

Fundraising Summary – Ann Bliss

On July 5, 2007 Joanne Connolly, Director of Voices from the Heart, took 130 chorus members and one male instrumentalist on a ten day international tour, to Croatia and Slovenia. The chorus raised funds for Adopt A Minefield (AAM), a project of the United Nations Association – USA, prior to departure as well as during the tour through donations and benefit ticket sales. The chorus hoped to raise \$25,000 to clear one minefield, however in the end raised approximately \$38,000 in the States and another \$35,000 in Croatia and Slovenia. The International Trust Fund (ITF) of Slovenia matched the donation dollar for dollar.

The fundraising committee developed multiple activities to generate the needed funds for this project. The group learned that it took \$1000 to clear one mine a staggering number given that it only costs \$3.00 to build one. Our hope was that we could adopt a village or area that could be transformed from a dangerously mined land area to one that is thriving and mine-free.

The Night of a Thousand Dinners is a program developed by AAM. Voices enthusiastically embraced the project. There were many dinners, lunches, and social gatherings hosted by many different Voices members. These events raised the consciousness of participants to the

horrors of landmines and unexploded ordinance left long after wars end and raised the much-needed funds for mine clearance projects.

Talented Voices members created and hand stitched a quilt that was raffled off. A smaller quilt was auctioned at the large auction organized by the fundraising committee.

Corporate and Individual Donor letters were sent out and members spoke at churches, synagogues, and businesses as part of the fundraising effort. Information was shared with concert audiences who also generously donated.

While in Croatia, the chorus had the good fortune to visit the village of Bukovac Perusic in Perusic District. Substantial minefields affect the ability of the people of the village to use their agricultural land or walk in the woods.

It was very compelling to walk the dirt pathways of the village dotted with danger signs. It was painfully apparent that any misstep into the woods could be deadly. Most families were evacuated and live elsewhere. There were no children and one lonely tied up dog howled as our huge buses crowded the yard of a small farm.

The International Trust Fund (ITF) of Slovenia matches all funds raised for Croatian mine clearance. That means that

Voices from the Heart raised almost \$150,000 for mine clearance in Bukavac Perusic. They will finally have the opportunity to revitalize their village. We are proud to have contributed to this project.