



2025 GIVING VOICE CONFERENCE

Friday, May 2nd, 2025 | 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak Street SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455

We're so excited to host you for the Giving Voice Conference! This year we really leaned into embracing and showcasing the wealth of knowledge, expertise, and inspiration that exists right within our very own Giving Voice Network & community.

We have some amazing people we feel fortunate to know and we hope that through the conference sessions, events, and opportunities below, you feel connected to this community, inspired to continue to do this work, and equipped for your next steps forward.

Also, if you're coming in from out of town, we hope you consider staying a while. The Twin Cities has so much to offer especially in the spring, and you won't regret staying that extra day to explore it.

As always, don't hesitate to reach out with any questions! Contact jackie@givingvoicechorus.org.

Are You an Existing Choir?

Submit a Poster!

Are you a part of an existing network choir? Shine a light on your choir by creating a poster! We'll hang up all the posters to be viewed by all throughout the event. You can make it by hand with poster board and a glue stick the old fashioned way or you can create and print it digitally. Either way works! Send all posters to Giving Voice Initiative, PO Box 390225, Minneapolis, MN 55439. See the poster specifications and deadlines below!

Pro Tip: If you create one digitally, you can print it at Walgreens to the specifications below for under \$20 (and that's not yet including their frequent online discount codes).

Poster Size: 16 in. X 20 in. or 20 in. x 30 in. (your choice of landscape or portrait!)

Deadline: We recommend sending your poster (i.e. sent from the site or your hands) by April 7th. This will guarantee it gets to us in time to be shared! Once you've sent it make sure and send an email to Jackie at jackie@givingvoicechorus.org so we know to look out for it.



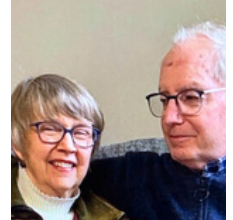


Conference Sessions and Speakers

The following list & schedule is subject to change.

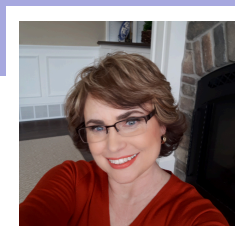
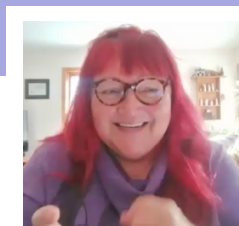
Understanding Dementia & Creating a Supportive Rehearsal Experience

The heart of this program is leading weekly rehearsals in a way that makes people with dementia and their care partners feel safe, engaged, valuable, and connected. In this session, learn more about the experience of dementia from expert *Dementia Friends* educator, Colleen Fritsch, and how to best support that in the rehearsal experience from seasoned Giving Voice director, Joey Clark, and seasoned choral member and care partner to her husband Marv, Elaine Lofquist.



"You Can't Always Get What You Want"

When starting a dementia choir, it can be easy to get stuck on what your program *should* have.... a director with a specific set of skills, a budget with a certain amount of money, a specific number of singers, care partners, and volunteers, but the reality is that you may not have all these things right away *and* it may in fact not be what's best for your choir. In this session, learn the importance of starting with the resources, team members, and singers you *do* have, understanding their needs, and growing from there. Cathy Reitz and Kathleen Albrecht are experienced and accomplished giving voice network choral directors who have mastered this mindset to build and lead sustainable and impactful choirs and they're excited to share their wisdom with all of you.





Demystifying Fundraising & Redefining Success

Eyleen Braaten is the executive director of Giving Voice Initiative, a non-profit that started as a single program with a fiscal sponsorship and has grown into a strong non-profit that runs multiple giving voice choirs and supports over 60 choirs in the giving voice network. That to say... she knows fundraising. And in this session, she is passionate about breaking down fundraising in a way that feels accessible to you, because everyone can be a fundraiser. In this session, we will equip you with the knowledge and tangible resources to be able to fundraise in your community and remind you that your program is valuable and any money that goes to support it is a transaction and not a favor.

The Art of Music Selection & Arrangement



Choosing and arranging music for a semester can be an equally exciting and daunting part of implementing your program - because there's a lot to know, especially if you're directing a dementia choir for the first time. Dale Anderson and Suzy Johnson are music selection & arrangement mavericks, having spear-headed the efforts for their respective Giving Voice Network Choirs for many years. In this session, they'll review the important things to consider when selecting music for a dementia choir, the basics of arranging, their biggest successes and learning opportunities, and much more.

The Neuroscience Behind the Singing

Dr. Patricia Izbicki is a neuroscientist, classical pianist/harpsichordist, and forthcoming music therapist passionate about understanding and furthering the research and application of merging science and the arts. In this session, learn an overview of the major research that validates the importance of this work, new and up-and-coming research, ways to apply research to your work to improve your program, and so much more.





The Importance of Storytelling

Storytelling is such an important part of this program for so many reasons. To name just a few: it reminds your singers and your community of the incredible depth of stories that are often overlooked in people living with dementia, it helps your singers build community with each other, and it emotionally connects your community to your program and therefore offer more support



(financially or otherwise). Viva Weber Carr is the unofficial “storyteller” of Giving Voice. With years of experience with the organization and a background in television and theatre she will share her expertise on how to tell a good story, where and how to share it, and why it’s important .

Ask Me Anything

Creating and running a dementia choir is all about supporting the needs of people living with dementia and their loved ones. And the best way to learn is to ask. In this session, you will have the opportunity for an open Q & A with people living with dementia and their care partners who have been involved with this program for many years. To ensure a safe and supportive environment you’ll be able to ask your questions face to face *or* anonymously and all panel participants will be able to veto a question *or* answer later in private. We encourage you to take a moment before the session to write down questions you may have!



Andi Gair



Mike Gair



David Schut



Virginia Schut



Darrell Foss



Mary Foss

Musical Tables - A Speed Networking Activity

This session is a chance to meet new people, get energized, and just have a little fun. Similar to musical chairs, when the music starts you’ll mosey around the room, and when the music stops, you’ll have to find a chair and you and your new table mates will have limited time to all answer one question. Once the music starts, it’s time to move again! We hope you join us!



Canva Masterclass

When running a choral program there are a surprising amount of design needs for digital and print content! And with the plethora of complex online tools out there, it can feel overwhelming even knowing where to start. In this session, get an in-depth master-class on the inexpensive (*or free for nonprofits*) design tool, *CanvaPro*. Experienced Canva Creators Megan Livers and Jessica Clifton will share their expertise in this Canva Masterclass, giving you the tools and the knowledge you need to more easily and quickly create the content you need for your program.

**We are not funded by Canva in any way, we have just found this platform to be very effective, and we think you will too.
If you have a laptop or iPad, though it is not required, we encourage you to bring it for some hands-on practice.

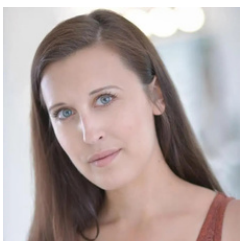
Reaching the Rural Communities

One of our goals for Giving Voice in 2025 is to better serve this community by learning from and supporting the formation of more choirs in rural areas, starting in the rural communities of Minnesota and surrounding areas. In this session, learn from local choral leaders Susan McFadden and Mindi Larson, who have had direct experience running this program in rural areas. They will share the things that make it unique, the particular difficulties they've had to overcome and practical advice they've learned for running a sustainable choir in a rural community.



Trauma Informed Pedagogy for the Dementia Choir Director

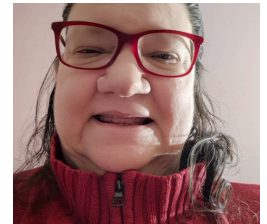
Sarah DeYong has her Master of Fine Arts in Musical Theater Vocal Pedagogy. In her work as a performer, teacher, faculty member, and director of the newly formed dementia choir and non-profit, *Raising Voices*, she is passionate and knowledgeable about incorporating *Trauma Informed Voice Care* into her teaching, a practice that recognizes how trauma can impact a person's voice and body. This awareness in mind, the goal is to create a safe and supportive environment that allows individuals to access their voice with agency rather than focusing solely on technical correction.





A Mock Rehearsal

Sometimes you need to experience something yourself to truly understand it and sometimes you just need some new ideas! Joey Clark is an accomplished musical theater and cabaret performer, director and teaching artist, and was the beloved Giving Voice St. Paul Chorus director and now consultant for Giving Voice. Sandy Waterman is an incredible pianist and accompanist for the St. Paul Giving Voice Chorus. In this session, they will lead you through a dementia choral rehearsal start to finish, showcasing the Giving Voice model while sharing additional structures and ideas from through the giving voice network that you might consider depending on your needs.





Schedule

The following list & schedule is subject to change.

A more detailed program will be available digitally & shared with you via email a few weeks before the event

..... **8:30 – 9:00**

Registration

Coffee & fruit will be available at this time

..... **9:00 – 9:30**

Opening Presentation

..... **9:40 – 10:30**

Breakout Sessions

Understanding Dementia & Creating a Supportive Rehearsal Experience

“You Can’t Always Get What You Want”

Trauma Informed Pedagogy for the Dementia Choir Director

..... **10:40 – 11:30**

Breakout Sessions

The Importance of Storytelling

De-Mystifying Fundraising & Re-Defining Success

The Art of Music Selection & Arrangement

..... **11:40 – 12:20**

Catered Lunch

Do you have special dietary needs? Please email jackie@givingvoicechorus.org



Schedule (cont.)

..... **12:30 – 12:50**

Energizing Activity

Music Making

Quiet Guided Stretch

Networking in the Commons

..... **1:00 – 1:50**

Breakout Sessions

Ask Me Anything

The Neuroscience Behind the Singing

Networking in the Commons

Sparkling Juice & Snacks will be available to grab at this time!

..... **2:00 – 2:50**

Breakout Sessions

A Mock Rehearsal

Canva Masterclass

Networking in the Commons

..... **3:00 – 3:50**

Breakout Sessions

Musical Tables – A Speed Networking Activity

Reaching the Rural Communities

Networking in the Commons

..... **4:00 – 4:30**

Group Closing



Special Events

Pre-Conference New Chorus Meetup

When you're embarking on something brand new it can be really nice to have a support system going through the same thing, so we hope that all newly formed choirs or choirs in the process of forming join us at this event to network and connect with others at the same place in this journey.

If you are a more seasoned choral leader and you are interested in attending, you are still welcome to come! Just like a giving voice rehearsal, all are welcome.

Additional details coming soon. The meet-up will be within short walking distance of the conference venue.

Post-Conference Happy Hour

Join us after the conference for a happy hour at a local brewery (location tbd)! No farther than a long walk or a short uber ride away, we'll be gathering right after the conference for some drinks, apps, & conversation.

Accessibility Information

The Conference Venue: McNamara Alumni Center

- *Men's and women's restrooms on the main floor that are ADA accessible*
- *No steps to enter the building, all paved pathways*
- *All exterior doors have powered doors which can be opened with a button*
- *There is a tunnel to and from the University Avenue Ramp (the closest ramp) which has elevators and stairs to enter the McNamara Alumni Center with signage throughout*

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any additional concerns or requests

jackie@givingvoicechorus.org



Location & Getting There

Event Location:

McNamara Alumni Center
200 Oak Street SE
Minneapolis, MN, 55455

To get a visual of the space, check out this McNamara Alumni Center 2-minute video reel:
https://youtu.be/kVDu_zco0hU

How to Get There

Mcnamara Alumni Center is a large building on the University of Minnesota campus (address above), but when looking up directions, we recommend navigating to a nearby parking ramp (since there is no attached parking lot) and using our downloadable walking map from there to navigate to the venue.

We have 150 spaces reserved at the closest *University Avenue* ramp (address below), which we expect to be more than enough, but in case it fills up, you can also park in the nearby *Washington Avenue Ramp* (address below).

University Avenue Ramp:

1926 University Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455

Washington Avenue Ramp

501 SE Washington Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55455

Downloadable Walking Map
Coming Soon!



Public Transportation Options

The Light Rail: Green Line

The Green line stops a short block from the McNamara Alumni Center at the East Bank Station. It is on Washington Avenue across from the Graduate by Hilton Minneapolis hotel. McNamara is just 4 stops on the Green line from Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis. For specific route and schedule information visit www.metrotransit.org or <https://www.metrotransit.org/route/green>

Metro Area Bus:

Metro Transit Buses 2, 113, 114, 115, 465, and 475 stop just outside McNamara Alumni Center at Oak Street and Washington Avenue. Stop ID: 41248 (heading South) and 40278 (heading North). For routes and schedule information, visit www.metrotransit.org

Lodging

We've reserved a room block at the Graduate by Hilton Minneapolis, one short block away from the McNamara Alumni Center! Address: 615 Washington Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414

They are offering us a \$175+ room rate on **Thursday, May 1st** discounted from their regular rate of \$265+. Amenities include a fitness center, meeting rooms, free wifi, and onsite dining.

View room images [here](#)! Please reserve rooms by **April 9th** to ensure a spot.

[Click here to book at the discounted rate!](#)

Or call (612) 379-8888, press 2 for reservations, and request the Giving Voice Conference room block (group code 935)

If lodging is an expense that is holding you back from attending, OR you wish to stay an extra night but can't afford the full hotel price, please don't hesitate to reach out to jackie@givingvoicechorus.org. We have a big community in the twin cities and may be able to find someone who's willing to host you in their home free of charge.



Food

At the conference we will provide coffee & fruit in the morning, a catered lunch, and a snack in the afternoon. For additional breakfast and dinner options, consider the nearby choices below all within a few blocks.



Breakfast:

Chik-fil-A | [Menu](#)

Caribou Coffee | [Menu](#)

Bruegger's Bagels | [Menu](#)

Dunn Bros. Coffee | [Menu](#)

Dunkin' | [Menu](#)

Dinner:

For a Faster Meal

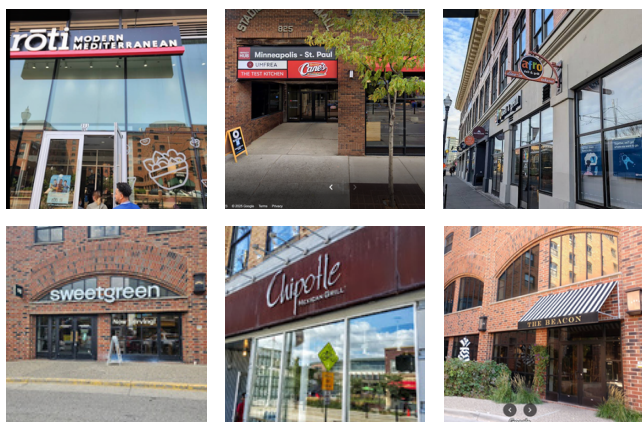
Roti Mediterranean Bowls | [Menu](#)

The Test Kitchen | [Menu](#)

Afro Deli and Grill | [Menu](#)

Sweet Green | [Menu](#)

Chipotle Mexican Grill | [Menu](#)



For a Sit-Down Meal

[The Beacon Public House](#)

(within the Graduate Hotel by Hilton Minneapolis)

Just in Case

Walgreens

Wellsfargo

US Bank

Chase Bank

Huntington Bank ATM

(within the Graduate Hotel by Hilton Minneapolis)





Make it a Weekend

Interested in making it a weekend and enjoying the twin cities in the spring – do it! There is so much to do within walking distance of the hotel and a short drive away. Consider these personalized suggestions from our Giving Voice Staff.

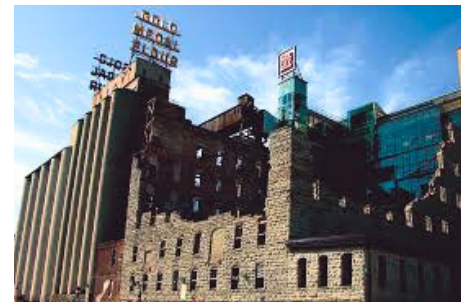
From Jessica

- Bring your swimsuit and book yourself an incredible bathing experience at [Watershed Spa](#). When you're done and feeling fully rejuvenated, add on lunch nearby at the fantastic [Cafe Alma](#)!
- Check out the [historic Mill City Museum](#) and follow it up with a walk along the Mississippi River.
- Visit the [Textile Center](#)! They have amazing exhibitions by textile artists and a gift shop full of lovely things made by local artists.
- Visit [Open Book](#) to enjoy a fantastic, small, independent bookstore called [Milkweed](#), a sweet coffee shop called [FRGMT Coffee](#), a [book arts gift shop](#) with tons of one-of-a-kind zines and small books by local artists, and a [book arts gallery](#).

From Jackie

- Enjoy the biggest cinnamon roll you've ever seen at [Isles Bun & Coffee Bakery](#) and follow it with a stroll around Lake of the Isles and/or [Bde Maka Ska](#) (White Earth Lake)
- Enjoy a movie at the historic and old-fashioned [St. Anthony Main Cinema](#)
- Get the infamous french fries and shake at [Annie's Parlour](#) in historic Dinkytown

Mill City Museum



St. Anthony Main Cinema



Open Book & Frgmt Coffee



Walker Art Center Sculpture Garden



Make it a Weekend (cont.)

From Eyleen

- Visit the Minneapolis Institute of Art - with over 5,000 pieces, they have something for everyone. And it's free!
- For all the history buffs out there, visit Historic Fort Snelling for a guided tour or a beautiful hike
- Visit Kramarczuks for a some sausage, fresh baked bread and more!

From Megan

- Enjoy a fun filled day at Can Can Wonderland and Headflyer Brewing
- Enjoy the arts and culture of the Walker Arts Center - which is free on 1st Saturdays!
- Visit Como Zoo and Conservatory and be surrounded by plants and animals!



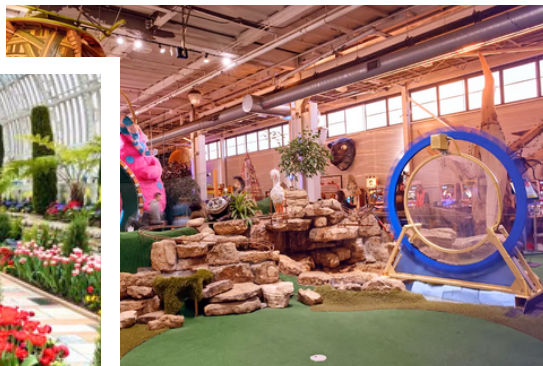
Fort Snelling



Kramarczuk Deli



Como Zoo & Conservatory



Can Can Wonderland



Ted Mann Concert Hall