

## **U Can Square Dance**

*GOAL of this initiative is to make people who know nothing about SD realize they may want to learn to SD.*

Pam Berg approached MCASD around Fall of 2019 with her idea to launch a website to attract prospective dancers to the world of square dancing. MCASD agreed to fund this initiative for two years, \$12,000 total. Pam had a team of three start on this when the pandemic started. The project restarted spring of 2022 with new members on her team. This team met once a week determining the project flow, project needs, website requirements and advertising requirements.

### **First Year:**

- We know it takes at least 7 'touches' to generate interest. Fall 2022 was our first attempt at exposing our activity to the masses.
- Referrals doubled in Winter (68) vs Fall (33)
- Attendance at Samplers almost tripled in Winter (29) vs Fall (11).
- Prospects that started lessons tripled in Winter (24) vs Fall (8).
- We received inquiries from people looking to have their own Square Dance Party Nights.
- One inquiry was from a previous square dance couple who has since joined Downers Grove Square Thrus.
- While UCSD can attract prospects, it is up to the clubs to offer a product (square dancing) that keeps prospects interested enough to take lessons.
- To our knowledge, this is the first in the US multi-club Square Dance initiative to target potential new dancers.

We started advertising in the middle of August for the fall lessons, late December for Winter 2023 lessons.

We paid to have UCSD show up on google searches. We tested and was able to confirm this did work well.

Ads were posted in Facebook around 7 to 14 days ahead of the each club's Square Dance Sampler. Ads were run in August, September and October 2022 for Fall 2022 lessons. Ads were run in December 2022, January and February 2023 for Winter 2023 lessons. Responses to inquiries were done

within 24 hours. There were a couple inquiries for callers (barn parties, one for Bobby Poyner).

### **First Year Expenses \$3900**

\$500 Website & Domain Name

\$3400 Advertising

### **Second Year:**

Fall Semester 2023 (September 2023-January 2024) saw 119 referrals, 18 people attend samplers, 7 people start lessons and 4 people finish. In total, some 51 students across seven clubs completed lessons. Of these, 44 joined a club.

Winter Semester 2024 (January 2024 – June 2024) saw had 139 referrals, 32 people attend samplers, 21 people start lessons and 14 people finish. In total, 83 students across six clubs completed lessons. At this time, 40 joined a club. Two clubs will accept membership from their new dancers later this summer.

For both semesters, we had 134 students finish lessons. While a few of these students may be repeats (i.e. took lessons twice), in total we have added more than 100 new dancers to the Chicago-area Square Dance community over the past dance year.

### **Media Attention:**

- **August 2023** - *The Record North Shore* newspaper printed an article on Square Dancing after finding the U Can Square Dance website. They highlighted North Shore Squares.
- **December 2023** - *Spotlight Chicago (WGN TV Chicago)* saw the article and invited North Shore Squares to come into the studio. Laura McDaniel led members of North Shore Squares in sample

patter then invited the host to join in and taught a couple calls. WGN-TV displayed links to both the NSS and UCSD websites.

- **March 2024** - *Fox 32 Morning News* host Tim McGill came to Morton Grove at the crack of dawn to film a square dancing in action. Multiple live segments aired. At the end, Tim tried his hand at calling under the guidance of James Cha.
- **April 2024** - *WGN-TV Channel 9* reporter Erin McElroy came to Morton Grove to cover drop-in square dance parties hosted by Glenview Squares and led by caller James Cha. This segment aired 3 times over 2 days.
- **April 2024** - Glenview Squares dancers were featured on stage with a live orchestra. The Southwest Symphony Orchestra collaborated with caller Candice Hansen to showcase three square dances.
- **April 2024** - Arlington Squares celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Palatine.
  - *The Daily Herald* newspaper featured the dance in their print edition.
  - *ABC-TV Chicago* covered the dance on both on their evening news and the next day's news.
  - *NBC-Chicago* was also at the Arlington Squares Anniversary dance but unfortunately events of the day took precedence and the segment was not aired.

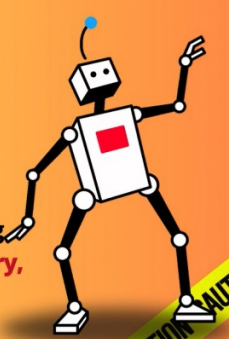
Leads to UcanSquareDance started coming in on the UCSD site after the media coverage.

### **Second Year Expenses \$2600**

\$500 Website & Domain Name

\$3400 Advertising

**Yes, ANYONE Can Square Dance!**



**Sample Square Dancing in Johnsburg & McHenry, Illinois, this January.**

Visit [UCanSquareDance.com](http://UCanSquareDance.com) for details.

CanSquareDance ads (9)

**Square Dance for the fun of it.**



**This January, Sample Square Dancing IN ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, ILLINOIS.**

Visit [UCanSquareDance.com](http://UCanSquareDance.com)

CanSquareDance ads (10) (1)

**Spinning your GEARS now that summer's winding down?**



Fun. Social. No partner needed. Today's music.  
**LEARN TO SQUARE DANCE.**  
A great way to move both body & mind.

**This August, join us for FREE Square Dancing parties, taking place across the Chicago area.**  
Visit [UCanSquareDance.com](http://UCanSquareDance.com) for dates & locations.

**Finding evenings a SLOG now that summer's winding down?**



Fun. Social. No partner needed. Today's music.  
**Learn to Square Dance.**  
A new way to move both body & mind.

**This August, join us for FREE Square Dancing across the greater Chicago area.**  
Visit [UCanSquareDance.com](http://UCanSquareDance.com) for dates & locations.

Club	# Referrals Winter 2024	Attended Sampler Winter 2024	Start Lessons Winter 2024	Prospects Finished Lessons Winter 2024	Prospects Join Club Winter 2024	Total Students Winter 2024	Total Finished lessons Winter 2024	Total Join Club
Arlington Squares	26	8	4	1	1	24	14	
ChiTown	2	-						
Downers Grove	35	4	0	0	0	5	2	2
Fox Valley	33	17	12	9	9	22	18	16
Glenview Squares	10	1	0	0	0	29		
Naper		-						
North Shore Squares	9	2	3			21		
NW Grand Squares	17	0	2	2	1	12	7	
Swingin' Sugars		-						
Others	7							
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>18</b>

Club	# Referrals Fall 2023	Attended Sampler Fall 2023	Start Lessons Fall 2023	Finish Lessons Fall 2023	Joined Club Fall 2023	Total Students Fall 2023	Total Finished lessons Fall 2023	Total Join Club Fall 2023
Arlington Squares	13	4	0	0	0	12	3	3
ChiTown	11	0	0	0	0	11		
Downers Grove	21	0	0	0	0	5	3	3
Fox Valley	15	4	4	4	4	9	8	7
Glenview Squares	9	5	3			15		
Naper								
North Shore Squares	18	4	0	0	0	15	13	8
NW Grand Squares	7	0	0	0	0	10	3	2
Swingin' Sugars	13	1	0			0	0	0
Others	12							
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>

## You can Dance Website Process Flow

### Participants:

**Club Contact (CC)** – each club should designate a point of contact

**UCSD Website Manager (WM)** – paid position, approx. 20 hours/month

**UCSD Project Administrator (PA)** – MCASD Executive Position to oversee this project

**Prospect** – someone who has contacted UCSD to explore square dancing

