

## Young Naperville Singers Announces New Executive Director, Matthew Chicola



The Board of Directors of Young Naperville Singers is very excited to announce that Matthew Chicola will be the first ever Executive Director of the 380-member organization. It has been a years-long goal of the YNS Board to find just the right candidate for the crucial position of Executive Director: that goal has been realized with Mr. Chicola.

### About Matthew Chicola

Matthew Chicola believes in the power of voice; whether it is seen as a privilege, a burden, or a gift, YNS and Matthew have been granted a unique opportunity to share their voice with others. Having worked in non-profit philanthropy for nearly a decade at organizations like Loaves & Fishes Community Services and Chicago House and Social Service Agency, Matthew found his own voice through community building and strategic implementation, and he now brings that expertise to YNS for perfect harmony. The world, as we know, is a challenging place, particularly for youth who are seeking to develop their voices among the demands of a fast-paced, results-driven culture. With an advanced degree in English Studies from Elmhurst College, Matthew understands the complexities that lie in communication patterns, and he will share his insight with YNS to help the voice of this organization expand. In partnership with the board, staff, and community, Matthew will lead the implementation of the strategic plan to improve the infrastructure, capacity, and sustainability of YNS toward the shared vision of benefitting more young lives.

Artistic Director Angie Johnson is looking forward to beginning a new phase of growth for YNS. “We are beyond excited to bring Matt Chicola on the YNS team. We have been growing as an organization musically and numerically, but our dreams are out ahead of our resources. Matt brings some much needed direction, new ideas, and insight to chart a course for YNS to enter the next era of growth.”

YNS will be holding a community open house to welcome Matthew and celebrate our retiring staff on Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the Naperville Community Concert Center, located at 55 Concert Lane, Naperville. YNS welcomes everyone to attend and take the opportunity to meet Matt and learn more about the organization.

### About Young Naperville Singers

YNS is a preeminent community-based children’s choral music program located in Naperville, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. About to enter its 35th year, YNS continues its tradition of excellence in music education and youth leadership development. Currently, YNS has a total of nine ability-based choirs, with members ranging in age from six to eighteen. Its newest choir, Brio, was launched in fall 2017 to accommodate our growing number of young boy singers. Notably, YNS now has 3 ability-based choirs exclusively for boys and young men. In addition, a tenth choir for young women will be added in fall 2018.

Three of the YNS choirs, Bella Voce, Canto Vivo, and Cantabile, have toured over the years. Cantabile Singers, under the direction of Anne Kasprzak, has participated in the Queen City Children’s Choir Festival in Cincinnati several times. The young men’s chorus, Canto Vivo, has traveled to Oregon with director Brett Goad, to participate in the Pacific International Choral Festival. Bella Voce, the premier YNS women’s ensemble, under the direction of Artistic Director Angie Johnson, has traveled internationally, to Ireland, and most recently to

Austria and Slovakia in the summer of 2017. Bella Voce performed in Naperville's sister city of Nitra, Slovakia, and their performance was attended by the United States' Ambassador to Slovakia, Adam Sterling.

All of the YNS choirs focus on the social emotional development of young people, using music as a vehicle to reach the hearts of children. The singers of YNS, in turn, learn to use music as outreach, to touch the hearts of all who hear them sing. YNS members are leaders and are trained in leadership from the earliest ages. A curricular effort is made in the choirs of YNS to develop leadership skills in the singers. This effort bears fruit: many of the singers in YNS prove to be leaders in their schools and communities.

With Matthew Chicola as Executive Director, YNS hopes to reach new heights of social, emotional, and musical accomplishment. Neveen Michael, current president of YNS is thrilled and says, "The entire Board of Directors and staff are excited to be working alongside Matt! The passion and expertise that he brings to YNS is instrumental and, as we embark into our 35<sup>th</sup> season, we know that Matt's leadership will be an imperative part of our future growth and success!

Support for YNS is provided in part by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, and the City of Naperville Special Events and Cultural Amenities.