

Evan Bellas, a senior at Homer-Center High School, recently attended Regional Chorus as a Tenor One and Piano Accompanist. Hosted annually by PMEA in various locations, this event took place on March 7<sup>th</sup> through March 10<sup>th</sup> in Ridgway, PA. Evan auditioned for states on Wednesday, practiced 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. with the choir Thursday and some of Friday before the concert at 7:00 P.M., and performed in another concert the following night. He really enjoys Regional Chorus, saying, “It’s nice to represent Homer-Center and to make new friends.” Ms. Joy Wilson, Homer-Center’s Choral and Band Instructor, has very high regards for Evan. “He is an amazing musician and being the Regional Chorus Accompanist is an honor that he absolutely deserves. It makes me very proud to be his teacher!”

Evan is very musical and performs often, but he says he still gets nervous. “I have to sing by myself, and I don’t know what I’m going to sing until I’m at the audition. It can be very scary, but the purpose is to prepare the music.” There are four judges who are teachers from the region. It is a blind audition, which means the judges are not looking at you as you sing which can possibly ease your nerves.

There was a banquet prior to the concert on Friday featuring a dinner and speeches from Ridgway High School’s Principal, Ms. Heather McMahon-Vargas, and the Guest Director, Dr. Tony Leach of Penn State. The concert on Friday is held mainly for the host families, who are the families that permit Evan and other regional chorus members to stay at their homes until Saturday. “We meet the families on Wednesday, go home with them, and settle in for the experience. They really make you feel like part of the family,” Evan says.

When asked if Evan had motivation to advance to states, he answered, “Yes, and it’s always an honor because there are ten selected, but only four get to go to states.” It’s very limited, but Evan is very hopeful and has an excellent chance of advancing. His love of music is so strong that he says, “I’m attending Seton Hill in the fall for Music Education, so these performances are almost like internships. I’m really excited about doing music for the rest of my life.” These musical experiences and opportunities have been very beneficial for his future.

**Story by Stephanie Ruffner, Sarah Henry, Kayla Silvasy**

**Photos of the Week**

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