

## The CDSS Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023

On behalf of the CDSS Governing Board and staff, I am excited to introduce the latest CDSS Strategic Plan, which will focus on the time period from 2019-2023. We began work in earnest in November 2017, with a new Executive Director in place, at an extended Board Executive Committee meeting in Boston, with board members and staff in attendance. We followed a structured process that examined our capabilities and a view of the external landscape, with input from a variety of sources: board members and staff, member feedback from community meetings with CDSS Board members, surveys (including the recently published Canadian and US organizer surveys), assessment of progress and priorities from the prior plan developed in 2012, and insights from an organizational review conducted during the transition period mid-2017. We debated and discussed over a series of meetings throughout 2018, examining areas that are critical to delivering value to our members today, as well as defining the work that we need to do to be relevant for the future generations.

The Strategic Plan has multiple components that collectively define the core of what CDSS does (Mission), a future view of the impact we wish to have on the broader community through the work that we do (Vision), principles that define our organization's culture and beliefs (Core Values), and the important priorities that we must address to achieve the

vision (Priority Focus Areas). This is not a list of everything the organization will be doing over the next five years, but rather a general road map and direction that will inform each annual plan, which will include specific goals and objectives that our Executive Director and staff will identify each year. CDSS serves a broad community, including dancers, singers, musicians, callers, organizers, and local affiliates, and we want to make sure that our resources and services provide value to all of our constituents. The strategic plan is a living document intended to focus our attention on the highest priorities of our community, and the Board and staff will annually review progress and make adjustments as appropriate.

Through the many months of planning, discussing, debating, and framing the Strategic Plan, it was clear that the people who work and volunteer for CDSS share a common passion for dance, music and song, and firmly believe in the value to society that derives from participation in the types of activities that are supported, encouraged, and driven by this organization. We ask for your continued support as we move forward with our new strategic plan to help us achieve our vision: "Communities strengthened by dancing, singing, and making music together".

Nancy Barbour  
Chair, Strategic Planning Task Group  
CDSS Governing Board Member



# 2019 - 2023

## Mission

We connect and support people in building and sustaining vibrant communities through participatory dance, music, and song traditions that have roots in English and North American culture.

## Vision

Communities strengthened by dancing, singing, and making music together

## Core Values

With welcoming hearts, we strive to build intentional *Inclusivity* with our communities.

We are inspired by the artistry and *Creativity* at the core of our living traditions.

We commit to *Stewardship* in our care of the resources and evolving traditions entrusted to us by those we serve.

We encourage *Collaboration*, networking, and teamwork between individuals, among affiliate groups, and across the wider community.

## Priority Focus Areas

- **EXPAND OUR IMPACT** - Expand our impact, influence, and visibility across the continent by fostering connections among affiliates, building new partnerships for collaboration, and advocating for participatory arts.
- **PROVIDE VALUE FOR MEMBERS** - Provide value for members in all constituencies by responding to their needs, expanding our resources and services, and effectively communicating what we have to offer.
- **REACH SCHOOL-AGED AUDIENCES** - Improve our ability to bring traditional dance, music, and song experiences to school-age audiences through school and community-based programs.
- **DOCUMENT AND STEWARD LIVING TRADITIONS** - Document and steward historical and contemporary practices of music, dance, and song traditions.
- **ROBUST CAMP PROGRAMS** - Create a robust camp program based on evaluation of current and future community needs.

CDSS provides services to members and affiliate groups in the U.S. and Canada. We support a variety of traditions rooted in English and North American culture; the common thread that binds them together is their celebration of human togetherness and collaboration. We believe that the traditions nurtured by our organization benefit individual health and social cohesion. These are living traditions that speak to the needs of the present. We support the innovations that naturally emerge, as we honor the past by providing historical perspective.

In order to achieve our goals, we must continue to build the strength of the organization, including implementation of technology infrastructure, expanding staff capabilities, improving governance, expanding and diversifying our financial resources, and tapping into the talents of our extended organization of members and volunteers.