Sing for Wellness – Choir for Life

We listened to our mother's songs even before we were born. We began singing ourselves as soon as we could. We sing to express our emotions, our passions, our love, our disappointments, our joys and our sorrows. In every culture around the world, singing is a natural expression of life.

As adults, we tend not to sing in public. Yet singing is good for us; it's good for our *mental* and *physical* health. Singing in a choir is even better for us because it improves our *social* health, too. Singing in a choir is fun! If you've ever needed a nudge to start singing and join a choir, here's your chance.

The Canadian Orpheus Male Choir (COMC), with the support of the *Hamilton Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)*, is introducing a wellness initiative that promotes mental, social, and physical well-being through the joys of group singing. Starting in May 2026, we invite people of all backgrounds and skill levels to experience for themselves the proven health benefits of singing in a choir. The campaign includes open rehearsals at many of Hamilton's community choirs, introductory singing workshops, pop-up community sing-alongs, and invitations to local choir concerts.

The Hamilton Branch of the CMHA marks its 60th Anniversary in 2026 and it celebrated with special activities built around National Mental Health Week in May. It embraced *Sing for Wellness - Choir for Life* and is lending its resources to support the initiative. Research shows that group singing improves mental health by reducing stress, anxiety, and depression, and supports physical well-being through improved breathing, posture, and cardiovascular engagement. The social health benefits of new friendships, camaraderie, and contributing to the creative arts scene through live concerts are clear. The CMHA-Hamilton supports *Sing for Wellness - Choir for Life* because it encourages group singing as another route to mental-health wellness.

Participating GHA choirs will be hosting **open rehearsals** throughout the year for anyone who would like to listen to them practice or join in to see what it's like to sing from the middle of the choir. No worries – visitors will be assigned a choir member to guide them through the practice. Check back regularly for dates.

A few of these choirs will organize **Choir Workshops** to introduce interested folks to the basics of choir singing. They will take place 30-45 minutes before regularly scheduled practices. Dates and locations will be announced as they come up.

The Hamilton Branch of the CMHA is hosted a Mental Health Week Community BBQ outside Hamilton City Hall on Tuesday, May 5th and the Canadian Orpheus Male Choir

made a special appearance to entertain the crowd. Other choirs will likewise sign up for public appearances to reach new audiences and demonstrate the benefits and joys of singing.

The COMC counts 19 community choirs in the Greater Hamilton Area. There are all-women's choirs, all men's choirs, mixed men's and women's choirs, and children-only choirs. Some sing *a capella* (without musical accompaniment), some with a pianist or organist, and some with orchestral accompaniment. Choirs can sing as one voice or in two, three, or four-part harmony. These choirs program concerts throughout the year; see the attached list for dates, times, and locations. Find out which kind of choir you like best!

Sing for Wellness – Choir for Life is a vibrant, inclusive initiative that will enrich lives and support mental, social, and physical well-being through the power of sung music. We invite you, your family, your friends, your organization, to get on board, spread the word, and try out choir singing this spring.

Singing is free, joyful, and profoundly human—let's raise our voices together.

CANADIAN ORPHEUS MALE CHOIR

CMHA Hamilton's 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Hamilton