

PRESS RELEASE – EVENT SATURDAY OCTOBER 4TH

REAL MEN SING – NUMBERS DON'T LIE

A Musical Event Featuring Nearly 600 Voices

With the event about a week away, the registered performers scheduled to attend this year's annual Real Men Sing climbed to 595. Young men ranging in age from early teens to age 85 will be part of the 595 voices in the Real Men Sing festival and concert in Staples, MN on Saturday, October 4, 2014. And with those kind of participation numbers, it seems to imply that real men *do* sing. In what appears to be the biggest gathering of voices at the annual Real Men Sing concert yet, the Staples Area Men's Chorus (SAMC) are wondering how they will have enough milk and cookies to feed all the men. And let's not forget the pizza. But nourish them they will, because they have a show to put on. On Saturday, October 4, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. the Staples Motley High School Gymnasium concert will begin featuring students from 19 schools, the Staples Area Men's Chorus (SAMC) and Twin Cities-based internationally acclaimed guest choir the Great Northern Union Chorus (GNU).

So why is this event so popular? The mission of the Real Men Sing festival is to show young men that singing is a lifelong pastime. "What do you do when a baby is born? You sing the baby lullabies. What do you do at a funeral, you sing hymns. And there is plenty of singing in between...These guys are being role models for the older high school students, and younger middle school students. There are college students, dads, fathers, and grandfathers in the group. It's something!" said Brian Stubbs, Brainerd High School Choir Director and the 2014 guest director for the Real Men Sing Jr. group. "Life is all about relationships – family and relationships. Singing strengthens bonds. [The Real Men Sing festival allows] schools to come together. For some, it is the first time they are going to be working on something *together*," Stubbs emphasized, rather than competing as they are usually doing in sports or other activities. "So that is what I am excited about. The kids are emboldened to sing in front of others with this experience, and some of them will form friendships" at this year's festival.

The following cities will have schools represented with performers participating with Real Men Sing Jr.: Albany, Bertha-Hewitt, Browerville, Brainerd, Eagle Valley (tentative), Henning, Little Falls, Long Prairie, New York Mills, Osakis, Pequot Lakes, Pillager, Pine River-Backus, Sauk Centre, Sebeka, Staples Motley, West Central Area Schools, also joined by the Bemidji State University Men's Chorus.

The Staples Area Men's Chorus are excited to host so many musicians and watch those who haven't been part of a similar group "hear the music in their chest," said SAMC member Mike Gold. GNU has its own following, and for area residents who are not familiar with the group, GNU has approximately 90 singers in the men's a cappella chorus. They have competed in the Barbershop Harmony Society International Competition 21 times with each performance finishing in the top 10, and in eight of those finishes they were a top 5 medalist.

Great Northern Union's excitement to be part of the Real Men Sing festival stems from a contact made nearly two years ago with 2014 Real Men Sing Jr. director, Brian Stubbs. Stubbs had been contacted by GNU about wanting to find a location to tour in Northern Minnesota. Stubbs introduced GNU to SAMC director Steve Hoemberg and shared about the annual Real Men Sing festival. "GNU was excited about coming to our Real Men Sing festival because they had just been to one in Wartburg, Iowa." Hoemberg said. "Ironically, it was our Real Men Sing festival that has started this whole thing,

and we can track the musicians that began to bring this concept across the state and even into Iowa,” he explained. “It started here, and then it took off at St. Cloud State, and then Wartburg College. The GNU are even planning their own Real Men Sing in addition to being guests at our event on October 4th.”

For the participants the festival begins at noon where they are welcomed before vocal solos are reviewed, followed by rehearsals, the talent show, a special GNU master class, more rehearsals, supper, and any last minute concert preparations. This day-long workshop will be an invaluable learning experience for the singers, but is especially important for the younger students who are helping SAMC fulfill their mission of teaching and sharing the lifelong value of singing for men.

The concert featuring all of the performers begins with Real Men Sing Jr. (directed by Stubbs), followed by songs by the SAMC (directed by Steve Hoemberg), featured soloists, and the GNU performance (directed by Pete Benson). The grand finale will be a mass chorus with every performer on stage. The concert will be held in the Staples Motley High School Main Gymnasium (stadium and floor seating available) in Staples, Minnesota, starting at 7:00 p.m.

For those wanting more, they are in for a treat. The guest Great Northern Union requested an opportunity to meet the audience at a special AfterGlow performance. The AfterGlow will be held immediately following the concert open to concert-goers at the Staples Community Center and will be a more intimate social event with cash bar and appetizers catered by Ted & Gen’s of Aldrich.

Tickets for this event are available online at www.staplesmen.org, from a SAMC member, or at Nelson Insurance Agency, 325 2nd Avenue NE, Staples, MN, telephone 218-895-5045. Tickets are \$10 per person and includes admission to the concert as well as the AfterGlow concert following. This project is made possible by a grant provided by the Five Wings Arts Council with funds from the McKnight Foundation supplemented with Legacy funds and with support from the Staples Lions Club, Staples Motley Area Community Foundation, National Joint Powers Alliance, 3M, and Popplers Music.