

The ParkinSonics: Philanthropic Impact

By Kaylin Kopcho



The ParkinSonics in action. Watch them [here](#).

Born out of Dr. Alexander Pantelyat's controlled, crossover behavioral intervention research study to investigate the benefits of choral singing on the quality of life and voice outcomes of people living with Parkinson's disease (PD), the ParkinSonics Community Chorus has recently completed its second full season. The program is co-sponsored by the Johns Hopkins Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders (PDMD) Center thanks to funds raised through Pacing for Parkinson's and aims to:

- Support cognitive health and improved executive functions, as well as vital self-synchronous and other-synchronous rhythmic functioning – physical, verbal, body-mind, interactional;
- Provide an ongoing opportunity for participants to work on vocal maintenance – increased volume, fuller breathing, clearer diction, enhanced expressiveness;
- Enrich the quality of life of participants by reducing isolation and creating community.
- Redirect attention toward new learning and creative functioning;
- Prevent and/or relieve depression and anxiety, increase confidence, and support a healthy sense of self; and
- Provide hope to the Parkinson's community at large by demonstrating ability rather than disability through performance.

Each week, approximately 35 people living with PD and a handful of care partners meet and, after a comprehensive warm-up consisting of vocal and physical stretching, embark on a musical journey across many genres and eras, from traditional hymns and canons to Frank Sinatra, Carol King, and even Simon and Garfunkel. Participants were surveyed recently and report many positive impressions from and impacts of the ParkinSonics, including improved vocal tone, the ability to learn how to sing while spending quality time with a partner, friendships made with other chorus members, and overall joy in life. [Watch them practice and perform in this YouTube video](#).

The ParkinSonics meet Wednesday from 1:30-3 pm in Sharp Hall at Govans Presbyterian Church (5828 York Rd., Towson, MD) from September through May. No prior singing experience or equipment is needed, the program is free to participants, and care partners are welcome to observe or join in.