

Group Corner—Starter Kits (not just for newbies)

by Jeff Martell, CDSS Group Services Manager

Howdy folks. I am sure many of you are aware of the work Ethan Hazzard-Watkins did as our first Youth Intern. He visited loads of groups and events, did a lot of youth organizing, and spoke with many of you in his travels. What you may not be aware of, is that he also made up a series of Starter Kits, aimed at folks who want to start a group or a dance from scratch. The Kits are divided up by general information, genre, and location (for instance, college campus, etc.) and they are all free

You may be thinking, “Well, that is great for the newbies and all, and I am glad someone is putting this information out there for them, but I have been organizing dances for twenty years, what does this matter to me?” The answer is the Starter Kits can teach some old dogs some new tricks. Are you effectively using social networking sites to promote your events? How is your direct email marketing? Is your dance attracting new people? Is your dance attracting young people? Where would you even FIND new people? Is there anything you could improve about the nuts-and-bolts infrastructure of your events?

Group organizers know better than anyone how much work, from all sorts of disciplines, goes on long before anyone hits the floor (and if we do it really well, the folks hitting the floor never know!). I believe that even the most experienced of organizers will find some new ideas they can use in the Starter Kits. Ethan drew upon his extensive experience as a dancer, musician and promoter, then solicited genre and location specific input from some of the best in the business to put these together. So, spend an hour or so looking through these. I would be willing to bet you will come out of it with at least one new idea you can use, I certainly did. I guess you can teach an old dog new tricks after all!