

Surprising Harmony, Made Sweeter by YOU

by CDSS Executive Director Katy German

2018 has been an exciting and fascinating year here at CDSS! This was our first year with a remote Executive Director, and that has required embracing technology in a new and different way. It seems odd to work with dance, music, and song traditions that require human togetherness and close proximity, and yet spend so much time focusing on technology. But there is surprising harmony in our work. In building out our Salesforce capabilities, we are creating a system that allows easier member engagement and **improved customer service**. By harnessing **video conferencing** technology to bridge geographic divides, CDSS is facilitating the exchange of ideas and inspiration across the continent.

This year also brought us a new **5-year strategic plan**, one that sets high standards for our programs and pushes CDSS further out into the world of participatory arts. Everything we do will be held up against this plan to ensure that we are staying on course and following through, with a strong emphasis on community engagement and evaluation. I am a big believer in data-driven decision making. I want the systems and programs we put in place to be useful, relevant, and forward-thinking. And we are going to need YOUR HELP ensuring that the work we do meet these criteria. **In 2019 CDSS work will lay the foundation for smart data-driven growth in the coming years, including:**

- Launching **CDSS Commons**, an interactive integrated online portal for members, where you manage the contact information we have for you and your household, access the online directory, register for camp, renew your membership, make donations to support our work, and more!
- Initiating **Annual Affiliate and Member Surveys** to help us better understand what services and support our Affiliates and members need from CDSS
- Engaging camp program advisors and participants in defining the **programmatic Mission & Vision for each camp session**
- Expanding on our successful pilot program, hosting **quarterly web chats for organizers** that focus on topics identified by our Affiliates and web chat attendees
- **Realigning our grants program guidelines** with our new Core Values and Strategic Focus Areas
- Recruiting new **community-supported Task Groups** in order to tap into the skills and expertise present in our fold. If you or someone you know has a background in traditional archiving, digital archiving, folk arts in education, arts advocacy, or arts marketing reach out and let me know (katy@cdss.org).

As this year comes to a close I urge you all to become a part of the CDSS mission. Thank the callers, organizers, musicians, song leaders, and sound technicians in your lives. Tell the people with whom you dance and sing how much your community means to you. And **send in a year end contribution to CDSS**, to help us continue to provide excellent resources, training, and opportunities to connect and inspire!

We believe that
singing, dancing, and
making music together
enriches our lives
builds community
speaks to the needs of the present



**Give to our Annual Appeal
at cdss.org/donate**