

CLINTON TOWNSHIP

# Chippewa Valley set to host third ‘A Cappella for Autism’

C AND G NEWSPAPERS

By Thomas Franz✉



Students perform during the 2015 “A Cappella for Autism.” More than 350 students will perform in the 2016 edition of the concert. (Photo provided by James Pecar)

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Students from Oakland University, Chippewa Valley High School, Algonquin and Wyandot Middle School and Erie Elementary will perform in the 2016 “A Cappella for Autism.” (Photo provided by James Pecar)

CLINTON TOWNSHIP— In its third edition, Chippewa Valley Choir Director James Pecar’s “A Cappella for Autism” will feature more than 350 student singers from elementary ages to college performers.

The event will feature two shows, both at 6 p.m. on April 19 and April 20, at Chippewa Valley High School’s Henrichsen Auditorium.

“My goal is to invite community members in to see that these students can do more with their voices than just sing songs,” Pecar said. “They’re able to promote awareness. The audience is educated as well on the importance of music in schools and for students who have autism.”

The event is held to raise awareness and funds to assist the Macomb/St. Clair County Affiliate of the Autism Society of America in achieving its mission to assist individuals affected by autism and also to assist the Chippewa Valley High School music classes.

Through two years, the concert has raised approximately \$25,000, and Pecar hopes the pair of shows this year will match that number.

“My main goal is to make people aware and let the students know they can do so much more than they think. This was a little dream I had when I started in college, and it’s grown to be something where we have more than 350 kids participating,” Pecar said.

For the April 19 show, students from Algonquin Middle School will join Oakland University’s Gold Vibrations a cappella club, which Pecar said recently won the semifinal round of the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella.

“We are so lucky to have a group like that in our presence,” Pecar said of OU’s club.

The April 20 show will feature students from Erie Elementary and Wyandot Middle School.

All 180 members of Chippewa Valley High School’s choir group will perform in both shows.

“I feel like the students have taken ownership of the entire event, and they take pride in it,” Pecar said. “It’s less of me giving ideas to them and more of them taking a whole new role on their own and going for it.”

With this show being the third year for some students to participate in it, Pecar said the concert has improved due to their and other students’ hard work.

“The students have taken on this work ethic of creating a regiment of their studies and music study,” Pecar said. “They practice outside of school, and they said it’s really helped their balance with homework and music.”

The concert comes during a stretch of several significant performances for Pecar’s group, including the state solo ensemble taking place the weekend prior, and the state choral festival occurring a few days later.

“It’s kind of a crazy schedule,” Pecar said. “We’re preparing for three big events simultaneously.”

Both nights of the concert will begin with a fishbowl raffle. There will also be a “Miracle Minute,” door prizes and informative presentations about autism.

Advanced ticket sales cost \$10 and can be purchased at [cvchoirs.seatyourself.biz](http://cvchoirs.seatyourself.biz).

More details about A Cappella for Autism are available at <http://cvchoirboosters.weebly.com>.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Staff Writer Thomas Franz covers Macomb Township, Chippewa Valley Schools and the Macomb County Board of Commissioners for the Macomb Township Chronicle. He also covers sports primarily for the Shelby-Utica News. He has worked for C & G Newspapers since 2013 and attended Michigan State University.*

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