

February 27, 2008

Dear Friend of SVGMC,

My name is Tom Nixon. I sing in the Silicon Valley Gay Men's Chorus, and I'm the president of its board of directors. And I'd like to tell you my story.

I graduated from Amador Valley High School in Pleasanton in 1987. During my coming of age in the 1980s, I thought I might be gay. Back then, that was scary! In 1987, there were few gay role models—Boy George, Elton John, and George Michael were all straight. AIDS was a death sentence for gay men.

I didn't want to be a gay stereotype. When it was time for college, I headed to Fresno State. In my 18 year-old mind, I was sure there were no gay people in Fresno, and without them, I could "go straight."

After ten years in Fresno, I decided to move back to the Bay Area. In the middle of law school graduation, the bar exam, and job hunting, I made a courageous decision—I told my parents I was gay. Fortunately, they took the news well, and even suggested I move to San Jose to live in my grandmother's house.

My first boyfriend was a volunteer for SVGMC, and he introduced me to the chorus. In January 1999, I attended my first rehearsal. I remember thinking, "These guys aren't stereotypes—they're just like me."

SVGMC has been an incredibly important part of my life for the last nine years. Through the chorus, I have found friends, roommates, jobs, and clients. I've shared camaraderie with people who love music. I've even picked up a few tips about clothing and haircuts!

Mostly, though, SVGMC has been my "safe space" to learn to feel good about being gay. Here in the Bay Area, acceptance and support of the GLBT community is the norm. That doesn't make it any easier for men who think they might be gay to come out to their friends, families, and co-workers. Singers in the Silicon Valley Gay Men's Chorus are role models for those guys. When newly out singers join us, telling the people in their lives about SVGMC is a way to continue their own transformations—to feel good about being gay. It sure worked for me!

Daniel Hughes, Artistic Director • Rusty Tooley, General Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Nixon, President • Johnathon Atwood, Vice-President • Kenny Porush, Secretary • Don Jolly, Treasurer
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SVGMC is twenty-five years old this season. We've grown a lot since we started, but one thing has stayed the same—the music we perform transforms the lives of the singers and the listeners!

You can hear that music—and be transformed—at our next concert, *HeartSong*, on March 14 and 15, and at our 25th anniversary concert, *PrideSong*, on June 20 and 21. Advance ticket purchase for both shows is recommended. For concert information and tickets, visit www.svgmc.org.

This is a monumental season for us. We're celebrating our 25th anniversary by recording a CD—*The Best of SVGMC*. We are also traveling to Miami, Florida to sing at the 2008 GALA Choruses Festival. Add to that our three regular concerts here in Silicon Valley, and you have an exciting and ambitious season!

To make all this possible, I'm writing to you and other friends of SVGMC. I ask that you make a generous gift in the next few weeks to support our chorus.

SVGMC is participating in the *Music & Arts Campaign* (a program of Arts Council Silicon Valley), to bring even more effectiveness to our fundraising efforts. There are many ways you can participate in this campaign, but you may be especially interested in three sponsorship opportunities:

- **Send a Singer to GALA.** Every four years, GALA (the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses) hosts a week-long festival of gay and lesbian choruses from around the world. Each chorus performs for an audience of thousands—often debuting new music that other choruses can bring home to their local audiences. SVGMC hasn't appeared at this event since July 2000, so we're anxious to share our best performances with this international audience.

It takes every voice to make a chorus, and we are taking *all our singers* to GALA, regardless of their financial resources. Many generous people just like you have helped us raise most of the money for this, but we're not finished. It will cost each singer \$855.40 just to be in Miami for the few days that include our rehearsal and performance. Perhaps you can make a gift at this level.

- **Adopt a Singer.** Sheet music. Performance attire. Rehearsal weekends. Travel. It costs money to sing for a chorus! SVGMC auditions singers for their musical ability—not their financial status. We want to make chorus membership accessible to singers at every income level. With a gift of \$250, you can “adopt” a singer and help defray their personal costs of being in the chorus.
- **Sponsor a Track.** To celebrate our 25th anniversary, we're recording a new CD, *The Best of SVGMC*. Your gift of \$100 will support recording, production, and distribution, and get your name (or that of your business) printed in the liner notes.

I hope you'll consider one of these sponsorship opportunities, but please know that we'd welcome a contribution of any amount! Making your gift to the *Music & Arts Campaign* enables us to put your contribution to work—quickly and efficiently. It's easy to make a secure credit card gift online by visiting <http://www.artscouncil.org/grants/programs/music.asp>. Or take a moment right now to write out a check and use the enclosed envelope. Either way, please remember to designate SVGMC as the recipient.

If your employer has a matching gift program, please obtain a Matching Gift Form from your Human Resource office and include it in the envelope. This is a great way to make your financial support go even further.

Your financial support of SVGMC will send a real message of encouragement to our artistic director, the marvelous singers, and the wonderful volunteers. What a tribute to the passion and creativity of our community!

It's a great honor for me to serve on the board of directors of this remarkable organization, and I'm grateful for your interest, involvement, and generosity. I'll see you at our next concert on March 14-15, 2008!

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Nixon". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light green rectangular background.

Tom Nixon
President, Board of Directors

P.S. Many of our chorus members have been singing and making music since elementary school. Music has transformed the lives of our members—and sponsors like you. Please help ensure the future of performing arts in the Silicon Valley by making a generous gift today. Thank you!