NCCO Webinars

Part 3

Series 1, Webinar 1 - 24 Mar 2020: Running Choir Online

Retrieved on 11/23/2026 11:22:23 from https://ncco-usa.org/publications/ncco-webinars/issues/7/articles/71/download

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Elise, how can we show our students that there is a light at the end of the tunnel? That we will get through this?

EH: We are creating an asynchronous online space for students to upload songs, poems, their own compositions and performances as a digital scrapbook, which we will then share at a "family reunion" at some point before the next school year begins. This has left many students without a sense of closure, and they are grieving. The idea of a family reunion creates a chance to have some closure.

Katherine, you work with community singers at Lewis & Clark. How has this affected your non-student singers?

KFG: When we had our first Zoom call, there was an outpouring of gratitude for keeping the weekly rhythm. For many people, this is what you do on Tuesday evening. And the online connection provides a sense of normalcy, and it's very meaningful for adults and students alike to acknowledge that this is a community that has value.

What thoughts do we have for those who are running summer terms, and will have to start classes in this environment, or if this situation were to persist through the summer into next fall.

MBC: Retreats are often awkward at first, especially for introverts. You can still have a choir retreat on Zoom---you're not retreating to a place, but if your aim is to gain community it can be done. And for introverts it might skip the initial awkwardness, because you don't have to go up to people. As long as you could curate activities that make people talk and give everyone an equal amount of time: for instance, a scavenger hunt---you have 60 seconds to go and find a toothbrush or glove, and be the first person to bring back things.

How do we address the needs of our international students who have lost their school community but are unable to return home and may be stuck in a dorm?

EH: It has to be intentional. We can't just throw something out and hope that they latch on. This is a very scary time for them, not being home with their family. Intentional and frequent. Lots of phone calls.

MÁF: Yes, when we turn off Zoom we find ourselves once again alone---community includes colleagues, the staff that we see every day.