



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 10, 2018

CONTACT: Juliette Funes

William Diepenbrock

(909) 445-1001

Whittier Union Students Give Gift of Music and Fellowship during Annual Choral Festival Students win over adjudicator from Azusa Pacific University

WHITTIER – Whittier Union students rang in the holidays, singing traditional songs and holiday favorites during the annual Choral Festival on Dec. 5 at the Whittier College Memorial Chapel.

Choirs from California, Whittier, La Serna and Santa Fe high schools each performed short programs for family, friends and peers while receiving critiques from Azusa Pacific University assistant professor and conductor of the Chamber Singers Michelle Jensen, who joined the students after their performances to share her thoughts.

“What I am looking for is passion and a commitment to excellence,” Jensen said. “My passion is promoting choir art into the next generation, and my hope is that it continues to flourish in the future. It’s more than becoming a great singer; it’s also about being a great audience member. What a beautiful life we live when we can spend the day exploring and listening to music.”

Jensen counseled the singers on technique, posture, hand movements and how to make written music come alive when performing. Jensen won over the students with her prescient, but light-hearted comments, receiving laughs and applause.

“Do you want to feel comfortable or sound amazing?” Jensen asked the students.

Whittier High School Choir Director Jesse Meza likes the idea of having his students evaluated in a formal session.

“Having an adjudicator work with the choir lets the students know what they need to work on and helps us look toward the spring season,” Meza said. “The students don’t get nervous. They approach this like they do any other performance.”

The Choir Festival is a chance for the school choirs to get to know each other and share tips and recommendations.

“We are truly a family – the choir program is a positive place where no one judges you,” Santa Fe High senior Darlene Lupian said. “Our choir director, Mr. Kwon, does more than teach music. He teaches us to read and how to express ourselves. He gives us a voice and helps make the music our own.”

La Serna High senior Matthew Rios has been a member of the chamber choir for four years. Rios, who practices every day and is a cantor for his church, credits chamber choir for helping him better engage with his classmates.

“I enjoy when we get to the end of the songs so that I can hear the others sing,” Rios said. “Being in chamber choir has also helped me develop my leadership skills and I have since joined ASB.”

For Cal High parent Sophia Alvarado, singing in the choir is a family tradition. Her daughter, Cal High junior Ariana Alvarado, is in her second year of chamber choir, following in the footsteps of her cousins, all of whom have been tutored by Cal High Chamber Choir Director Dan Hawkins.

“I love to see all the children singing,” Sophia Alvarado said. “It brings joy to my heart to see them pursue what they love.”

Each of the District’s comprehensive high schools offer beginning, intermediate and advanced choral and instrumental music programs and theater arts courses. The choral ensembles have performed in local, regional and national competitions in famous locations such as Carnegie Hall and the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

“I look forward to the choral festival every year. It is wonderful to watch our talented students come together and give the gift of music and fellowship,” Superintendent Martin Plourde said. “Thank you to our dedicated and hard-working choir directors, their distinguished accompanists and our adjudicator, Michelle Jensen, whose professionalism and wit delighted us all.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS

121018_WUHSD_CHORAL1: La Serna High School Chamber Choir Director David Carter conducts his students during Whittier Union’s annual Choral Festival on Dec. 5 at Whittier College Memorial Chapel. Choirs from La Serna, California, Whittier and Santa Fe high schools sang traditional songs and holiday favorites in front of family and friends.

121018_WUHSD_CHORAL2: Azusa Pacific Director of Chamber Singers Michelle Jensen shares a laugh with the Santa Fe High School Chamber Choir during Whittier Union’s annual Choral Festival on Dec. 5. Jensen acted as adjudicator for the performance, counseling students from Santa Fe, California, La Serna and Whittier high schools on how to be better singers.

###

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

WUHSD Board of Trustees

Dr. Ralph S. Pacheco, *President* ■ Russell Castañeda-Calleros, *Vice President* ■ Jeff Baird, *Clerk* ■ Leighton Anderson, *Member* ■ Tim Schneider, *Member*
Martin Plourde, *Superintendent*

9401 S. Painter Avenue, Whittier, California 90605-2798 ■ (562) 698-8121 ■ www.wuhsd.org