



Highwood Lions Music Festival AGM President's Report- November 27, 2023

On behalf of the Highwood Lions Music Festival, I would like to offer warm greetings and deep appreciation to all of the parents, teachers, volunteers, sponsors and students who are connected to our festival. You have all offered time, finances and support to our organization as we strive to encourage and equip those involved in music and speech arts in the Foothills.

It's been an absolute pleasure to serve as president for our festival for the last three years. It's been a delightful challenge to plan a fully virtual festival, then a hybrid one, and now to be back in person. Each step of the way I can confidently say that our dedicated board members, volunteers and sponsors have embraced the heartbeat of the festival, regardless of what the format was. What a joy it was hearing a student's piece start to change immediately as they worked with our talented adjudicators. Whether it was a more nuanced shape to a phrase, greater clarity of tone or articulation, or a new sense of confidence, we believe that these take-aways are so valuable for our participants. Thank you for the ways you have been involved in making them happen!

We look forward to welcoming students in person from March 11-22, 2024. Look for more details in mid December on all of the logistics and dates for our festival.

As we look towards our 2024 festival and the future of our organization, there are a few changes the board is making to ensure we remain feasible in the future. First, in consultation with AMFA and other festivals, we have decided to move towards a 'governing' board structure instead of a 'working' board structure. This will allow our board to spend more time looking at the big picture of our festival and raising funds to support that big picture. As this happens, we will dissolve the 'tech team' role that has currently supported our festival and create a more all-encompassing administrative role called 'Festival Director'. This role will report to the board and will be responsible for executing the board's vision and direction. In addition to this change, I want to welcome Sasha Penchuk as our new president. Sasha has been associated with the festival and served on the board in the past, and as a local teacher and music educator herself, she embodies the heartbeat of our festival. Welcome, Sasha!

Our board is working hard to plan for the future of our organization, and we're cognizant of a few challenges as we look at our feasibility in the future. I'd like to invite you to consider how you could partner with our organization to ensure we continue to grow and serve the artists in our community. First, our group is small at the moment, and we'd like to add a few more members to our team. You don't have to be an expert in music--just excited about being a part of equipping and encouraging the musicians of the Foothills! We meet approximately 6 times a year on Zoom. Please reach out to me if you or someone you know might be interested in serving in this way. Secondly, like many organizations right now, we are feeling the pinch of inflation on our festival's finances. The festival's registration fees cover less than 1/3 of the costs of running our festival each year. We have some incredibly generous donors (thank you Highwood Lions Club and others), but our board still needs to raise over \$20,000 to run the festival. Do you know of a business or individual who would be able to donate to the festival? Please reach out to me--I'd love to share our mission and vision with them! Lastly, during the festival weeks we rely on many volunteers to help things run smoothly. If you'd like to be added to our volunteer list to hear about more opportunities as we get closer to the festival, please let me know.

With great appreciation,
Chelsea Bustin
President, Highwood Lions Music Festival