

Singing is healthy Swabian Choral Association Campaign in co-operation with doctors and their practices

For over a year the Swabian Choral Association has been preparing a poster campaign entitled "SINGING IS HEALTHY" for use in co-operation with doctors and their surgeries. Based on the conviction that singing can make a contribution to good health, the aim of the campaign was to convince doctors to promote choral singing in their practices. The starting-point of the campaign was that every choral singer has a G.P. and regularly sees specialists (paediatricians, gynaecologists, ENT specialists etc.). Many are also friends with doctors and so have ideal opportunities to recommend the campaign.

DOCTORS ARE ASKED TO ADVISE their patients to sing in a choir in order to:

- ⚙ improve their breathing
- ⚙ train their memory
- ⚙ contribute to positive vital energy
- ⚙ be sociable
- ⚙ help develop their personality (particularly important in the case of young people)
- ⚙ have a hobby to balance their work

ADVERTISING SPACE in doctors' practices is particularly valuable, because patients typically spend far more time looking at posters there than on a billboard or in shop windows. Then there is the psychological situation: people are more open to advice and new ideas when they are ill than when they are well.

SINCE THE MOTIVATION for joining a choir can be different for each age group, three different posters were drawn up for three different target groups, designed to address particularly the motivating factors for that group:

- ⚙ For children, choir means fun and action
- ⚙ For the professionally active, it's a necessary counterweight to the stress of everyday life
- ⚙ For senior citizens, choral singing means "staying active".

THE FORMAT of the posters is such that they don't take up too much space and can also be displayed on doors and still be noticed. The empty space in the corner is there for the nearest choir of the appropriate kind to attach a box of business cards with double-sided tape or Velcro. That way, anyone interested can take the address home with them, without having to write it down. The more attractively the cards are designed, the more likely they are to bring results.

Further health-based arguments with which choral singing can be promoted:

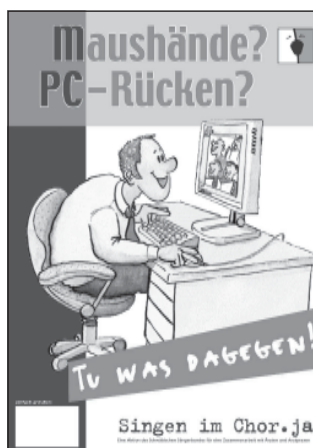
- ⚙ SINGING ENCOURAGES PROPER BREATHING. Each of us breathes over 20,000 times a day. By not breathing properly 20,000 times, we damage our health 20,000 times, since the lungs are the place where oxygen and carbon dioxide are exchanged between the air we breathe and our blood. When we sing, we instinctively breathe more deeply. Thus the organism receives extra oxygen, and we feel fresher, but at the same time come to rest.
- ⚙ IN THE CASE OF CHILDREN, singing is beneficial not just for the voice, but FOR LANGUAGE TOO. In cases of language and voice disorders, ENT specialists often refer patients for "singing therapy" as part of their treatment.
- ⚙ Singing is beneficial not just for language, but also for children's achievements IN READING AND SPELLING.
- ⚙ SINGING PROMOTES WELL-BEING and leads at all ages to physical and psychological balance.
- ⚙ SINGING STRENGTHENS CHILDREN'S SOCIAL COMPETENCE and is as such one of the best ways of reducing their willingness to resort to violence.
- ⚙ PERSISTENT HOARSENESS in children is often a sign not of a cold, but of a voice disorder, which can be cured by regular singing without recourse to medicine.
- ⚙ SINGING IMPROVES CONCENTRATION. A study in Switzerland has shown that children who had an extra hour of singing a day instead of an hour of maths or language lessons showed no drop in achievement in the subjects mentioned. An additional positive effect: children's interaction with one another was notably better than in other schools.
- ⚙ FOR WORKING PEOPLE, singing can create the desperately needed balance and means of REDUCING STRESS.
- ⚙ FOR THE ELDERLY, singing is really essential for maintaining physical and mental balance, strengthening the VOCAL MUSCLES and thereby one's entire well-being and preserving MENTAL CAPABILITY.

So much for the whole campaign, which will now be continued from doctor's practice to doctor's practice. In May 2002 there was a first production for radio and television, but the real kick-off was in September 2002 with press-conferences in the 23 member associations of the Swabian Choral Association in order to get best possible coverage in the regional press. Some of the results were overwhelming – to judge by articles which appeared from Maulbronn to Friedrichshafen. Particularly surprising was the enthusiasm with which the doctors themselves responded. A number of therapists and playgroups have since been in touch, wanting to take part in the campaign and continue it.

After an article in Lied & Chor, in November 2002. Reprinted by kind permission of VVK-publishing.



You have a "PC-back" and "mouse-hands"? Do something against it! Sing in a choir, yes!



Your doctor recommends "singing in a choir" - it keeps your body and your spirit fit.

