



Country Dance & Song Society **ANNUAL REPORT 2022**



Photo: Jeff Bary

A Look Back at 2022...

Sometimes the years feel like a kaleidoscope—celebrations, accomplishments, and challenges all blending what came before into what comes next. Looking back at 2022, I see that it was complex yet beautiful, a year of regaining our footing, understanding the challenges ahead in a post-pandemic world, and stepping boldly forward.

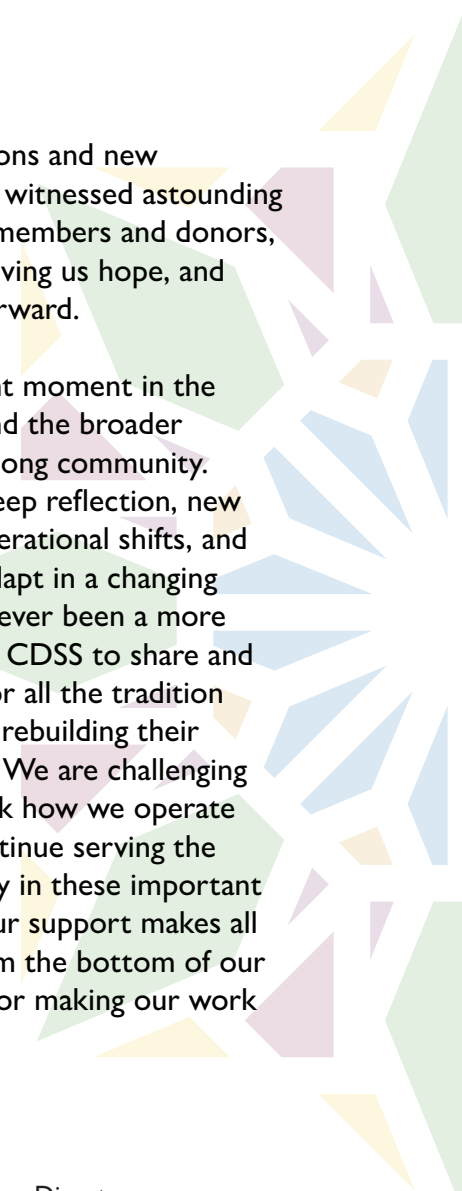
We had a lot to celebrate and be thankful for, as we bid a fond farewell to Crispin Youngberg and celebrated the 30+ year career of Linda Henry. Then we welcomed aboard two new staff members, Sarah Babbitt-Spaeth and Audrey Jaber (our first West Coast staff member!).

The Cultural Equity Advisory Group wrapped up their work, providing recommendations that both challenged and inspired us. We pored over that report and many other stakeholder surveys as we launched a new strategic planning process.

We provided a variety of free and low-cost online programming for organizers, callers, and dance, music, and song enthusiasts. We overhauled our website to make it easier to access online resources. And we ran all nine of our joyous summer camp sessions for the first time since 2019, investing hundreds of additional hours of labor to implement strong COVID protocols that kept our campers safe.

We also faced some hard truths. We learned about the lasting economic impacts the pandemic will have on us. We watched the cost of living and our operational costs rise, and the value of our invested funds drop. 2022 turned out to be one of the most challenging financial years for CDSS.

We continued our cultural equity work, with both board and staff creating opportunities for deeper conversations about improving equity in our operations and removing barriers to participation.



Amid the celebrations and new challenges, we also witnessed astounding support from our members and donors, lifting our spirits, giving us hope, and helping us move forward.

This is an important moment in the history of CDSS and the broader dance, music, and song community. It's a moment of deep reflection, new understanding, generational shifts, and an imperative to adapt in a changing world. There has never been a more important time for CDSS to share and create resources for all the tradition keepers out there, rebuilding their local communities. We are challenging ourselves to rethink how we operate so that we can continue serving the broader community in these important next few years. Your support makes all the difference. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for making our work possible.



Katy German, Executive Director

Thank You!

We are deeply grateful to you, our members, donors, volunteers, and community for your generous support and dedicated work in 2022.

We are especially grateful to our governing board. Board members always work hard and give generously of their time, money, wisdom, and expertise. In 2022 they went above and beyond, giving more time than ever, forging new connections, creating new resources, and engaging with complex issues.

And we want to acknowledge the work of local organizers across North America. We've heard from so many of you about the challenges you're facing, the help you need, and your hopes for the future. Thank you for everything you do to hold the fabric of your communities together!



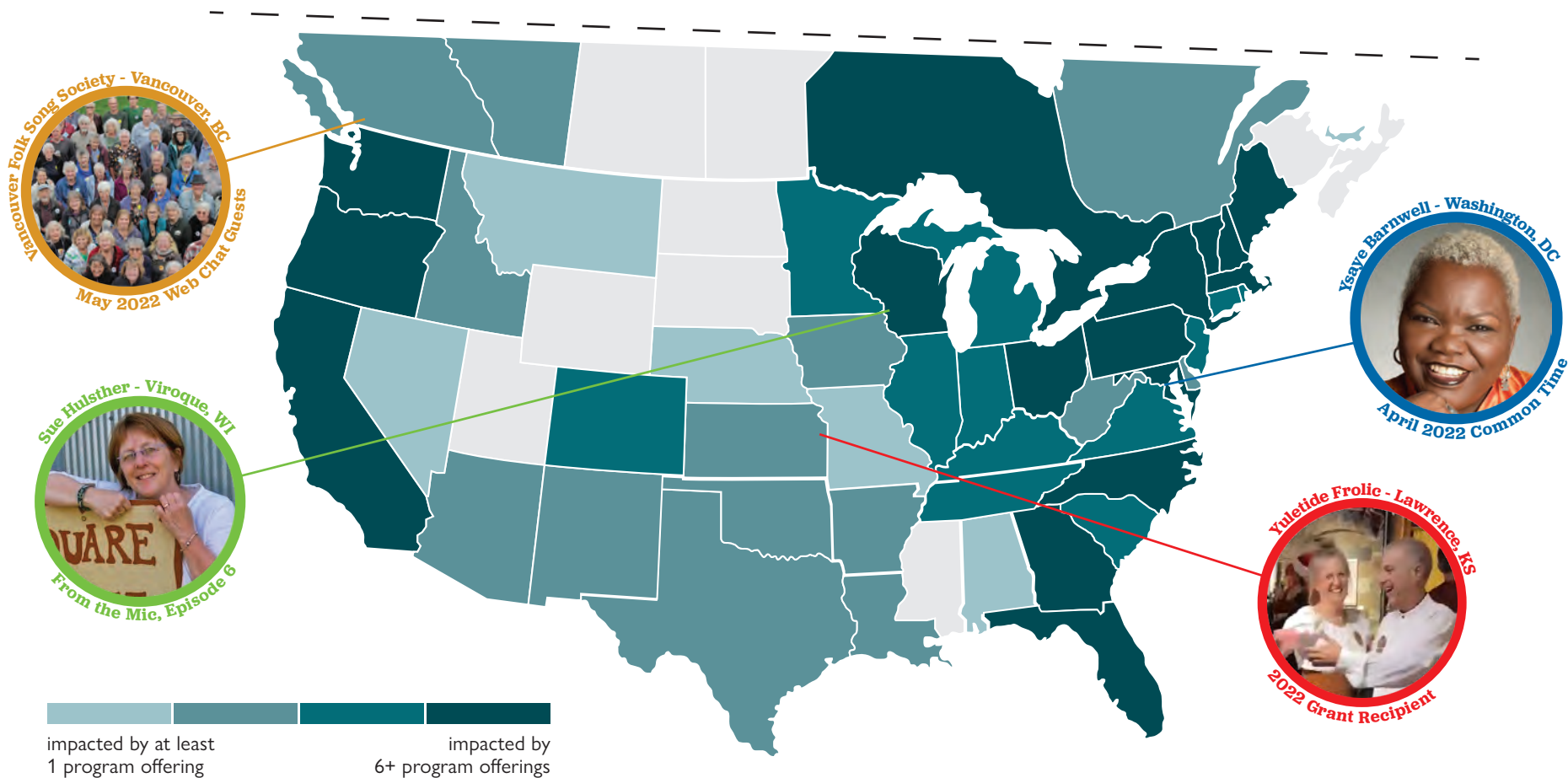
Photo: Doug Plummer

Programs

Rippling Across the Continent

CDSS programs continued to grow this year, providing more ways for folks across North America to engage with participatory dance, music, and song. As the map shows, participants in our programs represented 52 states and provinces in 2022 (up from 48 in 2021).

The darker colors on the map show the states where individuals and Affiliates engaged even more through programs such as grants, matching scholarships, CDSS Web Chats, Common Time, and podcasts.



19 grant & matching
scholarship donees
in **15** states &
provinces

24 online program
presenters from
13 states &
provinces

799 virtual
attendees
from **48** states &
provinces

10 podcast guests
from
7 states &
provinces

1,080 campers &
camp staff
from **41** states &
provinces

“Inspiring! I enjoyed it and benefited from it immensely... As a beginning dance musician, I learned a LOT—all the topics we covered were valuable”

—English Dance Musicians
course participant

“Thanks for organizing this; I learned a lot and appreciate CDSS efforts to become more ‘woke’ and help me become more woke, too.

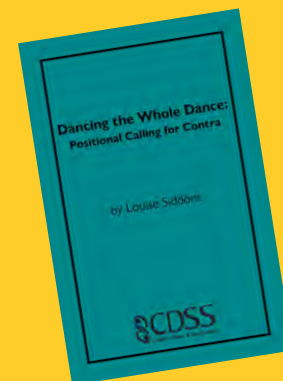
—Common Time participant



Photo: Alan Duffy



New highlights from 2022 include From the Mic, a podcast about North American social dance calling hosted by Mary Wesley, and the latest installment of our instructional booklet series, *Dancing the Whole Dance: Positional Calling for Contra* by Louise Siddons.



2022 Financials

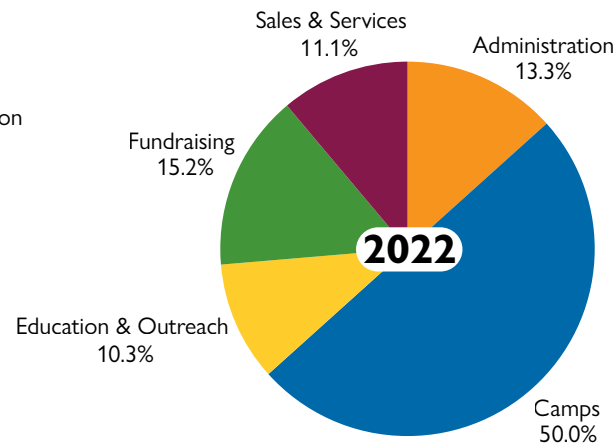
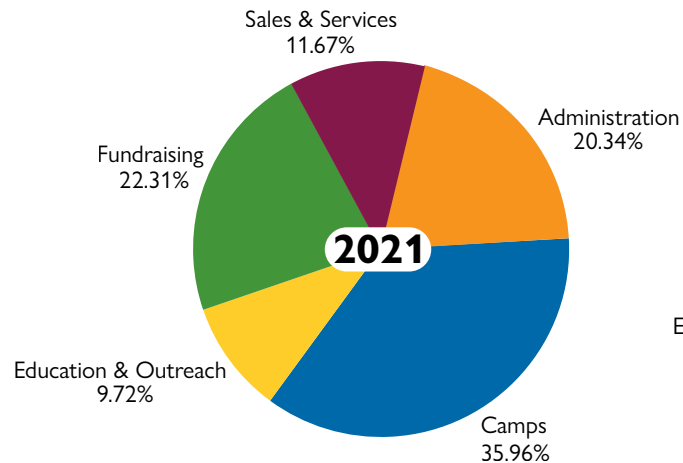
2022 was a challenging year financially for CDSS.

In many ways 2022 was our first real test of what operating in a post-pandemic economy will look like. We ran all nine of our summer camp sessions and maintained our year-round online programming. However, the lingering challenges of the pandemic kept camp attendance, store sales, Affiliate renewals, and insurance coverage requests low.

Our invested funds took a hit as the stock market shrunk.

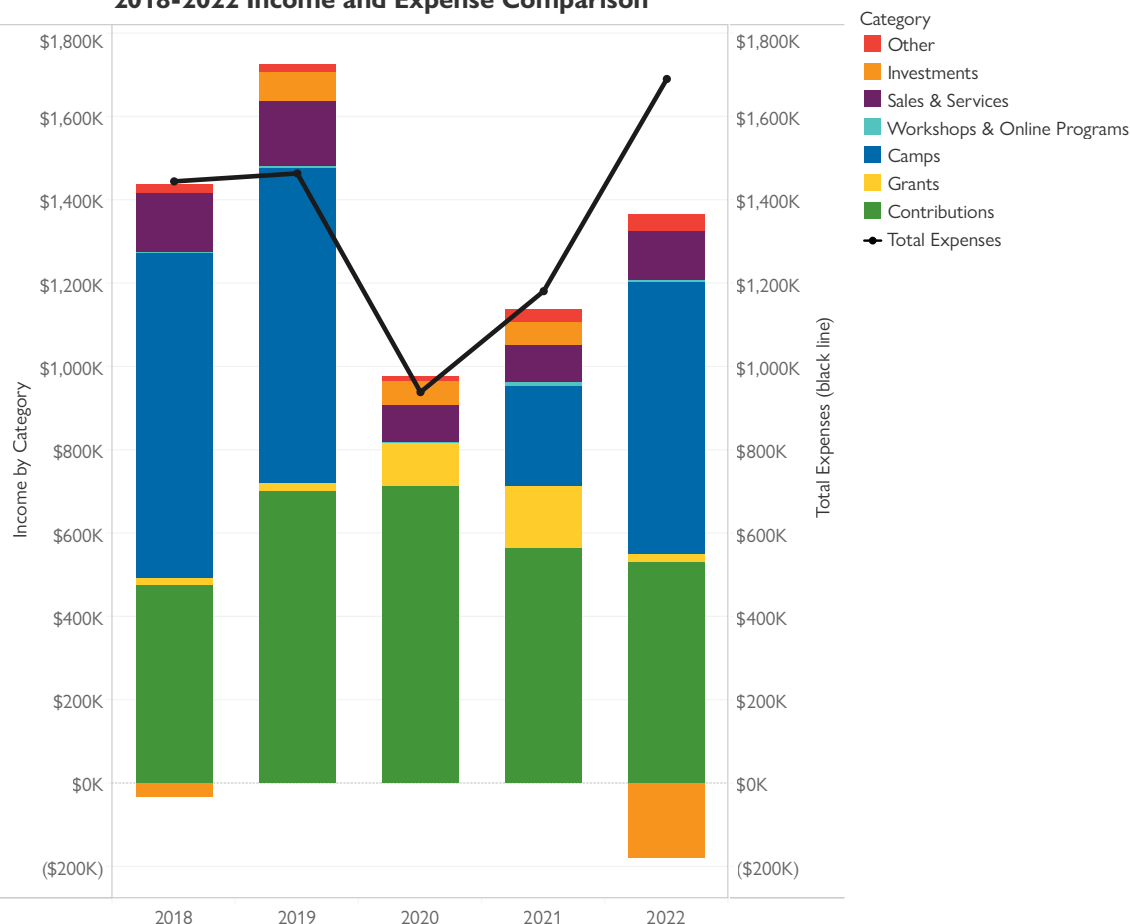
At the same time, our facility fees, operating costs, and the cost of living all went up. And unlike the previous two years, we did not have the federal PPP funding that helped us bridge the pandemic gap in earned income.

2021-2022 Expense Comparison



As we returned to full summer programming, camps once again became our largest expense category. Our fundraising and administrative expenses make it possible to provide community grants and scholarships, produce podcasts, provide free and low cost online programming, and host the volume of free resources on our website.

2018-2022 Income and Expense Comparison



As you see in this graph, our expenses exceeded our income in 2022, despite strong and inspiring support from donors. In response to the sobering year, we updated our five-year financial projections, identified cost-saving adjustments, and applied for additional state recovery funds.

We have been very fortunate over the past few years. The generosity of our supporters has played a critical role in our ability to ride out these challenging financial times.

We were able to fill the 2022 gap between income and expense without depleting our reserves thanks to the 2022 installment of the Bright Futures gift and SBA low-interest loan, made available to nonprofits for post-pandemic recovery.

As we work to further reduce costs and increase income, we are committed to finding solutions that will not compromise the quality of our programming and resources.

The black line in this chart represents our total annual expenses. The dip in 2020 and 2021 is associated with running fewer camps sessions during the pandemic. In 2022 we returned to a full season of programming and higher facility costs.

The increase in contributions between 2019 and 2021 came from the Bright Futures multi-year gift, recognized entirely in 2019, and generous major bequests. These significant gifts helped provide us with operating cash to meet expenses in those years, as well as in 2022. Income from grants in 2020 and 2021 was boosted by the federal PPP funding.



MISSION STATEMENT: We connect and support people in building and sustaining vibrant communities through participatory dance, music, and song traditions with roots in English and North American culture.

2022 GOVERNING BOARD

Officers:

President: Gaye Fifer, Pittsburgh, PA
Vice President: Nikki Herbst, Amana, IA
Secretary: Pam Paulson, Waukesha, WI
Secretary-elect: Susan English, Wooster, OH
Treasurer: Joel Bluestein, Arlington, VA

At Large Members:

Peter Baker, Ann Arbor, MI
Jenna Barron, Easthampton, MA
Margaret Bary, Brooklyn, NY
Jeremy Carter-Gordon, Marshfield, VT
Norman Farrell, Ridgefield, WA
Alice Kenney, Leyden, MA
Howell Langford, Portland, OR
Susie Lorand, Ann Arbor, MI
Robbin Marcus, Lithonia, GA
Craig Meltzner, Santa Rosa, CA
Avia Moore, Toronto, ON
Justin Morrison, Burlington, VT
Marni Rachmiel, Cambridge, UK
Diane Silver, Asheville, NC
Luanne Stiles, Asheville, NC
Juliette Webb, Nashville, TN
Chris Weiler, South Burlington, VT

2022 OFFICE STAFF

Kathryn German, Executive Director, Asheville, NC
Robin Hayden, Director of Development, Greenfield, MA
Joanna Reiner Wilkinson, Director of Programs, Cheltenham, PA
Julie Brodnitzki, Director of Finance, Barkhamsted, CT
Sarah Pilzer, Director of Operations, Winooski, VT
Anna Mach, Accounting Manager, West Springfield, MA
Linda Henry, Community Resources Manager, Amherst, MA
Nicki Perez, Gifts & Database Coordinator, Northampton, MA
Audrey Jaber (Knuth), Membership Coordinator, San Diego, CA*
Sarah Babbitt Spaeth, Programs Coordinator, Burlington, VT*
Ben Williams, Sales & Insurance Manager, Northampton, MA
Kelsey Wells, Marketing & Communications Manager, Murfreesboro, TN
Janet Brown, Office Assistant, Easthampton, MA

2022 CONTRACTORS

Anne Campbell, Webmaster, Orlando, FL
Anna Gilbert-Duveneck, Designer, CDSS News, Framingham, MA

* New to CDSS this year!

SPECIAL THANKS to Linda Henry and Steve Howe for their 30+ years of service!



CDSS is funded in part by a generous grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.
massculturalcouncil.org



Photo: Jeff Bary