

## Letter from Executive Director Katy German

I recently wrote to you, “Our world needs more of this.” More twirling and turning! More rousing choruses! More hands making music! Well, there’s more to it than that. One of the most incredible parts of being in this new position is connecting with members and affiliates from across the continent and hearing their stories of how traditional dance, music, and song touched their lives and sustained them in challenging times.

Community does not end when the dance is over or the music stops. We form bonds that last a lifetime, support each other when times are hard, and lift up the spirits of those who are struggling. I am encouraged and inspired by these stories of dance, music, and song communities banding together to offer emotional support when times are tough. This is powerful stuff here, people, and our world definitely needs more of it!

So how do we make that happen? On a local level it takes people like you showing up, volunteering, traveling to gigs, schlepping equipment, learning tunes, helping others learn and grow, and encouraging folks who are just discovering it all. For CDSS, it means providing the resources you need to keep these traditions thriving, facilitating connections with others who share your passions, providing grant funding to help new ideas and initiatives take shape, and helping more people discover what traditional dance, music, and song have to offer.

A big part of our work in 2018 will be crafting our next **strategic plan**. (Woohoo! Any other strategic planning nerds out there? That’s right, be proud!) But 2018 is also going to be a year of *doing*.

### Here are just a few of the things that CDSS will be up to in 2018:

- collaborating with local organizers on at least **two regional leadership conferences**
- sharing with our members and other arts organizations the **results of our Canadian census**
- closing the door on outdated data management software and completing the transition to **Salesforce**, a comprehensive system for managing relationships and the information associated with them
- celebrating the 10th year of our **outreach grants** program by increasing grant resources and following up with the 300+ previous grant recipients to capture and share their long-term impact stories with you
- providing our **85th consecutive year** of stellar camp programming, with nine wonderful **week-long immersion experiences in dance, music, and song**, at four facilities, for adults and for families
- sending into the world CDSS’s **first song book**, Tony Barrand’s *On the Banks of Coldbrook*, a collection of songs from Vermont, with music edited by John Roberts
- reviewing our **e-library collection**, improving its accessibility, expanding it with additional resources, and promoting this excellent resource far and wide
- building a stronger **Affiliate Group Network** through CDSS-hosted live webinars on hot topics, common challenges, and new ideas that folks are trying in their home communities
- stepping up our role as **national advocates** for traditional, community-based arts and education, and helping others interested in advocating at the local level to do the same

Photo by Doug Flammer

Friends, your financial support is what makes it all happen. Join us in the work of bringing more traditional song, music, and dance into the world. If you’ve already donated to CDSS this year, thank you! If you’re still considering a donation this year, it’s not too late. Please join me in making a generous, tax-deductible year-end gift to CDSS! ~ KG

**TO DONATE: Send a check to Country Dance & Song Society, 116 Pleasant Street, Suite 345, Easthampton, MA 01027, or give online at [www.cdss.org/appeal](http://www.cdss.org/appeal)**