

Report from Wendy Krueger,  
Hawks Square Dance Club  
at Walnut Road Elementary School, Surrey, BC.

Our club began dancing on January 20th and wrapped up on April 4th, 2006

We danced to Moving and Grooving.

Sound system in gymnasium—wall mounted speakers. System has cordless and corded microphones, CD player with pitch control but no remote control (remote control would be better)

I promoted the square dance club experience to the parents of students in grade 3, 4, and 5 in early January. Students in these grades have a desire to be involved in school groups, but cannot yet play on sports teams. Also, these children will be in the school for several years yet, so from year to year, we will have a growing group of experienced dancers in the group. And children of this age group are generally easier to manage in a social setting than older students.

I informed the parents in my very first contact that we would dance Fridays after school from 2:45 to 3:45 pm and on Tuesdays at noon hour, 12:00 to 12:25 p.m. I also let them know about the school district's annual dance festival, in which I wanted the club to perform in April, and about the upcoming Northwest Teen Festival in May, to which I plan to take all interested children and parents for several hours on the Saturday.

Fifty-four students signed up initially, and 51 came to the first session. I had a few adults helping me that day, to get everyone organized and we had 7 squares. After 7 weeks we still had 44 regular dancers, and that number held steady throughout the 10th week.

First Lesson:

- 35 girls and 16 boys came out; they made up their own pairs if they came with a friend
- those who came solo were partnered up by the teachers
- Verbal introduction of promenade with a partner, explanation of 1's and 2's
- The name tags were blank to begin with. We gave our 1's white name tags and 2's wore blue name tags. We recorded who were 1's, who were 2's and filled in the name tags before the next dance. That was when I thought the pairings would be pretty well consistent.
- All the couples promenaded around to music, then teachers took them in eights and showed them how to form squares.
- I taught them the moves to the first patter, and had them walk through them a couple of times before I introduced them to Mr. Turner on CD. Then they followed the instructions on the CD. They learned Colinda the same way, through instructions without music first, and they began dancing it to the CD.

Subsequently:

By the second dance, we needed some children to dance either role, so we got blue bandanas and white bandanas to wear as well—those on the left wear white, those on the right wear blue and it's easy to change bandanas if someone needs to change roles. Name tag colour no longer applies.

We have ordered engraved badges which the parents paid for. The school bought the bandanas at Dollar Giant for \$1 each, which we use at each dance. The school also bought blue and white dress shirts for the team look when we dance at the festivals.

With 7 or 8 weeks behind us: the oldest students square up themselves, making one square, and the 2 or 3 or 4 squares of others need teacher help to square up. This takes 5 or 6 minutes every time.

At nine weeks I had introduced the concept of the 2's progressing around the square, but at the end of that lesson, the children were still having trouble finding their corner instead of their partner, so weren't very successful.

After 10 weeks, we danced at the Surrey Dance Festival. Three squares of the younger students danced to Colinda, and the older ones danced 3 squares to Slowpoke. One square consistently circled right when left was called, and circled left when right was called in Colinda. The right and left grand proved a problem for several children dancing Slowpoke. They all knew how to get back to home in time for the next call, so squares did not break down.

The students and parents continue to express enthusiasm for the square dancing program I provided. I have set our dancing season at 10 weeks. With all the demands for gym time and the climax of the Surrey Dance Festival, I decided this would suit us best at Walnut Road Elementary.

At the Northwest Teen Festival, I will request for my dancers and their parents to be met and greeted by Wesburn Wranglers. Elaine Jacobsen is working on music that my club can dance to while they are there. I know the dancing will be marvelous and inspire the children to continue in the school program next winter, and hopefully, to join Wesburn Wranglers in the future, or start another teen club.