

Presidents Report 2019

I continue to be amazed with the achievements of our organization. We can only do what we do, as a great team of people. We touch people's lives thru dance. This again was made evident in our journey to the 2019 Canada Winter Games with the biggest team of people we have ever put together for a show. Not only did it give people a chance to do something they would not have had the opportunity to do on their own, but we represented the club, the community, Red Deer, Alberta, and Canada.... something I could never have even dreamt of when we started this club. This has increased our club profile to an unprecedented level. The experience you have all shared, creates bonds, friendships, and no one can ever take that experience away from you Congratulations to everyone who participated. Sitting on other community group boards, and focus groups has also given us exposure in the community like never before. The last 6 months has undoubtedly been the busiest our club has ever been, and doing more than we ever have.

1. Sponsor for the Celebrity Dance Off 2018 - Benefits for the Canada Winter Games Legacy Project
2. Donations – From our Christmas Party to the Red Deer Christmas Bureau and the Food Bank
3. Family Dances – Continue with a strong sub committee (of 8 people) helping promote the dance. Partners now include the Red Deer Native Friendship Society, the Red Deer Culture Heritage Society, the Red Deer Arts Council and the City of Red Deer. The City helped sponsor the dance in 2018 and the Family Dance with the Canada Winter Games. We continue to bring the love of dance to a whole new generation of people by exposing them to a positive, healthy, family friendly community event.
4. Participation in the Red Deer Parade promotes ourselves, our sponsors, and project a positive image to the community.
5. Performances at senior centers on a volunteer basis to spread good will.
6. Alberta Culture Days - Cross promoting other dance organizations in Red Deer during the weekend. The Celebration of Dance we spear headed has become an important part of the weekend events and is an official sub committee of the Red Deer Arts Council. This day of dance was instrumental in the planning for the Winter Games show that involved the whole community, because the President for the production attended and was so impressed with the community.
7. International Westcoast Swing Flashmob - Promoting the City of Red Deer internationally around the world.
8. Pure Dance Workshop weekend - World class instructors from the USA and Alberta to help us host a successful weekend workshop, that we look to expand in Oct of 2019.
9. Donating manpower to the Red Deer Culture and Heritage Society in a co-operative events show community support.
10. Partnering with the Canada Winter Games – Performing in the Opening Ceremonies Show. We were the closing act for 3 minutes and 40 seconds just before the lighting of the torch.

Financial

Bingo revenue remains lower due to economic times, but we continued to operate under our 2018 budget of \$49,875 and our cash reserves have remained consistent.. Casino revenues are spread over 3 years at \$7,500 per year, our next casino will be in the 1st quarter of 2020. Keeping spending to budget and strong income from more grants, donations, membership, and honorariums kept us in a positive cash-flow position and has made up for the bingo short fall. Maintaining fiscal responsibility while keeping the club involved in the community, and giving back to our members continues. Setting a higher budget to approx \$55,000 for 2019, we will spend some of the reserves we have built by continually being under budget for the last 5 years and will allow us to build on the programs and plan more events for the future.

Membership and Dance Team

Membership is strong and consistent. We developed new membership levels to involve more people. Our dance team continues to grow with new people and we add more material to our public performances. The team continues to be an integral face for the club in the community and projects our purpose to the public. We have built relationships with other groups and are being asked to participate in high profile events such as the 2019 Canada Winter Games.

Attendance

Remains very strong and well attended at classes, dances, and workshops.. Classes such as 2-step and Westcoast Swing are to capacity at Festival Hall and we are open to the idea of expanding further. The free Tuesday evening practice time we book at Festival Hall organized by Bob and Dorothy Gosselin continues to be popular and will continue as another benefit we offer as a club.

Vision Statement

Share knowledge and build community relationships through dance as an art form

Mission Statement

Promote Country Western Dance in the community through lessons, dances, workshops and performances

A recent article I shared online talks about dance..... "Why dancing makes us happy? When we dance our brain releases endorphins, neurotransmitters that create a feeling of comfort, relaxation, fun and power. Music and dance do not only activate the sensory and motor circuits of our brain, but also the pleasure centers. Indeed, neuroscientists at Columbia University say that when we move in tune with the rhythm, the positive effects of music are amplified. Therefore, a little secret to make the most of the music is to synchronize our movements with the beat, so we will be doubling the pleasure. However, the magic of dancing can not simply be reduced to brain chemistry. Dancing is also a social activity that allows us connect with the others, share experiences and meet new people, which has a very positive effect on our mental health. What's more, as we move, our muscles relax to the music, which allows us to free ourselves of the tension built up during the day, especially the one accumulated in the deepest part of the musculature."

On a personal note 2018 was very special year for Kathie and I. It started when I proposed to Kathie on Canada Day just after our show at Bower Ponds. Sharing that moment with our dance team family was very special moment, and one we will never forget. The Flashmob on the Sept long weekend started a very busy 6 month stretch... planning for our wedding, Alberta Culture Days, Pure Dance workshop, and the Winter Games started.... Our wedding was very special and was a real dancing event that would not have been possible or nearly special without our dancing family. Next was Alberta Culture Days with our club playing a key role, and the President of the production company for the Winter Games Ceremonies was in the audience. This event helped him set the tone for the show. A few weeks later we hosted our most successful Pure Dance Workshop with Mario Robau, and instructors from AB and Sask. A week later a Family Dance. More planning for the winter games show, our Christmas dance at the end of Nov, and then we started full on practices for the games show just before we went on our honeymoon. Christmas shows for some seniors centres and then pulled the new dance team together between Christmas and New Years to start the most intense 6 weeks of training for a show we have ever done.... To have 38 people step-up and commit to do the show... dedicate extra time, and to perform was UNBELIEVABLE! More than 20 of the 38 people had never done a show before; never mind in front of 1,000's and potentially millions on TV..... WOW. Words to capture the journey and how proud I am of everyone doesn't quite cut it... the dedication, the spirit, and how we came together as a team was amazing. I saw people go thru transformations, and grow like never before, and to do something they never thought possible!..... It was great!

People came together and helped each other learn and achieve something special. Many thought we could not do it... There were flared tempers, doubts, and tears but we came together and did it. That is what this club is about, it is the vehicle to let people do things they would not do on their own. To have that team of people that encourage and support each other. I can't help but compare where we are at to the "OLD" days of Country Pride when we were a competition team. We have far surpassed what we have done in the past and built a bigger team of people impacting more people's lives thru dance in a positive way. This is what continues to inspire me and when I get tired... I focus on that and the impact we have. I stop and think.... what if Country Pride didn't exist...all the missed opportunities. I believe it is this strong sense of purpose... why we are here. Why Country Pride has endured... What we do, when people "get it" they want to help others experience the joy of dance.

Member Benefits

- Continuing the bingo for membership program to include membership, lessons, and all team benefits for free
- Increase the Workshop reimbursement from \$200 to \$250 times 2
- Covering more costs for dance team. Outfits, Boots, Hats and Jacket recognition program.
- Pure Dance workshop to bring instructors to Red Deer from Edm, Calgary, Houston, and California....
- Tues night practices for free at Festival Hall & optional instruction
- Developing Teacher and Training program for succession
- Looking at sponsorship program for dancers.
- Continue to do more social activities to grow membership

Vision for 2019

Work with community groups and be involved with opportunities to promote the club such as CFR and others.

We will continue to build relationships with other community groups and businesses to cross promote each other.... we are not an island unto ourselves.

We will develop new leadership for the board, committees, and teaching to ensure club longevity.

We have already secured Praxair as a corporate sponsor for the Family Dances & potentially more.

We have been approved for the Community Culture Development Grant of \$2,220.

We are booking more paid gigs for 2019 than ever before

We all have things we accomplish as individuals, but I hope everyone buys into how important what we are doing as a team & a club. Individual goals can fit within an organization and with the support of a community we can all do

AMAZING things. It is just dancing; however it is an important part of our lives that enriches us all if we choose to let it.