

## **GENERAL INFORMATION AND HELPFUL HINTS** **FOR PLANNING LSSE COURSES**

**Audience:** LSSE strives to offer courses that are of interest to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. Course participants come from all over the Pioneer Valley.

**Seasonal System:** *Generally*, LSSE courses are offered on a seasonal basis--Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer. Courses *usually* run eight or fewer weeks per season (dependent upon subject matter and individual course goals) and class sessions are *normally* held one day per week. There are exceptions to these general rules, but many courses fit this mold.

**Types of Courses:** LSSE courses tend to fall into several general categories. These include visual and performing arts; crafts and hobbies; health, exercise, and fitness; dance; personal development; sports; and pre-schooler and youth courses. **HOWEVER**, we are always on the lookout for creative new course ideas, so don't hesitate to suggest new ideas and categories!

**Course Scheduling Issues:** Especially when they affect the availability of our teaching facilities, public school vacations and official holidays are taken into consideration in planning each season's course schedule. Due to limitations in staff resources and facility space (see "Facilities" below), the majority of courses take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays. A *limited* amount of facility space is available for Friday, Saturday, and/or Sunday courses.

**Facilities:** LSSE relies on shared space to accommodate its courses and programs. Most LSSE courses take place at the Amherst Middle School, the Bangs Community Center, or the Munson Library. Some instructors provide their own space for teaching LSSE courses. Some others lease space from private businesses and then pass this cost on to students through increased price or a lab fee.

**Equipment:** In some facilities, extra equipment (TV's, VCR's, overhead projectors, etc.) is available for use by LSSE instructors. The use of extra equipment must be arranged with the Program Director during pre-season course negotiations in order to assure availability.

**Course Materials:** In general, instructors are responsible for supplying handouts, special equipment, and/or expendable materials required for use by participants during the course. Where appropriate and when properly arranged with the Program Director, instructors can choose to charge a reasonable lab fee to cover the cost of handouts and expendable materials and supplies. Additionally, course participants can be asked to supply their own materials, supplies, and/or relevant equipment by including a supply/materials/equipment list (along with estimated cost) in the course description.

**Promotion and Publicity:** Each season, LSSE publishes *Amherst Leisure Times*, our quarterly brochure listing all courses, programs, and activities for that season. Our brochure is direct-mailed to over 12,000

Pioneer Valley residents each season. An additional 4,000 brochures are distributed via placement in public facilities and popular businesses throughout Amherst and surrounding communities. When possible, LSSE supplements our internal promotional efforts by sharing course information with area newspaper editors and encouraging them to do feature stories. New courses tend to be those most often featured. However, all selections and printing dates are at the editors' discretion. We strongly encourage instructors to advertise and promote their LSSE courses through supplemental means. Interested instructors should contact the Program Director for guidelines before doing independent advertising.

**Contracted Instruction:** LSSE instructors work under a seasonal contract that details both parties' (instructor's and LSSE's) responsibilities. Payment is made once ALL terms of the contract have been met. Key instructor responsibilities include contacting course participants when classes must be cancelled, agreeing to make up cancelled classes, keeping complete and accurate participant attendance records, assisting in the course evaluation process, and submitting all records and requested paperwork in a timely fashion.

**Fee Reduction Program:** LSSE recognizes that the fees charged for some programs may place an economic hardship on some individuals. For this reason, LSSE sponsors a fee reduction program for those qualified **Amherst** residents enrolled in our youth classes. As an instructor, if you know of children or teens who may benefit from this program, you can encourage their parents/ guardians to contact the LSSE office and apply for a fee reduction. Application processing generally takes 1-2 weeks. Fee reductions are absorbed by the department and do NOT affect instructor pay.