

NEW WRITING

Two Left Feet

Julie Clark

Julie Clark is a Registered Learning Disability Nurse recently qualified for a doctorate in learning disabilities. Her thesis was about the intimate care experiences of people with severe



and profound intellectual disabilities. Julie has worked as a community learning disability nurse and is currently taking a break to look after her two children.

Summary

Two Left Feet is a voluntary group which has, since 2006, been offering beginners' dancing lessons to people from all backgrounds and with all disabilities. Everyone is made to feel welcome as soon as they come through the door and the atmosphere allows everyone to feel comfortable and at ease.

Two Left Feet is a voluntary group offering beginners' dance lessons for adults in Slough and Wokingham. The group is committed to introducing dance in a new, exciting and fun way. People from all backgrounds and with all abilities are welcome and *Two Left Feet* wants to appeal to those who 'dream' of dancing but because they believe they have 'two left feet' may not have had the confidence. I set up the group in 2006. As a community learning disability nurse and a keen social dancer, I had noticed a lack of opportunities for people with physical or learning disabilities to participate in dance.



'Brilliant! Worked up a sweat - which is what we came to do'

Between twenty and sixty people attend each session and of these people approximately a third have identified themselves as having a form of disability. One participant commented:

'You've brought people together that would not normally be together, disabled people and non-disabled people. You've brought unity through dance'.

Two Left Feet provides an opportunity for people to have an affordable night out, where they will have fun, socialise, learn new skills and engage in physical activity. The styles of dance taught are many and varied, and range from bhangra to ballet and salsa to street dance. Each session is led by an experienced teacher who has been selected, not only for their dancing ability, but also for their ability to make their lessons fun and easy to follow and to make participants feel comfortable.

The dances are broken down into simple and repetitive movements to enable everyone to benefit from the feelings of success and achievement. The teachers also adapt the dance for participants who have difficulties with any particular movements. No partner is needed and people are welcome to come along, watch and enjoy the music and atmosphere if they do not want to join in.

Two Left Feet ensures that everyone is made to feel welcome as soon as they come through the door and create an atmosphere where people feel comfortable and at ease. *Two Left Feet* also encourages wider community participation by making links with local dance teachers and directing people to other groups and classes in the area if they enjoy a particular type of dance and want to continue learning more about it.

Two Left Feet is funded by the National Lottery, Slough Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council.



What the dancers say:

- ✧ I want to thank *Two Left Feet* for giving me something to look forward to on a normally depressing Monday morning, now I can't wait for Monday to arrive.
- ✧ I really look forward to Monday nights, as I get to spend an evening having fun and laughing with my friends and meeting lots of new people.
- ✧ I have been to all 4 of the dance sessions with *Two Left Feet* and intend to come along to as many as I can – it's fun, energetic and I love learning a new style of dance each time.
- ✧ The sessions are perfect for me, just over an hour of learning and dancing, with easy and interesting routines. The dance teachers are all amazing and obviously of a high calibre.
- ✧ I think the mix of dance types is really working, it keeps me interested and means that if I don't like one particular dance I won't be put off coming again. I also think that the mix of cultural dance is really including everyone.
- ✧ Brilliant! Worked up a sweat - which is what we came to do.

To find out more visit: www.twoleftfeet.org