



## GSI CALLER SCHOOL

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# Grand Square, Inc

AKA :

- Grand Squares
- Grand Square International
- GSI
- GSI International

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Grand Square, Inc. (GSI) is a United States federally-approved 501(c)3 non-profit foundation. This certification is very difficult to achieve and the recipients of this status are required by law to uphold their mission. The GSI Mission is as follows:

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- To enhance the general public's perception of square dancing.
- To keep the square dance and general public informed of all newsworthy square dance issues and events.
- To promote the health benefits of square dancing to both the general public and to the square dance population.
- To be a communication vehicle for all square dancers and to increase the popularity of square dancing worldwide.

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The Curlee family - Everette, Virginia and Kim took square dance lessons in 1997 in Charlotte. All of them immediately fell in love with the activity. After graduating and dancing for a year or so, they saw a need to help get square dancing out more in the public eye.

In 1999 they founded Grand Square, Inc. for that purpose. In that same year, GSI applied for and was granted 501(c) 3 non-profit US tax exempt status. GSI quickly became involved in square dancing on a local, national and international level.

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Everette &amp; Virginia



Kim



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1999 – 2002

- GSI purchased large blocks of radio advertisement in the Charlotte, NC area to promote the area's square dance classes.
- GSI purchased and provided a portable dance floor (capable of dancing 100 squares) that square dancers may use.
- Established through CALLERLAB a \$10,000.00 scholarship fund to be dispersed through the CALLERLAB Foundation for use by callers and dancers worldwide for education.
- Was a recipient of the CALLERLAB Foundation' Directors Award.

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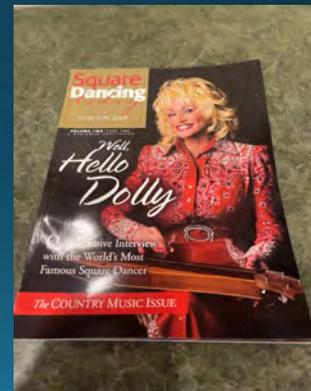


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- 1999 – 2002 (cont)
- Began publication of “Square Dancing Today” – Square dancing’s first full size, full color magazine. SDT was distributed without cost worldwide, and with a subscriber list of 25,000+ became square dancing’s largest publication. Sadly, SDT ceased publication in 2005



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## 2003 – 2006

- Sponsored the “Passing of the Torch” afterparty at the 2003 NSDC in Oklahoma City – Attended by more than 3000 dancers.
- Conducted a seven week “Introduction to Square Dancing” at one of Charlotte, NC’s middle schools.
- Sponsored a “New Concept Dance” in Las Vegas, NV that integrated current dancers and non-dancers in a “fun” atmosphere giving the non-dancers a very positive view of square dancing.
- Hosted several square dance parties with local Charlotte politicians

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## 2003 – 2006 (cont)

- Hosted a city-wide barbeque for the city of Charlotte – Bringing in local business leaders and exposing them to the square dance activity.
- Established a square dance fund in Florida to be used in recruiting and retention of new dancers.
- Spearheaded the Square Dancers for Katrina Fund, a fundraising drive that raised more than \$125,000.00. GSI worked closely with TRAC (Terrebonne Readiness Assistance Coalition).

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## 2003 – 2006 (cont)

- Established in 1992, TRAC (Terrebonne Readiness Assistance Coalition) is the longest, continuously operating community-based disaster recovery/preparedness 501 (c)3 organization in the nation - <https://trac4la.wordpress.com/>
- The donations from square dancers world-wide helped enable TRAC to build 5 hurricane resistant homes for five displaced families in Louisiana.

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**Protecting the Housing Future**  
**A TRAC-OXFAM AMERICA-SIGUS/MIT Collaboration**  
**Toward Sustainable Housing on the Bayous**

An initiative to rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricanes Rita and Katrina on the bayous of southern Louisiana, and to protect against future hurricane challenges. A broad range of interventions are considered: rebuilding and repair, outreach and training, and regulatory processes, for the formal and informal construction sectors.

**1 Development of Model Prototype House: "The Louisiana Lift House"**

- Development, construction and testing of a house design appropriate for building in the bayous
- Key principles:
  - Cultural sensitive
  - Environmentally responsive
  - Affordable
  - Maximizes effective volunteer inputs
  - Hurricane safer!
- Prototype construction to begin December 2006.

The first prototype houses are being funded by Square Dancers world-wide who contributed to the "Square Dancers for Katrina Fund". The fund raising drive was spearheaded by Tony Choudrie and Grand Square, Inc., based in Charlotte, North Carolina.

**2 Upgrading Housing Quality Through Increased Code Compliance**

- Preparation of "user-friendly" aids to clarify process: posters, leaflets, multi-media guides
- Review of process and brainstorm with officials in streamlining approach and accessibility
  - Combining steps
  - Better user access: location, times, mobile offices?
  - Lower fees

**3 Outreach to Informal DIY (Do-it-Yourself) Builders**

- Goal to improve housing built outside of formal system
- Particular focus on survivability from hurricanes
- Two areas: 1 - determine key problematic construction issues, and 2) develop communication approach to reach fiercely self-reliant Cajun communities.

**4 Demonstration and testing innovations in construction and materials through prototype houses with outreach program**

- Focus on cost effective design, energy efficiency, streamlined construction techniques and environmentally appropriate construction
- Provides vehicle for "see-learn-do" training in outreach programs

An initiative of TRAC, OXFAM AMERICA, and SIGUS/MIT made possible with the generous support of donors throughout the United States. To contribute funds or volunteer for the construction of the Lift House, go to: [lhb.houseoftrac.com](http://lhb.houseoftrac.com). For more information: TRAC - [www.trac4la.com](http://www.trac4la.com) - [programs@trac4la.com](mailto:programs@trac4la.com) | SIGUS/MIT - [web.mit.edu/sigus](http://web.mit.edu/sigus) - [signature@mit.edu](mailto:signature@mit.edu) | OXFAM AMERICA - [www.oxfamamerica.org/gulfcoast](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/gulfcoast) - [info@oxfamamerica.org](mailto:info@oxfamamerica.org)

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### 2003 – 2006 (cont)

- GSI hosted the first World Square Dance in Dachau, Germany.
- Prior to the dance, GSI sponsored a 5 day callers school. The school was staffed by CALLERLAB Accredited Caller Coaches and was free for all attendees.
- This school was the first of many GSI callers' schools held throughout Europe and led to the formation of GSI-Europe.
- GSI now has team leaders in 10 countries.

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### 2007 – Present (cont)

- In 2011, GSI spearheaded the Square Dancers for Japan Fund to help victims of the 2011 tsunami in Japan.
- More than \$60,000.00 was raised and sent to the Japan Square Dance Association.
- The JSDA distributed these funds to the affected square dancers in Japan.
- <http://www.squaredance.or.jp/english/index.html>

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### 2007 – Present

- In 2007, GSI, in conjunction with the 56<sup>th</sup> NSDC held the first GSI/NSDC Callers School in Charlotte, NC at the NSDC. This school was held directly before the convention and was free for all registered callers.
- Since that time, GSI, along with the current NSDC , has held a free school at every convention – with a total of over 600 callers attending.
- The resounding success of these schools led to a shift in GSI's focus to caller education. It is our belief that caller education is a major key in the success of our activity.

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### 2007 – Present (cont)

- GSI also is working on attracting new caller coaches. Several current CALLERLAB Accredited Caller coaches got their start at a GSI school.
  - Jack Pladdys
  - Barry Johnson
  - Ted Lizotte
  - Bob Riggs
  - Walt Burr
  - Bear Miller

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### 2007 – Present (cont)

- Of the 27 active CALLERLAB Accredited Caller Coaches, 12 have been on the staff at a GSI/NSDC school.
- At this year's school at the 71<sup>st</sup> NSDC in Evansville, IN, there were 12 Caller Coaches on staff - 5 CALLERLAB Accredited Caller Coaches and 7 caller coaches.

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2007 – Present (cont)

- In 2021, with the help of too many caller coaches to name and with the guidance of SUPER webmaster – Ray Owens. [www.gsicallerschool](http://www.gsicallerschool) came to fruition.



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SCHOOL**

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**GSI CALLER  
SCHOOL**

- Over 40 videos from Corona Learning Assistance Seminar Series (C.L.A.S.S.)
- GSI On-Line Syllabus – the same one used in all GSI Schools
- Software Training
- Links to future conventions

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2023 – GSI and the 72<sup>nd</sup>  
NSDC will be sponsoring  
the caller's school in  
Mobile next June.

**You know you don't want  
to miss it!**

***Y'all Come to Alabama  
to Dance & Play on  
Mobile Bay!***



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