

Local groups promote square and round dancing

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(Photo: Michele Marcotte/The Times)



Southern Swingers Square Dance Club and Red River Rounders show off their fancy footwork this week. The groups are encouraging others to join in the fun with an open house Tuesday at Promenade Hall, 5400 Benton Road. Doors open at 6 p.m.

Genevieve Carlisle, 79, and her husband, Wayland, square dance three to four nights a week.

"It's really filled our lives with a lot of good times," Carlisle said.

The couple began dancing after their mentally disabled son, Mark, whom they also cared for, died of leukemia at the age of 45.

"When he died of leukemia, we were looking for something to do, so that was something that really got us out of the house and gave us a real interest, gave us a lot of real friends. we were able to just do things we were not able to do," said Carlisle, who is now president of the Southern Swingers Square Dance Club



Vonda Ross reaches out for her partner during a square dance at Promenade Hall. (Photo: Michele Marcotte/The Times)

And nearly 10 years later, Carlisle is still dancing and hoping to introduce others to the intricate, coordinated dance moves. The Southern Swingers Square Dance Club and the Red River Rounders are jointly hosting Dance Fest 2014 to promote square and round dance, a choreographed ballroom dance, in the Shreveport-Bossier City area.

The fest will take place this year on Tuesday and functions as an open house for those curious to learn more about square and round dancing. Doors will open at 6 p.m. and dancing is expected to take place between 6:30 and 9:30 p.m. at Promenade Hall on Benton Road in Bossier City. Carlisle said the clubs members will demonstrate dance steps for newcomers, who will get a taste of what square and round dancing is all about.

"Hopefully, they will come back the next Tuesday, which is Sept. 2 and that's when our classes begin," she said. The weekly classes for beginners usually run until the middle of March, when students are ready to graduate. The first three classes in September are free.

Johnnie Ingles, with the Southern Swingers Dance Club, said square and round dance classes cost \$4 per person per class starting in October.

Both Ingles and Carlisle say the classes are good for empty nesters who are looking for social activities outside the home. Ingles said it's a good social outlet. "It's fun," she said.

"As people get older and their kids leave home, they're looking for something to do and this is just a really good thing. Plus, the exercise is great," she said.

Ingles has been dancing since 1997. She said she likes dressing up in square dancing clothes.

Carlisle agree.

"It's just such a good exercise for you and it's a lot more fun I would think than the treadmill or going to the gym. It's just good exercise." she said. "It's good for your mind also because you have to learn to concentrate and listen to the caller tell you what to do."

Want to go?

The Dance Fest 2014 open house will take place Tuesday at Promenade Hall, 5400 Benton Road, Bossier City. Doors will open at 6 p.m., and dancing will be from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Weekly square and round dancing classes are held every Tuesday from 7 to 9 p.m. starting Sept. 2. at Promenade Hall. If you don't have a partner, someone will be there to dance with you, Johnnie Ingles said.

For more information, contact Genevieve Carlisle at gcarlisle2@gmail.com or Johnnie Ingles at jmingles@bellsouth.net or 469-2929.

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