



## Spotlight on: Season Underwriters



*Season Underwriters event, 2016*

The City Choir of Washington's Season Underwriter campaign has become the organization's most critical source of funding in just five short years. Season Underwriters are donors who pledge \$5,000 or more yearly before the end of the calendar year. (Benefactors may also split an underwritership, each contributing \$2,500.) It's an annual injection of new revenue that the chorus can count on when budgeting and planning each season.

Maestro Robert Shafer, a Season Underwriter himself along with his wife Sharon, calls these critical donors "the backbone of the choir." The program brings in more than one third of City Choir's revenue, and makes it possible for TCCW to present programming of the highest artistic caliber with first class professional instrumentalists and soloists year after year.

Vice-President of the Board of Directors Barbara Greene is the driving force behind the project, and serves as Season Underwriter liaison to the Board. "I'm your advocate to the board, and your contact person for all special events," Barbara says. "We hold some really great events for our Season Underwriters." The highlight for many is a spring gathering (next scheduled for April 5, 2020) in historic Annapolis, hosted by Barbara and her husband Jon at the beautiful Annapolis Yacht Club. Season Underwriters are also guests of honor at the fall donor event in December 2019. Other perks include two free season subscriptions to the City Choir concert series and special recognition in all program books and the season brochure.



Barbara Greene with the next generation of Season Underwriters

Barbara began spearheading the campaign during City Choir’s 2014-2015 season. “Before we started the Season Underwriters program,” Barbara says, “it was really hard to plan ahead—for example, which soloists could we afford? How many winds could we hire for a particular concert? because we often couldn’t tally up donations until May or even June. Now we can budget more accurately, and Bob [Shafer] can make artistic decisions with more peace of mind.”

Why become a Season Underwriter? Barbara believes that “people join the program because they want to make a difference. We’re a smaller organization, so every benefactor, whether donating money or even time, can really see the impact of each and every gift. Our donors and volunteer singers get tremendous satisfaction knowing that they are an integral part of City Choir.

“We started off with just 10 Season Underwriters; now we’ve more than doubled that number with 23 households,” Barbara says. “Every year new donors sign up to participate—it is so exciting to see the program growing. I am especially thrilled that we have a new Season Underwriter who just sent her donation all the way from Taiwan!”

“Yep, that was my mom,” says Season Underwriter and Board President Ben Tsai. “She asked what I wanted for my birthday...But actually she is a big believer in choral music, having sung in a variety of ensembles all her life, starting out with impromptu renditions of Chinese opera that she organized as a kid with her dozens of siblings and cousins. She’s also served on the board of a number of charitable organizations, so she knows how important it is for a non-profit to secure stable streams of funding.”

Elaine Wunderlich, who with her late husband Marv provided the extremely generous donation that allowed City Choir to form in 2007, is a charter Season Underwriter. “There was no question in the City Choir’s first few years that there was a real desire to continue to provide quality performances with friends who appreciated singing under the direction of Bob Shafer, even though we all knew that meant a financial commitment as well,” Elaine told *Allegro*. “After all this time, to be able to attract so many new people to join us in that cause has been inspiring, and vindicates that it was worth the challenge. Marv and I have felt honored to be a part of this community. The DC music scene was one of the main reasons we chose to stay in this area even after we retired.”



Elaine & Marv Wunderlich, 2013

There is still time to participate in this vital program! Fill out your pledge form [online](#).

The support of our generous patrons allows the City Choir to keep singing. We treasure *every* donation and welcome corporate partnerships, alliances and individual giving at all levels. To donate to The City Choir of Washington, please click [here](#). Please contact Board President Ben Tsai at [president@citychoir.org](mailto:president@citychoir.org) to start the discussion and share your interest in how you would like to make a positive impact.