

EVENTIDE – A Timeline

March 2007 - the Beginnings: The inspiration for Eventide came as the result of a visit by Shelburne's John Bos to Marshfield, VT to the home of a friend who was dying from cancer. Carolyn Jones was the founder of Carolyn's Angel Band in Montpelier, later to be called Carolyn's Choir, one of more than 15 hospice choirs in Vermont.

A huge spirit and human being, Carolyn had outlived earlier predictions of her passing two years earlier. But then it became apparent that her time in this realm was fast diminishing. So Bos began traveling to Vermont to visit with Carolyn who he had met and befriended during a three-week Village Harmony singing workshop on the island of Corsica in 2006.

On one weekend in March 2007, he joined the singers from Carolyn's Angel Band who had all come to Carolyn's house for a potluck supper, to visit and to sing with their founder.



Angel Band founder Carolyn Jones (on couch) with her singers learning new music together.

It was an extraordinary evening of healing and Bos was deeply moved by the close community of singers and the healing power of the music they sang.

Driving back home the next day Bos “knew” that something like Carolyn's Choir was needed in Franklin County.

Following is a timeline of Eventide's beginnings.

March 14, 2007: Bos emailed Kathy Leo, a friend and founder/administrator of the Hallowell Singers in Brattleboro, asking for advice on how to start a hospice choir. Hallowell has served as a model for many hospice choirs in the U.S. that sing four-part harmony. (www.hallowell-singers.org/) In early June each summer Hallowell's leaders conduct a hospice choir workshop weekend at the Rowe Camp and Conference Center which many Eventide singers have attended. (rowecenter.org/events.php?event=284).

March 15: Kathy responded with this email:

John Bos [jhbos@verizon.net]

Harmony KBos then asked former hospice nurse and retired clergy person, Mary Schreiber, to work with him in founding a hospice choir for Franklin County. They both took the eight-week hospice training program provided by the Hospice of Franklin County to become better acquainted with how volunteer singers can be present at the bedside of a dying person.

April 15: “Holding Our Own: Embracing the End of Life,” a documentary by Vermont filmmaker Camilla Rockwell, was presented at the Latchis Theater in Brattleboro. (<http://litmed.med.nyu.edu/Annotation?action=view&annid=12776>) The one hour film features the work of artist Deidre Scherer of Williamsville, the music of Hallowell, and an interview with Dartmouth Hitchcock professor and author Ira Byock, M.D. about death and dying. Bos and Schreiber invited interested Franklin County singers to attend the screening.

September 8: a hospice choir workshop was conducted at the Guiding Star Grange in Greenfield. Sponsored by the Hospice of Franklin County and Bay State VNA, the 3-hour workshop was led by Leo, Mary Cay Brass, one of Hallowell’s music leaders and the director of Greenfield Harmony, along with some of Hallowell’s singers.

September 26: An organizational meeting at the Franklin Medical Center including representatives from the Hospice of Franklin County and Bay State VNA. (Bay State later announced the closing of its hospice services in Franklin County.)

October 18: Bos and Schreiber screened “Holding Our Own” for interested singers at St. James Episcopal Church in Greenfield.

A number of people began to step forward to volunteer their efforts in bringing a (yet to be named) hospice choir into being in Franklin County.

Following the Hallowell model Bos determined that because of her professional background the choir’s intake administrator the person who would serve as the interface between the people Eventide would serve and the choir would be Mary Schreiber.

Reverend Judith Kinley graciously offered the nascent choir the use of the church she led at that time, the First Congregational Church in Greenfield, as a rehearsal venue. Kinley was a singer with Eventide for three years before retiring to Vermont.

Steve Howland, a singer with Greenfield Harmony and Village Harmony and web site designer, worked with Bos to create Eventide’s first web site.

Bos became the public liaison public information officer, fundraiser and eventually executive director.

No less than three talented music leaders – Brendan Taaffe, Eveline MacDougall and Jeanne Morrill – volunteered to provide music leadership in the early months of the emerging hospice choir. MacDougall, the founder and director of the Amandla Chorus. and Taaffe, the founder and leader of Turtle Dove, alternated their leadership of the newly assembled singing group for several months. Morrill soon had to spend her available time with her ailing mother.

October 28: A group of 21 singers destined to become the hospice choir “Eventide” gathered together for the first time at the First Congregational Church in Greenfield. The first rehearsal was led by Evaline MacDougal.

February 16, 2008: Eventide made its first public appearance as part of a combined choir with other groups singing for a memorial service for Jackie Walker, a co-founder of the Cancer Connection in Northampton. At the memorial service Bos met Joe Toritto who agreed to lead the choir “for a few months” until such time as a permanent music director could be found.

May 10: Bos and Schreiber designed a day-long planning retreat at the First Congregational Church that included a three-hour hospice orientation by the executive director, chaplain and social worker from the Hospice of Franklin County.



Eventide singers at the first annual planning retreat on May 10, 2008..

October 24: – Eventide’s first guest leader, the much beloved gospel singer and teacher, Kathy Bullock, taught the singers several new songs at the First Congregational Church in Ashfield.

September 21: Appalachian singer, composer and teacher Val Mindel, the second guest leader, taught several new songs.



Guest leader, Appalachian singer Val Mindel, teaches a new song.

March 7, 2009: The second day-long planning retreat featured a repeat of the hospice orientation presentation by Hospice of Franklin County staff and certified music therapist Lynne Davis from The Bereavement Center of Amherst. (www.endoflifecommission.org/eoldb/western/bereave_center.htm)



Music therapist Lynne Davis.

May 1, 2010: Third annual day-long planning retreat.



Eventide singers at the May 1, 2010 planning retreat.

March 6, 2011: First annual benefit concert at First Congregational Church.

September: Bos and videographer David Fessenden are awarded first prize, adult division at the Ashfield FilmFest for their five-minute documentary “We’ve Come to Sing Again” which you can access on the home page.



Videographer David Fessenden shooting guest leader Kathy Bullock teaching Eventide singers new music.

November 20, 2011: Guest Leader Alice Parker teaches “My Life Flows on in Endless Song.”

February 26, 2012: Second annual benefit concert at First Congregational Church.

October 31: Guest leader Mary Cay Brass teaches “Venez Mon Dieu,” “O Sing to Me of Heaven” and “Durme, Durme.”

November 3: John Bos describes Eventide’s entry into the hospice choir movement in America in a ten-minute talk at the first TEDxShelburneFalls event. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6LXcwxLe_Q)



Eventide co-founder John Bos gives a TEDx talk about Eventide and the growth of hospice choirs in America.

February 10, 2013: Third annual benefit concert at First Congregational Church.

April 6, 2013: Fourth day-long planning retreat.

February 16: Eventide's annual benefit concert with all proceeds going to the First Congregational Church which has served as Eventide's rehearsal home since its very beginning.

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