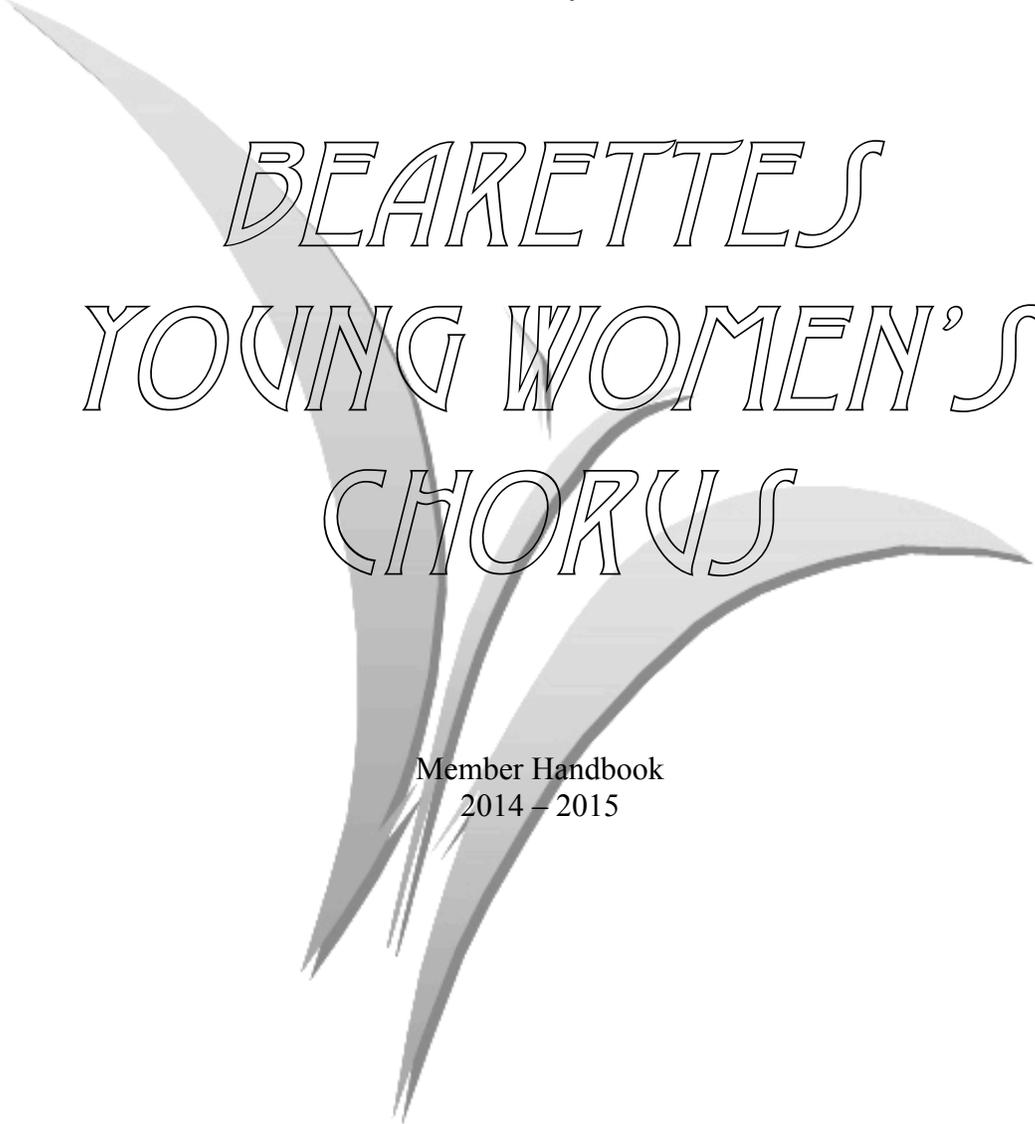


The Jackson P. Burley Middle School



*BEALETTE*  
*YOUNG WOMEN'S*  
*CHORUS*

Member Handbook  
2014 – 2015

## *Welcome*

...to the Jackson P. Burley Middle School Bearettes Young Women's Chorus. The ensemble is excited you're here and is anticipating a great shared experience. The ensemble is composed of Burley women from grades 6, 7, and 8. The group is 100% volunteer, singing together simply for the joy of performing music on a very high level. The Bearettes began in 2001 with a small group of six Burley women who wanted to try performing "girl group" music from the 50s, 60s, and movie soundtracks. Since then, the group has grown to over forty participants per year with performances all over the east coast of the United States. The women have performed in Washington DC, New York, Atlanta, Myrtle Beach, Ohio University, Virginia Beach, Charleston, and all over the Charlottesville area. In 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2011 the women were awarded the "Middle School Choir National Grand Champion" trophy by Music Festivals, Inc. In July 2012 the ensemble scored a Bronze Medal at the World Choir Games.

The women are well known throughout Charlottesville for their community service, with performances at UVA and Martha Jefferson Hospitals, Winterhaven Assisted Living, local area elementary schools, UVA athletic events, at local merchants, and are the official choir of the Charlottesville Fire Department.

## *Commitment*

In order to complete our goals as an ensemble and as individual musicians, participants and their families must be prepared to make the Bearettes their ***first extra-curricular commitment***, behind family, faith, and academic requirements. Attendance at all rehearsals and performances is mandatory.

## *Rehearsals*

The regular ensemble rehearsals are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7:45 – 8:55 AM. There will be occasional Saturday morning rehearsals, but families will be given as much notice as possible. Please contact Mr. Jennings in the event of a conflict or emergency as soon as is convenient. **Rehearsals are mandatory** and must not be missed in all normal circumstances. Please check the on-line calendar at <http://www.bearettes.net>

## *Attendance*

Students who are **chronically late or absent** may be asked to leave the ensemble. Students are required to report to rehearsal as soon as they arrive at Burley Middle School, and may not travel to any other part of the building without explicit permission from Mr. Jennings.

## *Expenses*

Participation in the Bearettes is *free*, however, the participants are asked to purchase their own uniform jewelry, shoes, and travel t-shirt (information to follow). These items must be a specific type for a uniform ensemble appearance. Furthermore, members will be asked to participate in fundraisers at various times of year in order to support ensemble endeavors.

## *Uniform*

The Bearettes performance uniform consists of the ensemble dress, shoes, and jewelry. The dress is provided and has been a signature portion of the “Bearettes look” since 2005. Families are asked to purchase shoes, jewelry, and the travel t-shirt. This year’s jewelry is being hand-made. *Returning Bearettes who have the new pearls and / or shoes that fit will not need to purchase more.* Please do not purchase these items from outside vendors: it is important that the ensemble not have variations in styles from student to student.

Expenses configuration:

- Need shoes, pearls, and this year’s shirt: \$50.00
- Need shoes and this year’s shirt (have pearls): \$42.50
- Need pearls and this year’s shirt (have shoes): \$17.50
- Need this year’s t-shirt (have shoes and pearls): \$10.00

More information regarding shoe fitting and payment will be issued by the end of September. Please contact Mr. Jennings if the uniform fee creates a hardship for your family. The **uniform and all of its components** must be worn at every performance. Exceptions will be made at the director’s discretion. (i.e. singing the National Anthem at a UVA baseball game, et cetera) Please make checks out to “Burley Middle School Chorus.” Please **do not send cash**.

## *Preparation*

The Bearettes perform a great many songs during the school year and will need to have opportunity to rehearse at home. While this may be somewhat daunting at first, a little preparation will help make practice part of the family’s routine, and will eventually become another normal household activity. It is imperative that a student is allowed to explore and grow on her own in preparation for the next rehearsal. She ***will*** make mistakes: please allow her to do so as a normal part of the learning process. Please be especially aware that sibling critique can be especially inhibiting and take precautions to help mitigate potentially destructive comments.

Rehearsal tracks of ensemble pieces are available on the Bearettes website (<http://www.bearettes.net>) for placement on an iPod or similar mp3 player. Students who lack internet access may request rehearsal CDs from the director.



## *Solos*

Solo opportunities will appear from time to time. While I appreciate the desire for many young ladies to be featured and encourage auditions if the student is ready, certain difficult realities about solos must be accepted:

- Solos are given at the discretion of the director and are **not** turn-based.
- There are a great many variables that come into play when decisions are made, from vocal maturity to ensemble need to performance chemistry. Not all of them are obvious, and *no* decision means you're a bad vocalist.
- If a soloist does not uphold the best practices of the ensemble the director reserves the right to re-assign the solo.
- While seniority is a consideration when decisions are made, other factors may be in play.
- Reality dictates that while there may be desire to sing a solo, not everyone will get a solo.
- If you are not yet mature enough to handle not getting a solo, it is suggested that you wait until you are able to process disappointment in an adult and professional manner.

## *Rehearsal*

The Bearettes normally rehearse a minimum of three times per week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, from 7:45 to 8:55 AM. In all normal circumstances, it is imperative that students be in their seats ready to go on time.

As there is absolutely no substitute for great rehearsal technique, it's a good idea to cover a few basics:

1. Be on time
2. Have **all music** and materials needed for rehearsal
3. **Bring a water bottle**
4. Bring a **pencil** to every rehearsal
5. **Mark** your music
6. **Ask** if you don't understand something!
7. Keep your attention on Mr. Jennings at all times
8. Maintain a good posture whenever singing
9. Do not talk when the director is talking
10. Receive correction and instruction with grace and maturity

Rehearsals are open to the public- parents are *always* welcome (no matter what your daughter may tell you...)

## *Code of Conduct*

The Bearettes are central Virginia's premier middle school vocal ensemble; they are often in the public eye performing community service, singing, and in the news. As such, the women are expected to behave with maturity and dignity at all times and to stay in good standing with the choral program and with Burley Middle School. Failure to uphold this standard may result in expulsion from the ensemble without refund.

## *Communication*

The Bearettes website (<http://www.Bearettes.net>) is the *primary* means of communication between Mr. Jennings and the ensemble's families. Information is updated as soon as is possible and is considered accurate. Each ensemble member is expected to check the updates page on the website at least once per day. This packet also includes a parent contact form with a space for email addresses. Parents may opt to be included in mass-emailings to help keep families better informed regarding the ensemble endeavors and expectations. However, the website is always "the last word."

Mr. Jennings is *always* available to families via email at

[cjennings@k12albemarle.org](mailto:cjennings@k12albemarle.org)

or

[cjennings@bearettes.net](mailto:cjennings@bearettes.net)

Families may also contact him during normal school hours at (434) 295-5101 ext. 50107. In the event of an emergency, parents and students may call him at home: (434) 984-3374.

Monthly newsletters are also published so parents may have hard-copy announcements and forms on hand. Newsletters will include vital information about trips and performances.

## *Parent Volunteers*

A choir like the Bearettes runs primarily on the "behind-the-scenes" work done by a **large** group of very generous and kind adults. We are always in need of parents to do the ensemble's "heavy lifting," whether as fund-raising chairs, dance volunteers, assistants to the trip planner, dress hemmers, grant writers... the list goes on and on. Any contribution of time helps! We are specifically looking for parents to help with our printer cartridge recycling program, dress and shoe fittings, planning *multiple* trips, and other important projects!

**Please jump in and lend a hand!**

## *Donations*

Donations to the ensemble are used to fund student scholarships (private instruction, travel, uniforms, et cetera), guest instructors, and performance opportunities for the women. In the past few years, the Bearettes have performed at the Virginia Music Educators Association annual conference, at the Ellipse in front of the White House, and as invited guests of the Ohio University music department in Athens, Ohio. Donations directly impact the young ladies and are tax-deductible through our PTO, which is registered as a non-profit 501c(3) group. Please contact Mr. Jennings if you are able to help!

## *Calendar & Projects*

The Bearettes' parent volunteers are already hard at work planning extraordinary opportunities for the women. Currently, we are working on the following *tentative* items:

- “Sing-a-Thon” fundraiser / rehearsal (January)
- An outing to Carter Mountain Orchard (preferably when the rest of the planet is *not* there) at the end of a Saturday rehearsal
- Possible “Girl Power” concert with AHS, MHS, and special guests (January)
- Performances / Cheering at Burley Basketball games (November 6)
- *Possible* Barracks Road Holiday Parade
- Entry in the annual “Christmas Idol” radio holiday event
- Performance at UVA athletic events
- The annual Goodwill Tours of local hospitals and venues
- Adjudication performance for VMEA District 13 (March)
- Annual performance tour of local elementary schools
- Performance at the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston (Tentative)

## *A note to parents and guardians*

Year in and year out, the women are enthusiastic, creative, energized, supportive, nurturing people. They are *far* beyond what the ‘teenage stereotype’ expects them to be. Their commitment to each other and to their music is inspiring. Thank you so much for supporting them in this endeavor: some will work harder than they ever thought they could, and the results may astonish them (and, possibly, you!). It is a great joy and privilege to work with your child- thank you a thousand times for the opportunity to do so



*Bearettes Young Women 's Chorus*  
*Family Information*

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: 7      8

Vocal part:    S      M      A      **Adult** T-Shirt Size: S M L XL XXL

Parents / Guardians: \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box to be informed via email regarding updates to the Bearettes program, calendar, and endeavors. Please write legibly!

Email addresses to include: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Check this box if you are willing to lend a hand with Bearettes projects: dresses, fund-raising, performance support, et cetera.

Volunteer contact information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email

# Burley Middle School Choral Department Uniform Contract

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dress #: \_\_\_\_\_

Dress shoe size: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent / Guardian email: \_\_\_\_\_

The above named student has received a Bearettes Uniform Dress from the Burley Middle School Choral Department for use during the school year.

By signing this form, both the student and parent agree to abide by all rules and conditions of caring for the uniform.

This form, once signed, will be used for all continuous years that the student is a member of the Burley Middle School Chorus.

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\*\*\*\*\*Sign below and return this entire page to the Burley Choral Department\*\*\*\*\*  
Please make checks payable to **Burley Middle School** (\$40.00)

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### Conditions for use of the Bearettes Choral dress

1. The dress is to be worn for Bearettes performances only.
2. The dress should only be worn by the person to whom it is assigned.
3. The dress should be hung on a plastic hanger.
4. The dress may be cleaned per instructions on the label (hand wash *only*, hang to dry).
5. The dress should be hung when not in use. Uniform must be in performance condition for each use.
6. Any dress that is lost or damaged beyond reasonable repair must be paid for in full. (Based on current catalogue prices, including shipping and handling.)
7. The dress must be worn properly, and in its entirety, for every performance.
8. The dress **MAY NOT BE CUT** for any reason, *including* fitting and hemming.
9. The dress **should be hemmed so that it is 1 inch off the floor** (baste stitch).
10. Students are expected to purchase their uniform jewelry and shoes from the ensemble. The cost is \$40.00; please make checks payable to **Burley Middle School**. No substitutions will be allowed. Please contact the director if this requirement creates a hardship.
10. **Performance dress includes** dress, black dress shoes and nude hose. Hair should be pulled back off the face to eliminate shadows on stage. The shoes and necklace **must** be worn with the dress. Women may purchase small white pearl earrings to match if they wish, but it is not required. No other jewelry of any kind is allowed, except that required for religious obligations or medical alert bracelets.
11. The dress must be returned at the end of the concert season (May) cleaned and with all fitting and / or hemming stitching removed. **DO NOT DRY-CLEAN THE DRESS!**

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I have read, understand and agree to abide by the above rules regarding the uniform assigned by the Burley Middle School Choral Department.

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Uniform # \_\_\_\_\_