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www.2012worldchoirgames.com

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First World Choir Games champion signs up for 2012 Games in Cincinnati USA

FORT WAYNE (IN) – Voices of Unity (VOU), a choir from Fort Wayne, Indiana, which was named champion of the 6th World Choir Games in the Gospel and Spiritual category, has registered for the 2012 World Choir Games in Cincinnati USA and is the first former champion to sign up.

Directed by Marshall White, Voices of Unity won gold medals in Gospel and Spiritual and Popular Choral Music in July 2010 in Shaoxing, China. The choir with the highest point total from a panel of judges in each category is named champion of the World Choir Games.

The World Choir Games, produced by Germany-based INTERKULTUR, is the largest international choral competition in the world, held every two years. The 7th World Choir Games will take place July 4-14, 2012, and for the first time ever will be hosted in the United States. The event is expected to attract 20,000 competitors from about 70 countries. Procter & Gamble is the first Presenting Sponsor of the 2012 World Choir Games.

“Participating in the World Choir Games last July touched our lives in ways we could never have imagined,” White said. “It enabled us to demonstrate our belief in ourselves and gave us a chance to represent our city, state and country.

“I have always believed in the power of children and young adults participating in arts activities as a way for them to grow. The cultural awareness our kids have developed as a result of their World Choir Games experience is proof.”

The impact of the World Choir Games experience on Voices of Unity has been tangible:

- As a result of being in Shaoxing, one choir member has been studying Mandarin and plans to go to China after graduating from high school to study there. The choir member is 1 of 9 children in a foster home.
- Voices of Unity’s Facebook page has been “liked” by people from more than 18 countries, including Kenya, Malaysia, Bulgaria and Indonesia.
- The SKH Lam Woo Memorial Secondary School Mixed Voice choir from Hong Kong and Voices of Unity met at the Closing Ceremony in Shaoxing and continue to be in contact, which supports one of the ideals of the World Choir Games: *Singing Together Brings Nations Together*. “We very much

hope this group finds the means to attend the 2012 Games,” White said. “We look forward to being reunited with them, standing side-by-side with our new friends from Hong Kong and singing as one.”

- Voices of Unity was invited to the Indiana State Capital, performed in chambers and was honored by a Senate resolution in January.
- The Renaissance Pointe YMCA in Fort Wayne opened a new Arts Academy in March. The Unity Performing Arts Foundation, founded by White in 2000, is managing a pilot program for the Arts Academy in which children will receive choral, instrumental, vocal, dance and oratory training. The new facility offers an office, private practice rooms and a choral room that will be used by Voices of Unity. The YMCA has awarded scholarships to the pilot program to 30 new VOU members.

“We urge all former World Choir Games champions and all U.S. choirs who have participated in past World Choir Games to join us in Cincinnati USA, help us meet and greet the world and allow more choirs and community members to forge the bonds of friendship with others from around the world who share our interest in singing,” White said.

“My work, *our* work, is never done, but I am thankful – *very* thankful. We're going to Cincinnati bigger and better. Every voice should have this opportunity. Every choir should make this happen.”

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ABOUT INTERKULTUR:

INTERKULTUR, based in Pohlheim, Germany, has ties to 120,000 choirs made up of 4.8 million choral singers around the world. In more than 20 years since INTERKULTUR was established, more than 5,500 choirs and some 250,000 singers from 100 nations have taken part in the World Choir Games and INTERKULTUR's regional choir competitions.

For more information about the 2012 World Choirs Games:

- www.2012worldchoirgames.com
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