

# CDSS & Philadelphia Region Community Meeting, 26 Jan, 2025

## SUCCESSSES ?

- Young Contra Dance Board
  - Teen Barn dance
  - Wide variety in Philly + suburbs
  - Opportunities for amateur musicians
  - Demo teams
  - "Dance with who comes at you" **INCLUSIVE**
  - Sliding scales **ACCESSIBLE**
  - Culture of dancing with new dancers
  - Encouraging new callers + musicians →
  - Mostly waltz, International, Scottish, Scandi **LEADERSHIP**
  - Range of ages **CONTINUUM**
  - Inclusive not "cliquey"
  - Quilts + healing jackets - caring
  - Great organizations: policies, \$, People Do
  - Carpool network for events
  - Inclusive of families
- Transition to non-gendered language
- Transparent about change - process
- Pandemic - ways to connect through Zoom
- Community empowerment - young leaders

## - Inclusive of families

- Transition to non-gendered language
- Transparent about change - process
- Pandemic - ways to connect through Zoom
- Community empowerment - young leaders
- Big bench of musicians - **BANDS**
- Use creativity i.e. fundraisers that build **community**
- **SPUDS** - opportunity and website / tune list used ~~as~~ as a global reference
- Contracopia!
- Old time musicians thriving
- Techno Contra

## CHALLENGES ?

- Venues are spread out + lack public transport
  - Lost some members in transition to gender neutral
  - Need dance weekends
  - A number of different organizations - **no umbrella** is a strength, but also a challenge
    - communication about opportunities
    - multiple volunteers/officers, etc.
  - Near future: how to cashless entry
  - Lack of diversity
  - Not always well advertised i.e. SPUDS
  - Publicity/showcasing - hard to find for newcomers
  - Don't always see/hear the larger community talent
  - A few volunteers do a lot - broadening pool
  - Challenge of paying talent vs. reasonable admission
  - Continuing to grow inclusivity
  - Could bring in mor of our friends
  - How to describe multi-faceted group
  - Performance groups separate from dances
  - No sword dancing (at present)
- Who is ~~to~~ not here?  
Racial/ethnic, families w/young children, etc.
- Island in sea of mass media
- Lack of presence in social media

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- Island in sea of mass media
- Lack of presence in social media, many would be interested
- No longer creating fliers + offering them at area dances
- Accessibility to those with hearing issues
- Need dances posted in advance
- The dances are not as welcoming as they think.  
Dances + figures are taught with an assumption of prior knowledge, + experienced dancers talk over the teaching leaving new or less experienced dancers uncertain or confused
- Enthusiastic ideas have been met with "no" more often than some people realize, leading to hurt + sorrow.
- Difficulty/lethargy with dealing with issues involving established community members

## WHAT SHOULD CDSS KNOW ?

- CDSS has not connected with old-time square
- All-comers dance would draw more
- Music or dance education in schools
- Lesson plans on website are terrific resource
- Community dance leaders mini-course how to connect with teachers
- Materials for outreach to teachers/schools
- Website support - make them exciting **seniors, special needs etc**
- Materials for teaching beginner **classes**
- Burdensome to get grant in past (perhaps more streamlined now)
- Website navigation is challenging
- Affiliates don't know about event listing / scholarship
- Sign-in is impediment to finding info

## ADVICE TO OTHER COMMUNITIES

- Encourage youth leadership + new volunteer
- Some long time leaders step back to allow this
- Family friendly barn dance logistics - can advise
  - Break with songs, afternoon - Very successful!
- Importance of name tags
- Coordinating callers program offers opportunities
- SPUDS + other open bands - low stakes
- Jobs should not belong to a person - none is indispensable
- Cashless payment system
- Materials for (private) schools
- Local H.S. students help with sound
- Organize, work together + **FORGIVE** One another