

For many years now the Placerville Chapter of the BHS has had a school visitation program to introduce barbershop harmony to our youth and to encourage them to get involved in singing. Last Wednesday we visited one of our high schools here in El Dorado County with an adult quartet and two high school quartets.

We arrived at the main office about 15 minutes early and used that time for the high school quartets to sing one song each to the administration. That got everyone there very excited and we were welcomed with open arms. That set the mood for the whole day.

We then proceeded to the theater where over 200 high school students were assembled. As the MC, I introduced myself and stated that we were there for two reasons. First, to encourage all the students to get involved in the arts and to reap the benefits of being involved in the arts, improve academics, as well as it being a great stress reducer. The second reason was to introduce them to a true American Art Form called Barbershop Singing. After giving some history about the art form I introduced the adult quartet who then gave a demo of four-part harmony using the song Wild Irish Rose. They then introduced themselves and sang one more song. The audience responded very positively.

Next I introduced the female high school quartet and they sang three songs. In between each song they introduced themselves. Then the male high school quartet did the same. The reaction from the audience to both of these quartets was VERY POSITIVE with cat calls, whistle's, and applause.

Next I invited the audience to ask the high school quartets questions. This is always a very interesting part of the program. You never know what kind of questions they will ask. Some of today's questions were: Do you have professional singing parents?? And, Did you know the other three people your whole life??

After the question and answer period of 10 minutes, the high school quartets sang one song as an octet to end the program and that just about brought the house down.

Before the high school quartets could leave the stage they were surrounded by students from the audience and within a few minutes the high school quartets had them singing tags. It was UNBELIEVABLE.

Then the principal of the school came on stage to thank the quartets and said that they set a very good example for his high school to meet.

At the same time other young men were crowding around the school's vocal teacher asking her about forming a quartet.

The finale hurrah was when the male high school quartet and I were walking to the car, the school secretary came running outside, yelling thank you to the quartet.

What a wonderful day!

Ron Murray VP Youth In Harmony Placerville Chapter