

# From One Generation to the Next

## The Kids Take Over by Jessica Emery

Here in Philadelphia we have a local community dance. People of all ages can attend and have fun learning easy dances and singing silly songs. Most of the time the music is just a few adults hired to play like any other dance, but for the last two Februarys, something different has happened—the kids have taken over! That’s right, we let the adults enjoy the dancing and a few of us kids learn a bunch of tunes and play them for the dancers. And not to worry, playing in the band does not take away any of the fun of the event. It is just as fun watching people dance to your tune as it is when you are the one doing the dancing.

Though some of the group has been dancing since we were around eight years old, we have only recently started playing for dances. Music is an important part of all of our lives and being able to share it with other people makes it that much more rewarding. I remember after our first dance tune was finished and everyone cheered. Even though I didn’t play it perfectly, it didn’t matter—it was just happiness at being appreciated for doing something you love, and I couldn’t keep the big silly grin off my face.

Our group is something that not many people get to be a part of and it is agreed that we would all play more if we could. Fellow member Drew said “Maybe I haven’t searched enough but groups like this one are hard to come by and we should play as much as we can.” We all love playing for the dances and are so grateful to Chloe Maher for organizing this group. Eleanor said, “Thank you so much, Chloe! I know that I speak for everyone when I say that we had a wonderful time playing in the group, and I hope I’ll be able to do it next year.” This entire experience has been extremely enjoyable, instructive and just an overall great time. Though a few of us are seniors this year and will not be able to continue with us, the rest of us are extremely excited for next year and the rest of us will miss them greatly.



## From Learning to Teaching by Chloe Maher

I was inspired to gather a group of teens together to play for a dance by my own experience playing for an English dance when I was in high school; Tanya Rotenberg organized that group of kids.\* It was a great experience to learn how to play for dancing and get to play for real dancers. The Community Dance in Philadelphia has had several children who have stopped coming when they reached the age of twelve or thirteen. I wanted to encourage them to stay involved and give them new ways to participate. So, I recruited a group of teens to play for the dance in February 2011 (six musicians) and February 2012 (eleven musicians). Most of the kids had never played for dancing before, though many of them were dancers. We worked closely with the callers each year to pick tunes that would go with the dances. We had four rehearsals in the weeks leading up to the dance. The caller attended the final rehearsal and ran through the tunes in the same way they would for the dance.

The musicians in 2010 were: Jessica Emery (piano, flute), Eleanor Avril (fiddle, piano), Sarah Thomas (fiddle), Maria Thomas (clarinet), Jocelyn Kurtze (flute, pennywhistle), and Rosalie Baseman (flute). In 2011, the musicians were Jessica Emery (flute), Eleanor Avril (fiddle), Sarah Thomas (fiddle), Maria Thomas (clarinet), Rosalie Baseman (flute), Julian Baseman (clarinet), Daniel Potter (piano), Drew Kaplan (button accordion), Tom Krumm (fiddle), Emily Agoglia (fiddle), and Jacob Agoglia (viola). We had a great time and the teens and I are looking forward to next year!

\* “Working with Young Musical Bands,” by Tanya Rotenberg, *CDSS News*, July-August 1999