Donor Story

For years, giving to the United Way through payroll deduction, I would agonize between helping with hunger, the environment, animals, education, justice, medical research, and other bottomless needs. It felt too selfish to give the most to CDSS activities because although dance and song was important, to me personally, I didn't perceive its social impact compared to other charities.

Then, somewhere along the line I had this epiphany—that in supporting CDSS, which promotes strong community as well as physical and mental health, I'm also supporting all the other “needs” that draw me.

It took me awhile to really internalize the big picture benefits of the community-building, and physical and mental health benefits, of the activities supported by CDSS. The dance/song communities I’ve been part of have all paid particular attention to fostering qualities I value, e.g., respect for people, the environment, property, ethics, teamwork, intellectual curiosity, giving back, history, and personal responsibility, no matter your age, situation, or baggage. Most of the kids I’ve watched grow up in my dance communities are now well-guided by these values in their lives.

CDSS builds strong communities among its participants, and encourages healthy activity and civil behavior all over the place. Strong communities are what address all the other needs I used to agonize over: the feeding, healing, protecting, teaching, governing, and so on. So, I’m no longer conflicted. I see my investment at work every day when I hear about all the interesting and good things that members of my community are doing in the world. Gifts to CDSS have a much broader impact than promoting and preserving traditional music, song, and dance; they also promote happy, responsible living.

Nancy Boyd, South Hadley, MA

The writer is a member of the CDSS Governing Board and a volunteer at the CDSS office.

From Robin Hayden, CDSS Director of Development: Every donor is special, every reason for supporting CDSS and every experience of giving is unique. What’s your story?

Thank you, CDSS!

The Pourparler folks would like to say an appreciative thank you to CDSS for its years of support for our annual gatherings. Since the third one in 1999, when Brad Foster and Peter Amidon came to Chicagoland to check it out, through our three in New England organized by Peter and Mary Alice Amidon, Andy Davis, Linda Henry, David Millstone, Marian Rose, and other wonderful people, and all the rest in different parts of North America, CDSS has been there for the Pourparler.

The Pourparler (poor-parLAY, Fr., a chat, a parley) brings together annually people from all over North America who teach dance—folk, ethnic, world, traditional, historic, creative, whatever—in schools, community events, recreation groups, studios, wherever. Folks who do this important work come to share dances and discuss common concerns, to network and party with their peers, and to lead a community family dance together. Sharing is the important underpinning.

The National Folk Organization (www.nfo-usa.org) was PP’s first sponsor. Bruce Mitchell, of the Stockton Camp in California, hosted our first West Coast weekend in 2000, and the next year many East coasters joined us at the CDSS-organized Pourparler in Colrain, Massachusetts. We have also met at Folklore Village in Dodgeville, Wisconsin; Los Altos Hills, California; Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The 2007 Pourparler in Williamsville, Vermont, was especially special when CDSS chose Pourparler as the place to present Dudley Laufman with its Lifetime Contribution Award. It was a treat to have Brad with us again, and to have Dudley and Jacqueline participating that weekend. The 2011 Pourparler met in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, hosted by Jan Baker. This big city was quite a departure from our usual bucolic and historic haunts, but it turned out to be another special time, including a live teleconference session on extending our careers by teaching dance long distance.

The 2012 Pourparler will meet in Salt Lake City, September 27-30. Anyone interested, please contact me at SannaMars@aol.com. And thank you again, CDSS, for helping make this possible.

Sanna Longden, Evanston, IL

Donate