

The NPM Youth Challenge

By RACHELLE KRAMER

When I reflect on my own journey into music ministry, two things come to mind: I began at a young age, and I was encouraged and mentored by several key adults who believed in me, saw my potential, and nurtured my gifts. Whether it was my first piano teacher, who convinced me to play a song or two at our junior high Masses, my parish music director, who invited my high school friends and me to lead the music for the Sunday evening Masses, or my college mentor, who introduced me to liturgical music as a vocation and possible career path, all were instrumental in developing my passion and love for music in the liturgy. If it had not been for these people, I can honestly say that I would not be serving the Church as a pastoral musician today.

Strategic Goals and a Hunger

In the summer of 2009, the NPM Council established strategic goals for the association for the next three years (2010–2012). Of the five goals created, one specifically targets youth:

To increase NPM focus on youth and young adults who can and do contribute to liturgical and music ministry in the U.S.

- We recognize that youth and young adults are generous and open to serving in ministry.
- They represent the long-term future of pastoral music ministry and of the NPM mission to foster the art of musical liturgy.
- Additionally, many youth and young adults lack awareness of the unique gifts that NPM can offer them as they enter ministerial roles.

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Some of the youth participants in the 2009 NPM Convention in Chicago (Rosemont).

Because of my own journey and my experience in working with young people, I truly believe that one of the most effective ways to get youth involved in music ministry in our communities is to invite them, and an NPM convention is an excel-

lent way to open that invitation. So I offer you a challenge: Who are the high school and college students you know who would benefit from attending the Detroit Convention this summer? How can you help raise funds to support them? When I asked young people at last summer's convention why they came, nearly all of them said it was because their music director had invited them. As adult mentors and teachers, the impact you have on young people is tremendous and cannot be underestimated.

Our lives as pastoral musicians are extremely busy, there is no question. Sometimes it is all we can do to make it through each liturgy, each committee meeting, and each rehearsal. But if we do not intentionally invite and mentor our young people, we and the larger Church are missing out. Perhaps St. Paul says this best:

As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable . . . so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it (1 Corinthians 12:20–22, 25–27).

So let's stop asking "Where are all the young people?" as if they are the only ones responsible for not being as present in our church as we wish they were. They are out there, and they are hungry for spirituality, for a deeper meaning to their lives, and for community and belonging. Let's deliberately invest our time and energy in a large portion of our Church who are, unfortunately, missing from our Sunday assemblies and from music ministry. Let us be Christ to them. Let us welcome and invite them and their gifts to the table. We can make a difference.

Much to Offer

NPM conventions have much to offer young people through the experience, formation, and fellowship that they provide. Here are some financial incentives to encourage youth to attend and a few new opportunities for our young people in Detroit.

Financial Incentives for Youth

- **Single Parish Membership—\$78 annually.** If a parish or campus ministry holds this membership, the benefits of the membership extend to *all* members of these communities—and “all” includes youth. This means that young people do not have to pay a membership fee to attend the convention.
- **Youth Convention Fee—\$155.** This is close to half of what adult members pay to attend a convention.
- **Housing.** Costs are greatly reduced when four people stay in one room. For example, if a room is \$120 a night, the individual cost is just \$30 per person. (The number of people in the room does not affect the total cost.) Multiply that by four nights, and the total is only \$120 per person.

New for Youth in Detroit

- A **Youth Room** will be provided for high school and college-age youth throughout the convention week. The room will be open during the lunch hour and in the late evenings and will allow young people the opportunity to connect and meet their peers. Topics will be suggested for informal conversation at the lunch hour each day, and the evenings will provide opportunities for young people to hang out, sing, and play their instruments together.

- **Youth Interns.** A youth intern program will be launched this summer for the Detroit Convention. Twelve internships will be available to youth 18–23 years old. Six technical interns will assist presenters with their technology needs and troubleshoot LCD, computer, and sound systems throughout the week. Four interns will serve as roving reporters and/or photographers. These interns will collect interviews, video, and photographs throughout the convention week. Two interns will serve as auditors for the NPM Mass Setting Competition. These young people will compile and tabulate the votes

Youth Interns 2010

An intern is a volunteer with skills, 18–23 years old. For the 2010 NPM Convention in Detroit, we need three types of interns: technical interns, roving reporters, and auditors.

Technical Interns work with anything that needs to be plugged in: trouble-shooting LCD projectors, computers, and sound systems; working with presenters to assure that their computers and their LCD projectors communicate with each other; and operating and trouble-shooting various sound systems as required. Six technical interns are needed: two to work at the Renaissance Center and four at Cobo Hall. Each technical intern has to be familiar with current AV, LCD, and computer technology and has to have an ability to interact in a professional and hospitable manner with speakers, volunteers, and convention participants. Training will take place on Sunday morning, July 11.

Roving Reporters move through the convention hall and the various events, taking short videos and photos and interviewing participants. Video will be edited and uploaded to *Flip* and *Facebook*. Four reporters are needed: two teams with a camera operator and an interviewer on each team. Reporters need to be able to operate a video camera, conduct interviews, and take action shots of the convention. They also need skill in interviewing people in an interesting, interactive, and respectful manner. Training will take place on Sunday afternoon, July 11.

Auditors will coordinate their work with hospitality volunteers, who will

distribute and gather the forms for voting on the Mass settings that are premiered at the convention. The auditors compile the information on the forms, tabulate the vote, and create a composite record for the Mass Setting Competition Committee. Two auditors are needed. Each must be able to compile the information and set up an Excel database to collect and tabulate the data. Auditors must also be prepared to keep the compiled information confidential until the results of the voting are announced publicly at the end of the convention. Training will take place on Sunday afternoon, July 11.

Benefits

Each intern will receive complimentary registration for the full convention and housing for five nights in hotel rooms shared with other interns. Interns must cover other costs associated with their participation (e.g., travel and food).

Application

Application forms will be available on the NPM website: <http://www.npm.org/EducationEvents/convention/index.htm>. The deadline for applications is May 1, 2010. Each applicant will be contacted and interviewed by a representative of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians to determine the applicant's aptitude for the position. Applicants will be notified whether they have been accepted by June 1, 2010.

each day on one of the four Mass settings to be reviewed at the 2010 Convention.

Benefits for interns include complimentary registration to the convention and housing for five nights. Specific qualifications and the application deadline for the intern program are listed in the box on this page and on the NPM website. If you are a young person who meets these qualifications (or you know a young person who would be interested) we encourage you to apply!

- **And More!** A Youth NPM Facebook page is under development; it will offer a way for young people to connect after

their convention experience.

If you are an adult or youth interested in volunteering your time for the Youth Section (high school and college-age youth), please do not hesitate to contact me at rachelle.kramer@mu.edu. We can use your help in our work throughout the year as well as at the annual conventions.

May the Spirit bless your work and ministry, and may we bring “Hope and Harmony” to our Church—and especially to our young people.