

Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood? a.k.a. Assets Mapping!

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by Rima Dael, CDSS Executive Director



Hello CDSS Community,

While in Phoenix recently, I danced and chatted with members of [Phoenix Traditional Music and Dance](#) (PHXTMD). Many thanks to Ron and Linda Nieman for the generous hospitality! I also met with Deb Comly for coffee in Flagstaff and we talked about the success of May Madness in Clarkdale, AZ and the dances in Flagstaff and Cottonwood.

Rima and friends in Phoenix

My takeaway from my conversations in Arizona that I want to share with you is connecting with resources in your communities. This came from answering questions of how best to continue to ensure the sustainability of a group, where to find good people to help with the group's work, and where can CDSS help. In answering the first two questions, I shall continue by framing this as Asset Mapping. Yikes! That's management jargon. Okay, in Sesame Street parlance this is also known as "Who Are the People In Your Neighborhood?"

So, who are the people and organizations in your neighborhood that can help solve the challenges your group faces? The first part of our conversation was to frame the work that we do as part of the arts and nonprofit communities. When defining dance, music and song groups in this manner, it opens you up to see there are organizations or people you know in the fields of the arts, arts management, academics, and nonprofit organizations that could help with challenges you face. In Phoenix specifically, we identified the Arizona State University's nonprofit academic program/center, the [Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation](#). PHXTMD members also identified people they knew at other arts organizations and that they'd like to reach out to, such as the [Musical Instrument Museum](#) and the local fiddle teacher.

In our discussion, it was clear that PHXTMD had accomplished a lot of great work in their 30 year history, and that should be celebrated and recognized. It is important to take stock of the good things and celebrate big or small wins on occasion, to help contextualize challenges a group may face or to frame future direction of where a group wants to go. I find it useful to problem-solve from a strength-based perspective. Sure, some feel that this is simply just reframing a problem by minimizing weaknesses, but a positive approach and spin is a much better way to help achieve success. As the saying goes "No one has ever succeeded while being convinced they will fail."

Don't forget that CDSS can also help your group! We provide grants, scholarships and financial backing and we have our resource kits. We are working hard to be a better hub and resource for our members, groups and others. We can help by pointing you in the right direction to get help in your local communities and we can help you think through how to do your own asset mapping.