

# LINDSBORG

LITTLE SWEDEN, USA



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SPOTLIGHT ARTICLE  
10/20/2011

For Immediate Release  
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## **Lindsborg Swedish Folk Dancers** *"Young Ambassadors"*



LINDSBORG, KANSAS - 10/20/2011 - The Lindsborg Swedish Folk Dancers were organized in 1963 after a group of youth decided to dance folk dances at a Lucia assembly. What started as a few dances turned into a Lindsborg institution. The Lindsborg Swedish Folk Dancers are unparalleled in many capacities. The time and discipline it takes to belong to the group is largely unrealized. The fun though, is readily apparent.

Musicians have an equally demanding role. Instruments such as the fiddle, accordion and nyckelharpa are typically used. The nyckelharpa is a Swedish folk instrument that has been played, in one form or another as it evolved, for more than 600 years. The number of musicians varies from year to year but consistently provide a great musical base to dance to traditional tunes.

Each student in the Smoky Valley schools from first grade to eighth grade receives instruction in multiple Swedish dances. As early as sixth grade, names are put on a list to join the Swedish Folk Dancers. Depending on how many high school seniors graduate, is how many new dancers are accepted. While the Swedish Folk Dancers are a separate entity from the school and a not-for-profit organization, the members must be enrolled in the USD 400 District. Many of the dancers have familial ties with the dance group. Their parents or older siblings have been a part of previous groups. The dancers make the dances look easy and seamless as most have practiced the dances for a complete year before performing in front of an audience.

As Sweden's traditional folk dress are different from province, town and parish, many of the custom

made costumes reflect some of the dancer's or musician's ancestors or family member location from Sweden.

Performing at the Swedish festivals that make Lindsborg a nationally and internationally known community, the Folk Dancers perform a series of dances determined by the length of the presentation. The three main festivals are as follows: Svensk Hyllningsfest, a biennial Lindsborg event honoring the arrival of the town's Swedish immigrants in 1868. Midsummer's Festival, which is a customary Swedish celebration of the longest day of light which includes folk dancing and the raising of the Maypole. Lucia Festival, a ceremony in recognition of the winter solstice based on a legend of a famine that gripped Sweden and was eased by a girl with candles in her hair on a ship laden with food. Midsummer's Festival and Lucia Festival are the Swedish National Holidays that Lindsborg observes. The Swedish Folk Dancers also perform in elderly homes and for various tour groups, usually with a performance scheduled once a month.

The dancers perform in many different venues from coast to coast. In the last four years, they have traveled to New York, Minnesota/Midwest, California and Texas and every four years a trip to Scandinavia. The travel schedule for the future is a trip this summer to Sweden and Denmark in June 2012. Traveling to the Scandinavian countries every four years solidifies the past ties and relationships with the contemporary Swedish way of life.

To fund these trips, many fundraisers are planned. *Julkärve* (sheaves set out for birds at Christmastime) are fashioned from donated wheat and sold throughout the United States. Home baked Swedish pastries and candles are also used for fundraising as well as grants.

Smoky Valley High junior and Swedish Folk Dancer, Jenna Hubele states it perfectly, "We bring a lot of happiness to the people who come and enjoy watching us perform which makes this group very special...In my opinion, Dancing is fun, it makes me happy, and I like bringing joy to an audience at a performance. Learning all the dances was challenging at first, but once you do them a million times, those dances are engraved in your memory forever. Our group is special and we have a lot of great members and Directors that lead us to be enjoyable for everyone who watches."

The Swedish Folk Dancers are yet another way Lindsborg celebrates and keeps its Swedish heritage alive, passing down from generation to generation.

*\*A special thank you to Julia Hudson, Executive Director of the Swedish Folk Dancers for information for this article.*

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