

Silver Linings: From the Mouths of Babes

By Marcia Patton



A year ago our Casper Children's Chorale took the stage at the Northwest Region ACDA Conference in Spokane, Washington. When we left the stage 30 minutes later, an announcement was made cancelling the rest of the conference due to COVID-19. Our chorale had four days of performances scheduled in Spokane with our 120 singer/chaperone entourage, but those plans quickly changed to activities that would keep our singers close, safe, and happy. As we traveled the final stretch of our 800 mile trip home, we found out school was cancelled. COVID was in Wyoming.

Although I am not a “tech person” (I can barely maneuver Facebook!), I quickly made the change to Zoom meetings. We talked, laughed, played games, and supported each other as one by one our remaining concerts and activities were cancelled. We held spring auditions online—which was honestly wonderful! Each audition was only one child and me, rather than four to six in a group with three adult “screeners”; but it was easy to gather information about each singer and so nice to carry on an online conversation with them and with their parents.

After a *long* year of Zoom, combined with small group rehearsals for short periods of time, masked and distanced, and no concerts (yes, we recorded a virtual video of our traditional end-of-year alum song, and sang a live, masked, and distanced throughout an entire auditorium national ACDA single recording—I know we were very blessed) I still had a hard time seeing the silver linings. So I did what we all do: I asked the singers. Following are “off the cuff” pearls of wisdom from fourth through eighth graders:

We are proud of ourselves and our perseverance, even though it has been hard.

We learned so much about our own personal strength. We pulled together.

We were able to continue to find joy and make music.

Zoom helped us make new friends because it was a smaller setting.

On Zoom we were able to meet with professional musicians from around the world.

We got to really know each other better through all the games we played on Zoom, and we got to see each other without our MASKS! This year has helped us appreciate what we have.

We got to work with ALL the adult section leaders, not just "ours." We had time to share and discuss what we felt about the songs. I have a renewed appreciation for what is expressed in someone's EYES. Everyone was kind and supportive.

Just being able to do this . . . we are so LUCKY to be here. It makes me so very GRATEFUL for what we have.

Yes, once again, from the mouths of babes. If you are second guessing yourself at recognizing the silver linings, just ask your singers. I know we will emerge from this pandemic stronger, kinder, wiser, more expressive, more empathetic, and, as a result, more *musical!*