



Suzanne Mallare Acton, Artistic Director

Rackham Symphony Choir (RSC) has embarked on a three-month project designed to raise awareness of, and support for the homeless.



Voices for Michigan's Homeless is a collaborative project of art, music, writing, and the sharing of personal experiences to voice the stories of the homeless in Michigan. As part of an educational outreach program, RSC will work with nearly 100 eleventh grade students at Henry Ford High School in Detroit in an innovative three month educational outreach program examining the topic of homelessness as it relates to the students, their families and their communities.

The project culminates in ***"Voices for the Homeless: A Concert for Hope and Help"***, presented March 14, 2010 at Metropolitan United Methodist Church in Detroit. The main feature of the event will be the Michigan premier of Henry Mollicone's *"Beatitude Mass (for the Homeless)"* which will be performed by the award-winning Rackham Symphony Choir, soloists, and chamber orchestra under the direction of Artistic & Music Director, Suzanne Mallare Acton. Mr. Mollicone composed this powerful work incorporating the Latin Mass Ordinary juxtaposed with text created from interviews with people living in homeless shelters. He is also a featured speaker in the high school outreach program and will attend the performance.

"Voices for the Homeless" will be an afternoon of music and art that will provide audience members an opportunity to meet individuals who work to combat homelessness, as well as those who have overcome homelessness. Narrated by former Detroit TV personality Nikki Grandberry of Adult Well-Being Services, the event will feature performances by the Michigan Opera Theatre Children's Chorus, the band **RECOVERY** - which is comprised of formerly homeless musicians, a fine art exhibit by local homeless artists, a photography exhibit on homeless residents and student readings. The afternoon will conclude with an artist's reception.

The event will raise money for three organizations:

- The Capuchin Soup Kitchen - a non-profit organization that serves Detroiters who suffer from the lack of basic human needs such as food, clothing, and household necessities;
- S.A.Y.- a nonprofit charity designed to help improve the lives of Detroit's homeless with the nation's first free, 24-hour clinic for homeless children;
- MCREST - a rotating emergency shelter team that hosts the homeless in Macomb County churches.

Partners for ***Voices for Michigan's Homeless*** include the co-creators of the high school outreach curriculum the University of Michigan's Department of Education as well Wayne State University's Department of Psychology; the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness; the Corporation for Supportive Housing; composer Henry Mollicone, photographer Prem Mukherjee; visual artist Freddie Harris and Gerald Butler and the **RECOVERY** band.

Funding for the educational outreach program has been provided in part by a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.