

# **Tapestry Folkdance Center's Accessibility Policy**

Tapestry's mission is to create "opportunities for participation in the joys of dance and music from around the world." In keeping with this mission and spirit, Tapestry seeks to make its programs and activities accessible to persons with disabilities to the extent we are able, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Minnesota Human Rights Act. A person who wishes to request accommodations should communicate with the Tapestry office two weeks prior to an event. We recognize that an individual might be reluctant to make a request based on a disability. We ask our volunteers and artists to smooth the way as much as possible when a request is made.

**Approved, Tapestry Folkdance Center Board of Directors, June 15, 2015**

## **Accessibility Practices and Procedures:**

Accessibility begins with a statement of need by an individual who, due to a disability, needs some form of accommodation in order to participate. Under Tapestry's policy (above), accommodations for persons with disabilities should ideally be arranged two weeks in advance with Tapestry staff. However, we ask our volunteers and artists to be as open and welcoming as possible if someone needing an accommodation arrives unexpectedly. This document provides some guidance for arranging an accommodation "on the spot." Clearly, some accommodations (such as hiring an interpreter) cannot be improvised quickly. If an acceptable accommodation cannot be found, the individual should be invited to return at a later date after contacting Tapestry staff. (Note that requests to adjust heat or sound levels are not generally disability-related, but please consider honoring them.)

Volunteers and artists should keep in mind that the individual may feel embarrassed or uncomfortable about revealing a disability and need. To begin a productive dialogue, a question such as "How do you envision participating?" will convey an open attitude and give information about what the person has in mind. **Refer requests for accommodation to the House Manager (or "opener/closer"; sometimes combined with admissions). See also Resource list, below.**

The House Manager should consult with the teacher, programmer or caller to explore options that fit the needs of the individual while being as unobtrusive as possible. The accommodation must be mutually agreeable for the individual requesting, and the Tapestry representatives. If it is simple and inexpensive and has worked in the past, it's considered reasonable to try to use it (for instance, a band or scarf of contrasting color worn on one leg as a visual aid). Accommodations beyond the resources of the organization, or that change the essential nature of the event, are not required by law. (Note, though, that "essential" is not the same as "ideal," and for most events this will allow much latitude). Safety of the individual and the other dancers is, of course, paramount. Accessibility equipment is available in the safe room

Service dogs cannot be denied admission. Using a service dog during group dancing is potentially dangerous to all parties, so it may be preferable to have another dancer as a guide for the patron. In that case, the patron must have someone else have the dog under control at all times. (You may *not* ask about the nature of the disability, or ask for the dog's certification. You may ask "What task or work is your dog trained to perform?" If these meet the disability-related needs of the patron, the dog is allowed.)

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The above Practices and Procedures were developed by Tapestry Folkdance Center's Accessibility Task Force over several months in 2015, utilizing information and resources on law and on practices of other arts organizations. Questions and suggestions from Tapestry volunteers have been incorporated, and continue to be welcome for this "living" document.

### **Task Force members available for consult include:**

**Ceil Wirth** 612-722-2645 (admissions for contra; admissions/house manager for Bollywood and Techno-contra)

**David Kirchner** 651-324-4563 (contra and Family Dance caller)

**Terry McGibbon** 651-639-9346 (International dancer and dance teacher)

**Jim Kiehne** 612-377-8037 (International dancer)

**Barb Hassing** 763-522-2822 (International dancer and dance teacher)

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