

"VOICES FROM THE HEART" DEDICATED TO ADOPT-A-MINEFIELD PROGRAM



In July 2007 Mrs. Joanne Connolly took her ensemble "Voices from the Heart" on a ten day international tour, to Croatia and Slovenia. In cooperation with the Vienna based Conceptio Network the chorus committed itself to raise funds for the UN Adopt a Minefield

Program. "Voices from the Heart" started their efforts for landmine clearance even before departure and was able to give \$30,000 (Kn 162.700,00) to AAM end of June. Then, during the concert tour itself - where the ensemble experienced the wonderful hospitality and sensitive relation that Croats have to music - their success in raising funds for the good cause continued. During their concerts in Dubrovnik, Split, Rijeka and Pula they managed to raise another Kn 72.100,00 as well as € 3.500 (Kn 25.600,00) that were collected at their final Gala concert in Piran, Slovenia.

The funds raised at concerts in Croatia were added to AmCham's "Night of a 1000 Dinners" account and will be doubled by Adopt a Minefield before they are returned to Croatia for demining.

The collaboration of all parties involved - such as the local City Governments, media, tourist

boards, Red Cross and many more - is an example of what high spirits can achieve. The rhythm and drive of the choir's African, Croatian and American "repertoire of peace" infected both audiences and organizers. "Voices from the Heart" sang their music right into the hearts of people and their performances in Croatia and Slovenia turned into emotional demonstrations of helpfulness. So did the unofficial program: the ensemble went into Bosnia to sing for peace at a border village close to Dubrovnik and went to meet the inhabitants of a village near Lika that is to be cleared from mines with AAM funds. Unforgettable moments for the choir members and locals alike.

The concert tour is to be considered a success in all respects. And, as Ambassadors of Goodwill to Croatia, "Voices from the Heart" hopes to educate and raise the consciousness of their own community and beyond to the horrors of landmines, a cruel and indiscriminate weapon of destruction. They envision the continuation of fundraising for this very important cause long after they have departed Croatia. The ensemble believes that documenting the efforts of 130 American women travelling thousands of miles to help a country barely known to them and the plight of people suffering long after wars end will move people to take their own personal action.

