



LEADERSHIP

BethAnn Hepburn, Regional Representative

Nurturing Advocacy for the Schulwerk: Advocacy in Your Chapter and State

Teachers by vocation are inherently servant leaders. As we serve our students, our lives are also enriched. During those “magic moments” in the classroom when the teacher is taken out of the equation, we watch with pride as the children move beyond imitation and begin the creative process on their own.

The relationship your chapter provides its members should be analogous to the student-teacher relationship in the Schulwerk philosophy. Advocacy for the work we do with children must begin with advocating for our chapter members’ needs and empowering them by providing the educational opportunities they merit.

So, how does a local chapter board member make this happen? Through *communication!* I found that by serving at the local level, I have enjoyed meeting other colleagues and gained many new friends. A strong servant leader listens. Knowing your chapter members’ needs is the first step in serving them in a meaningful way. A first year teacher, with no Orff Schulwerk teacher training who walks into a workshop of barefoot-dancing adults may be a bit unsure and has different needs from an experienced teacher who has attended three levels of training and four master classes.

How does a strong servant leader meet everyone’s needs? First, make everyone feel welcome. There is no secret handshake or password; let the new people know it’s great to see them! Welcome the first time workshop attendees, the college students, and all your regular members. Help these people make connections. Encourage the college students to talk to the regularly attending members. Perhaps they will find their future student teaching mentor. Help urban teachers find each other as they may have questions and needs only understood by someone in their shoes.

A servant leader advocates for the chapter as an ambassador. Knock on doors. Workshop attendance does not fill up on its own: invite the college methods course instructors and their students; find ways to partner with other music groups or associations in the area; invite the public and parochial school teachers to attend a workshop; and once people step through the door, find out who they are and how you can help them be more successful.

Give members a voice and the opportunity to be empowered. Empower them by offering workshops that meet their needs. What topics do your members request? Oddly, I have found much empowerment happens during chapter workshop “coffee” breaks! Colleagues feel safe to ask questions of each other during breaks. Personal or management concerns get answered such as, “Am I the only one losing those little grommets on the instruments?” and, “How do you pronounce this word, *übung?*” Often, it is the simple act of being there for each other that helps empower our members and provides support. There is comfort in knowing we are not alone and we are part of a greater community of music educators.

Getting out into that greater community advocates the work of AOSA on a larger scale. Servant leaders advocate by educating others about our work. The chapter needs to make connections to other state education groups, both musical and non-musical. Invite Orff clinicians to your

state music educators conference. Provide an insight to Carl Orff’s educational works by partnering with local symphonic groups by providing a “pre-concert” with children; educate others on the unique importance of this work. Build bridges to state organizations, advocate for the approach to be shared with your state music education group.

Am I honored to be an ambassador for this work and serve AOSA members? Yes, and I am a better person for working with such dedicated teachers. I hope *you* consider serving your local chapter and becoming an advocate for your students. It is compelling to want to give back to an organization that has given me so much, professionally and personally. It is a pleasant surprise to discover giving also opens the door for more receiving!

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