



# Women of DISTINCTION

HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*Karen Mihalyi*

Karen Mihalyi has been the founder and Director of the Syracuse Community Choir since 1985.

A choir activist, Ms. Mihalyi, along with the chorale, sings music that promotes peace, freedom and justice. Many of their selections feature songs that address issues of oppression, including racism, sexism, and homophobia.

A core value of the choir is that everyone is encouraged to sing and that every voice matters. Ms. Mihalyi is emphatic that the choir remains inclusive, and encourages and supports people of all ages, genders, races, abilities, identities, means and backgrounds. The choir has been known to provide transportation, childcare when needed, and sign language interpretation at concerts, and it reaches out to and collaborates with diverse communities.

Ms. Mihalyi has brought a multitude of skills to the choir, including directing, arranging music, singing, fundraising, community building, writing, marketing, teaching, mentoring, collaborating, activism, and conflict resolution.

In addition to the adult choir, Ms. Mihalyi organized and supported a teen and children's choir, passing on the core values of the choir and building confidence and skills among generations of young people.

As a community choir leader, Ms. Mihalyi incorporates fellowship during rehearsals. The aim is to have fun, greet each other lovingly, and spread that to the world in which we all live. Under her guidance, time is spent getting to know each other and learning about issues in the community. Choir members are encouraged to participate in local calls to action and community benefits. In recent times, Ms. Mihalyi initiated singing and collaborations with a March for Our Lives Gun Safety Demonstration, a Peace in Ukraine March, the Paul Robeson Performing Arts Company, and the Onondaga Nation.

Ms. Mihalyi has been the heart of the Syracuse Community Choir and has kept it going through love and years of hard work and dedication. At the end of each rehearsal, members are encouraged to offer appreciation for other members.

She is in the process of transitioning to emeritus status and has the appreciation of the Syracuse community. She has given the gift of service with an open heart, open mind, joy, and powerful music over many years.

***Karen Mihalyi was selected as a  
2024 Women of Distinction honoree by Senator Rachel May***

