOUTers to leave cell phones in the holding area. (No cell phones are permitted on stage.)
3. Chaperones will gently and firmly remind GenOUTers not to congregate in the restroom (or other places that are not the holding area).
4. Chaperones will gently and firmly remind students to maintain a quiet space (although it doesn't have to be absolutely silent).
5. Chaperones will help students bring someone into the fold. (Chaperones should be on the lookout for youth on the sidelines and encourage their inclusion in group activities.)
6. During a meal break, chaperones will stay with youth who do not have permission to leave the venue or who choose not to leave the venue. (No youth may be left without the oversight of approved adults.)
7. If two or more youth are engaging in intimate relations, chaperones will advise the Director or Chorus Manager, who will bring the youth back into the fold.
8. In the event of a minor medical event (e.g., cut/scrape requiring a bandage), chaperones will retrieve the first aid kit, and help the injured youth clean the wound and apply the bandage. Chaperones will contact the youth's parent/guardian to let them know what happened.
9. In the event a GenOUTer becomes sick, chaperones will help him/her/them as warranted, and call the parent/guardian for immediate pick-up.
10. Sometimes youth will become anxious in anticipation of a performance. Staying calm and helping them take deep, slow breaths will go a long way in helping them.
11. In the very rare event of a serious medical emergency, chaperones will first call 911 and then the parent/guardian. GMCW membership includes several medical professionals, and one or more of these may be available to provide initial help. If an ambulance is required, a chaperone might need to ride along with the injured/sick GenOUTer (bringing the permission form) and be a point of contact at the hospital.

Emergency Procedures

At the start of each season, GenOUT practices a fire drill and an active shooter drill. The basic instructions are as follows:

- FIRE DRILL: Stop all activity, including talking. Proceed immediately, calmly, and quietly to the nearest exit and gather at the designated gathering place for attendance. Do not stop to pick up personal items. Follow instructions of adult leaders. An adult leader will call 911.
 - ACTIVE SHOOTER DRILL: Stop all activity, including talking. Turn out lights and lock doors. Proceed immediately, calmly, and quietly to an interior space away from windows and doors. Gather together and maintain silence. Turn off all sound-making devices. Follow instructions of adult leaders. An adult leader will call 911.
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COVID-19 Protocols

Ensuring the safety of our GMCW community is our top priority. Our safe return to singing is made possible by adherence to protocols established by GMCW's COVID-19 Task Force. **The protocols stated below are current as of 8/12/22; updates will be posted to Chorus Connection.** As a member of the GMCW community, GenOUT is included in and subject to all of the protocols listed below:

- **Vaccinations**

- In order to participate in GMCW in-person activities, all members must be up to date on their vaccinations.
- Following CDC guidance, being up to date means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible.
 - Information on determining your booster eligibility is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>
 - If you experienced an adverse reaction to previous shots, please refer to this guidance from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/specific-groups/allergies.html>
- The Task Force has advised that, in line with current CDC guidance, exceptions to the booster requirement will be considered in limited circumstances for medical reasons. Please reach out to Executive Director Justin Fyala (jfyala@gmcw.org) for more information.

- **Masking**

- In circumstances where masking is required (see below), all members are required to wear KN-95 or KF-94 masks, which must cover your nose and mouth at all times except when actively eating or drinking.
 - No other mask types, such as surgical masks and cloth masks, will be permitted.
 - GMCW will provide KN-95 and KF-94 masks at no cost to members.
- For outdoor singing activities (rehearsals and performances), masking is optional for performers and audiences unless venue guidelines require masking. Social distancing of performers and audience members is encouraged to the extent possible.
- For indoor singing activities (rehearsals and performances), masking is required for performers and audiences.
 - Masking will become optional for performances at some point in the future when it is safe to do so. While not an exhaustive list, the following factors will be considered as part of this decision-making:
 - Guidance from the CDC and local health organizations in DC, MD, and VA
 - Number of positive cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in the DMV region (or area in which performance is to take place)
 - Number of positive cases reported by members to GMCW
 - Venue protocols
 - Potency of virus/variants for people who are up to date on their vaccinations
 - Up to date covid vaccinations (including future boosters, as they come available)
 - Negative rapid COVID-19 test on the day of the event
 - Member self-report of no known symptoms on the day of the event
 - Moving towards optional masking will always be subject to situational changes
- For non-singing activities (meetings, social gatherings):
 - Outdoor or virtual activities/meetings are strongly encouraged, to the extent possible, with masking and social distancing also strongly encouraged.

- For indoor activities/meetings, masking, social distancing, and opening doors to increase air circulation are strongly encouraged. Proof of vaccination must be provided or on record for participants
- As applicable, when a venue's protocols are stricter than GMCW's protocols, we will follow the guidelines set forth by the activity/meeting venue.
- **Individual Health Responsibilities**
 - **Do not attend GMCW events if you are feeling sick.**
 - By participating in a GMCW event, every participant agrees to the following:
 - I AGREE that I have NOT had close contact with anyone who has a suspected case of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 5 days. (The CDC defines close contact as being within six feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or more.)
 - I AGREE that I am NOT currently experiencing, NOR have I experienced any of the following symptoms within the past 10 days: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea.
 - I AGREE to immediately notify GMCW staff and stop participating in in-person activities if at any point in the future, I begin experiencing a fever over 100 degrees, difficulty breathing, sore throat, cough, or loss of smell or taste. If I experience any symptoms, I agree to wait at least five days after symptoms have subsided, without the use of fever-reducing or other medications, or provide GMCW with a negative viral COVID-19 test confirmation before resuming participation in in-person activities.
 - I AGREE to immediately notify GMCW staff and stop participating in in-person activities if at any point in the future I believe I have come into close contact with someone who has a suspected or known case of COVID-19.
 - I AGREE to adhere to all recommendations, requirements, and guidelines from the CDC, local governmental agencies, and GMCW at all times when volunteering with or on behalf of GMCW. I also understand that GMCW in-person activities are closed to everyone except those who have been invited by GMCW staff.
 - I AGREE to immediately notify GMCW staff if I engaged in higher-risk activities, such as international and/or cruise ship travel, in the past 10 days.
 - I AGREE that I have answered the questions above accurately and to the best of my ability.

Lincoln Theatre



GMCW's primary venue for its December, March, and June shows is the historic Lincoln Theatre, located at 1215 U St NW, Washington, DC 20009. The theatre opened in 1922 and served the DC's African-American community when segregation kept them out of other venues. In its early days, the Lincoln Theatre included a movie house and a ballroom, and hosted jazz and big band performers such as DC's own Duke Ellington. The Lincoln is part of a group of performing arts institutions once referred to as "Black Broadway." The theatre closed after the 1968 race-related riots; it was restored and reopened in 1994. The Lincoln has a capacity of 1225 patrons on two levels.

When we are at Lincoln Theatre, please remember:

- Performers use the stage door at the back of the theatre, adjacent to the parking lot. This is also where parents/guardians pick you up after the performance.
- The parking lot is for production crew only. Plan to park on the street or use Metro. The U Street Metro station is directly across the street from the theatre.
- Arrive fully dressed for the rehearsal or performance. There are very few private changing areas.
- GenOUT's holding area is sometimes the room upstairs. After passing through the stage door, turn left and take the stairs up to the second level.
- A single-stall, unisex restroom is located on the first level. After passing through the stage door, turn right and walk halfway down the hall.

- In rehearsals and performances at the Lincoln, we will receive directions from the GMCW Artistic Director, the Stage Director, the Production Director, and other adult leaders. Follow instructions from any adult leader.
- A few terms you will hear:
 - Tech Rehearsal – an opportunity to practice singing, speaking, and movement on stage, including entrances and exits. Sometimes, these rehearsals focus on special components, like soloists, speakers, or small ensembles (like GenOUT).
 - Cue-to-Cue – a tech rehearsal that focuses on transitions: going from one program element to another, often without singing every song all the way through.
 - Dress Rehearsal – a final rehearsal for the full cast, with full costumes, lighting, and sound. Unless otherwise stated, you must wear the full costume/attire specified for the performance. This rehearsal typically includes press, who take pictures and write about the program they are hearing. It is essential to imagine the dress rehearsal as a performance, so that you are practicing the mindset and behaviors you need to be successful.
- Production Director's guidelines for your mindset and behavior at rehearsals and performances:
 1. Prepare to be bored.
 2. Stay quiet.
 3. Be consistent.
 4. Don't disappear.
 5. Find your light

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

The success of GenOUT as an ensemble and community is based in large part on the participation of parents/guardians, who provide transportation to/from events, ensure that community-building skills are taught and reinforced at home, and support the ensemble at performances

- Providing transportation to/from events:
 - Parents ensure GenOUTers' on-time arrival at GenOUT events. On-time means that the GenOUTer is present and ready to begin at the call time, which is typically 10-15 minutes before the start of the event.
 - Parents ensure GenOUTers' on-time pick-up from GenOUT events. Parents show respect for the time of adult leaders (as well as the paid reservation time at venues) by not being late for pick-up.
- Ensuring that community-building skills are taught and reinforced at home:
 - Regular at-home practice is critical to the individual success of each GenOUTer and to the success of GenOUT as an ensemble success.
 - In most cases, regular practice (i.e., three times per week for 30 minutes each) will only occur with parent assistance/insistence in scheduling and monitoring; this scheduling and monitoring is a parent responsibility.
 - Communication is a core value of the GenOUT community.
 - Parents and GenOUTers reply promptly to communications in all forms.
 - Parents submit all required documents and information on time.
 - Parents ask questions about any components of GenOUT membership (including financial assistance and attire) in a timely manner (i.e., providing GenOUT adult leadership plenty of time to provide assistance so that the GenOUTer is not excluded from GenOUT expectations).
 - When providing contact information for Chorus Connection, parents provide e-mail addresses that they check daily and reply to promptly.
 - In most cases, regular monitoring of and replying to communications (notably e-mail) by youth will only occur with parent assistance/insistence in scheduling and monitoring; this scheduling and monitoring is a parent responsibility.
 - Respectful communication outside of rehearsal helps ensure that rehearsal time is positive and productive. Parents ensure that their child's communications with other members of the GenOUT community (youth and adults) follows all guiding principles.

- Supporting the ensemble at performances:
 - Parents and families are strongly encouraged to attend all GenOUT public performances, including outreach. Parental and family support inspires individual performers and translates into strengthening the ensemble.
 - Through social networks, parents are strongly encouraged to share information about GenOUT performances and events, doing what they can to ensure robust, enthusiastic attendance.
 - Parents are strongly encouraged to take and submit photos and videos from GenOUT events; these can be helpful tools for promotion and grant-writing.

Parents/guardians understand that GenOUT is more than “my child’s thing” and agree to be involved, in-touch members of the community. Keeping up to date with the GenOUT calendar is essential. All aspects of this Handbook apply to parents/guardians.

Draft Calendar: 2022-23

This document was last updated 9/13/22; always confirm accuracy with the Calendar on Chorus Connection, which is updated throughout the season.

Rehearsal (R) Locations

- Most Saturdays: St. Thomas’ Parish (STP), 1517 18th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036
- Once a month: Community Room of **THEARC**, 1901 Mississippi Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20020

Performance Overview:

- Sep – Wolf Trap
- Oct – MoHa
- Nov – Accotink UU, Bradley Hills PC
- Dec – *THS* (4 shows)
- Jan – DC HS CF
- Feb – ACDA (Cincinnati, OH)
- Apr – *Youth Invasion* (2 shows)
- May – UUCR, Nat’l Zoo, Spring Affair
- Jun – *Dolly* (2 shows) + Cap Pride Festival + Bedford Court

TOTAL = 19 performances

September – **Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month** (9/15-10/15)

Sat.	9/17	10:00-12:30	R01 – for returning singers only
Sun.	9/18	2:45-8:00	perf at Wolf Trap’s <i>Joyfully Together</i> – for returning singers only
Sat.	9/24	10:00-12:30	R02 – new members join

October – **LGBTQ+ History Month**

Sat.	10/1	10:00-12:30	R03 + PHOTO DAY (photos will be 12:00-12:30)
Sat.	10/8	10:00-12:30	social activity for all members, organized/led by parents/youth
Sun.	10/9	2:00-5:30	outreach perf – Mosaic Harmony concert
Tue.	10/11	---	National Coming Out Day
Sat.	10/15	10:00-12:30	R04
Sat.	10/22	9:00-12:30	Walk to End HIV, followed by R05
Sat.	10/29	10:00-8:00	GenOUT Fall Retreat

November – **Native American Heritage Month**

Sat.	11/5	10:00-12:30	R06
Sun.	11/6	8:30-11:30	outreach perf – Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church
Sat.	11/12	10:00-2:00	R07
Sat.	11/19	10:00-2:00	R08 – extended rehearsal at THEARC , includes lunch break
Sun.	11/20	9:00-12:00	outreach perf – Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church (also: Transgender Day of Remembrance)
Sat.	11/26	---	no rehearsal (Thanksgiving wknd)
Wed.	11/30	7:00-9:00	THS tech 1 (Lincoln Theatre) – solos, small ensembles

December

Thu.	12/1	6:00-10:00	<i>THS</i> tech 2 (Lincoln Theatre) – cue-to-cue (also: World AIDS Day)
Fri.	12/2	6:00-10:00	<i>THS</i> DR (Lincoln Theatre)
Sat.	12/3	3:00 & 8:00	<i>THS</i> perfs 1 & 2 (Lincoln Theatre; call time TBA)
Fri.	12/9	8:00	<i>THS</i> perf 3 (Lincoln Theatre; call time TBA)
Sat.	12/10	10:00-12:30	R09
Sun.	12/11	3:00	<i>THS</i> perf 4 (Lincoln Theatre; call time TBA)
Sat.	12/17	10:00-2:00	R10 – extended rehearsal at THEARC , includes lunch break
Sat.	12/24	---	no rehearsal (holiday break)
Sat.	12/31	---	no rehearsal (holiday break)

January

Sat.	1/7	10:00-12:30	R01 – for returning singers only
Sat.	1/14	10:00-12:30	R02 (MLK Day wknd) – new members join
Sat.	1/21	10:00-2:00	R03 – extended rehearsal at THEARC , includes lunch break
Wed.	1/25	3:00-9:00	perf at DC HS Choral Festival (Washington National Cathedral)
Sat.	1/28	10:00-12:30	R04

February – **Black History Month**

Sat.	2/4	10:00-8:00	GenOUT Winter Retreat + PHOTO DAY
Sat.	2/11	10:00-2:00	R05 – extended reh. at THEARC , includes lunch break
Sat.	2/18	10:00-2:00	R06 (Pres. Day wknd) – special reh. at STP, includes lunch break (last reh. before ACDA)
Wed.	2/22	all day	ACDA conference day 1/4 (Cincinnati, OH; travel plans TBA)
Thu.	2/23	all day	ACDA conference day 2/4 (Cincinnati, OH)
Fri.	2/24	all day	ACDA conference day 3/4 (Cincinnati, OH)
Sat.	2/25	all day	ACDA conference day 4/4 (Cincinnati, OH) – performance day 10:05-10:55 AM and 12:35-1:25 PM, Junior Ballroom D

March – **Women's History Month**

Sat.	3/4	10:00-12:30	R07
Sat.	3/11	8:00	no rehearsal; <i>Whitney</i> perf 1 (Lincoln Theatre; GenOUT serves as greeters/ushers)
Sun.	3/12	3:00	<i>Whitney</i> perf 2 (Lincoln Theatre; GenOUT serves as greeters/ushers)
Sat.	3/18	10:00-12:30	R08
Sat.	3/25	10:00-12:30	R09
Fri.	3/31	---	Transgender Day of Visibility

April

Sat.	4/1	10:00-12:30	R10 (Palm Sunday wknd)
Sat.	4/8	---	no rehearsal (Easter wknd)
Fri.	4/14	---	Day of Silence
Sat.	4/15	10:00-12:30	R11
Sat.	4/22	10:00-2:00	R12 – extended rehearsal at THEARC , includes lunch break
Fri.	4/28	7:00-9:00	<i>Youth Invasion</i> DR (St. Thomas)
Sat.	4/29	1:00, 4:00	<i>Youth Invasion</i> perfs 1 & 2 (THEARC; call time TBA)

May – **Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month**

Sat.	5/6	10:00-12:30	R13
Sun.	5/7	afternoon?	outreach perf – Gay Day at National Zoo
Sat.	5/13	10:00-12:30	R14
Sat.	5/13	6:00-11:00	perf at Spring Affair
Sat.	5/20	10:00-12:30	R15
Sun.	5/21	9:00-12:00	outreach perf – Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockville
Fri.	5/26	---	last day of school: Fauquier County
Sat.	5/27	---	no rehearsal; Memorial Day wknd
Wed.	5/31	7:00-9:00	<i>Dolly</i> tech 1 (Lincoln Theatre) – solos, small ensembles

June – **LGBTQ+ Pride Month**

Thu.	6/1	6:00-10:00	<i>Dolly</i> tech 2 (Lincoln Theatre) – cue-to-cue
Fri.	6/2	6:00-10:00	<i>Dolly</i> DR (Lincoln Theatre)
Sat.	6/3	8:00	<i>Dolly</i> perf 1 (Lincoln Theatre; call time TBA)
Sun.	6/4	3:00	<i>Dolly</i> perf 2 (Lincoln Theatre; call time TBA)
Sat.	6/10	10:00-12:30	R16
Sat.	6/10	afternoon	Capital Pride Parade
Sun.	6/11	afternoon	Capital Pride Festival
Wed.	6/14	---	last day of school: Arlington County
Thu.	6/15	---	last day of school: Alexandria City
Fri.	6/16	---	last day of school: Fairfax City, Fairfax County, Falls Church City, Montgomery County, PG County (also: DC Emancipation Day)
Sat.	6/17	3:00	outreach perf – Bedford Court Skilled Nursing Facility
Sat.	6/17	5:00	EOY celebration (location TBD)
Mon.	6/19	---	Juneteenth
Fri.	6/23	---	last day of school: DCPS
Sun.-Sat.	6/25-7/1		proposed week for summer camp with Major Minors in Nashville, TN
Wed.	6/28	---	Stonewall Uprising anniversary (1969) + GMCW founding anniversary (1981)

July – **Disability Pride Month**

August

Mon. 8/28 probable first day of school (2023-24) for many DC-area school districts