

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Supporters,

September 14, 2020

After the death of George Floyd, as Black Lives Matter protests spread across the continent challenging systemic racism, CDSS received two open letters encouraging us as an organization to look closely at our structures, programming, and decision-making processes in order to do the work necessary to move us forward in confronting our own racism. We appreciate our members reaching out to us with concerns; they modeled for us the kind of resolve and commitment necessary for meaningful change within our community. We don't have all of the answers, but we are working together, as the CDSS Board, CDSS staff, and interested members, to undertake the serious introspection and self-education necessary to move our organization into a more explicitly anti-racist way of being. We are aware that we need to do some things differently as we work diligently to confront our own history of racism and as we move towards cultural equity in all that we do.

We understand that this is not something that will happen quickly, but we are taking initial steps to move us forward. Both the Board and staff have had discussions to process our feelings and to confront our own lack of awareness. We are recruiting and convening an advisory group to help us focus on steps to take towards modeling and encouraging cultural equity in our own programs and among all our Affiliates. This issue of the *News* features other essays about related topics. We know that this work takes time and resources, and we are committing both to this effort.

We appreciate your ongoing support, which we understand comes in many forms, and together we hope to be able to build a CDSS committed to cultural equity in word and in deed.

Always,



ABOVE: Gaye Fifer, CDSS President.

OPPOSITE: English Dance Week. *Photo by Avia Moore.*