

From the Youth Desk

by Max Newman, CDSS Youth Projects Intern

How enjoyable it is to sit down and write my first newsletter report as the Youth Projects Intern for CDSS!

I come to the position with a background in both the small West Coast community of Fairbanks, Alaska where I grew up and the urban East Coast community of Boston, Massachusetts where I now live. I am excited to draw from my experience as a dancer, musician, and college dance organizer—as well as from the wealth of experience that exists across the country—to continue to expand the CDSS's resources for promoting youth involvement and intergenerational dance and song.

I began my first day in the office in late September and capped that week with a rewarding few days at the second annual Youth Dance Weekend in Plymouth, Vermont. This wonderful camp showcased some great things about youth involvement in English and contra dance. It was a pleasure meeting folks of all ages from across the United States and Canada and attending the “Toast and Jam” conversation about issues related to youth involvement and leadership in dance and music. (The thoughtful questions and useful ideas generated from last year’s “Bread and Butter” discussion are available at www.youthdanceweekend.org. And do check out the article in this issue on cooking for dancers from Sarah Pilzer, YDW’s cooking mastermind.)

Since then, I have been working to establish a year’s worth of projects and goals dealing with questions of youth and intergenerational song and dance. Succeeding Ethan Hazzard-Watkins in this yearlong position is a great honor and great opportunity to build on the accomplishments from last year. For just a few examples, I strongly encourage you all to visit cdss.org and check out the wonderful, dynamic resources being made available in the Starter Kits or the lists of worthy projects made reality with CDSS grants.

Last year’s progress has also created new opportunities and exciting possibilities. There are a number of cool projects going on and a few I’d especially like to invite your input on:

Starter Kits: I’m currently working on the English Beginning Caller and Ritual/Display Dance starter kits. I would love to hear about individuals’ and groups’ experiences with these subjects, as well as from folks interested in contributing.

Youth Representatives Program: We’re looking for motivated individuals interested in the opportunity to engage with their peers and their communities while representing CDSS as part of a network of Youth Reps across the continent. If this sounds like it could be you or someone you know, let me know and I can provide further details on the program and benefits.

Travel: Part of my job involves visiting communities and facilitating discussions about youth and intergenerational issues. Give me your suggestions for some places or events I should visit in your community!

I’m looking forward to your suggestions, questions, and ideas, as well as the successes and challenges in your community. And if you would like advice on strategies to encourage youth participation and leadership, promote intergenerational communities, or apply for a grant, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

On these or any other subjects, you can reach me anytime at max@cdss.org or 413-268-7426 x 114. You can also follow me at the CDSS Youth Intern Facebook page.

Thanks!

Check out www.cdss.org/youth to find out what Max is up to, links to the Starter Kits, and more.

Photo: M.-J. Taylor, asheville contra.com.

