

## FRIENDS OF HARMONY BACKGROUND



In fall 2008, the Rogue Valley Harmonizers, a Chapter of the international Barbershop Harmony Society, took a major step forward in its efforts to improve the musical experiences available to citizens of the Rogue Valley. As a financial support vehicle to raise funds for its many outreach programs, the Chapter created “Friends of Harmony” as a public fund-raising entity under the umbrella of the Rogue Valley Chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. The Rogue Valley Harmonizers teach American songs in schools in Jackson and Josephine Counties, and sing for shut-ins and for high school music programs. Friends of Harmony is a 501(c)(3) organization.

For more than 21 years, the *Rogue Valley Harmonizers (RVH)*, a local chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society, have entertained in local venues and retirement/assisted living facilities throughout the Rogue Valley and continues to present multiple performances each year. In 2004, the Harmonizers became aware of a lack of certified music teachers in some public schools. *RVH* accepted the challenge to help fill this void by implementing the *Get America Singing Again* program (GASA) for students. Since then our volunteers have visited classrooms and mentored more than 4000 public elementary school children. This program teaches students to sing traditional songs, preserving our American Heritage.

In the past, *RVH* members have paid for this school outreach program through their membership dues and show performance proceeds. Song books were purchased by *RVH* and donated at no cost to the schools. *RVH* would now like to expand this outreach program to include high schools. However the on-going cost of books and the group performances place a burden on our small club—made up mostly of retired members who donate their time.

Local Manor resident, Jim Collier was instrumental in launching the Friends of Harmony by way of making a sizeable charitable gift of seed capital for their use in putting together a viable framework for the purpose of seeking community funding. The Rogue Valley Harmonizers, in recognition of his generosity, have named Jim as the initial Founding Father of The Friends of Harmony, and will ever be grateful for his help.

This is not an unusual effort for Jim. In the past several years he has been a major supporter of The Rogue Valley Opera, The Chamber Singers, and the Rogue Valley Symphony. He has made similar contributions to like organizations in his home state of Iowa. He is also known as the “Piano Man” in Iowa and in the Medford area because of his donations of grand pianos. Jim is a true supporter of the arts and wants to see more and more people enjoy the benefits of quality music in their lives.



**You may wish to join Jim in his support of Friends of Harmony by making a donation.** Just click on the “Donate” link on this web page and follow the on screen directions We thank you in advance for your support of this important endeavor.