

Co-Ed Music Corps A Natural for Chicago

Intro

The Chicago Joint Territory Music Corps currently consists of three groups that perform together: band, flags and ribbons/ dance. Membership across six states consists of young men's and young women's division members. Eighty percent of total membership is Junior High and High School division age. A staff of 12, including section leaders, communicators, coaches and advisors plan the performances and bi-weekly rehearsals.

History

Before 1995, Chicago Brass Band activities were nearly non-existent. Rehearsals were attended by three or four members at the most, and many rehearsals were canceled when no one showed up at all. Brass Band leaders had been trying to reevaluate the purpose and application of the Brass Band since 1990, questioning whether it should exist at all.

The Chicago Fife and Drum Corps was also encountering some difficulties. Waning interest in the musical, as opposed to the dance, side of Fife and Drum Corps created difficulties in performing at any activity. Fife and Drum Corps leaders decided to become a Flag Corps exclusively and had some success gaining membership and performing to recorded music.

With word of a Chicago culture festival in 1995, Brass Band leaders knew it would be difficult to complete anything by October when the culture festival was to be held. After discussing options with the Fife and Drum Corps, the Brass Band and Fife and Drum Corps leaders decided to combine the two groups into one and adopted the name Music Corps on May 3, 1995.

At first, discussions were difficult; two groups who had always competed for time and resources now had to think as one and decide what to perform and how to perform it.

But as word got out about this new group, membership started to increase. Young men and women who had never participated in either the Brass Band or the Fife and Drum Corps felt natural in this coed environment and helped others see the advantages as well.

After five months of rehearsals, the Chicago Joint Territory Music Corps performed at the culture festival with 80 members from seven states.

It was a dream come true for the leaders of the Music Corps, who had tirelessly fought to create this fresh new group.

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