

Some context prior to reading this piece. This is a press release responding to a news article from the Philly Inquirer about the overall activity, the Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps, and sexual misconduct within it. While I was at the Oregon Crusaders, I insisted we release something in response. This is that release, which was written by myself, the executive director at the time, and the president of the board at the time.

We at the Oregon Crusaders wanted to take this opportunity to express that the health and safety of our performers, volunteers, staff and everyone involved with our organization is our top priority. We applaud those brave individuals who have shared their experiences in order to make the drum corps activity, and each of our member organizations, stronger and healthier for everyone involved.

To this end, with the cooperation of our member leaders, staff, board, and administration, the Oregon Crusaders has taken this topic very seriously and has continued to refine and expand our policies and procedures, including:

The systematic background checking of all staff and volunteers, and an expanded staff conduct agreement that includes strengthened language around discrimination, harassment and retaliation;

Strengthened member conduct guidelines that go into our member contract. A culture that is safe and nurturing must hold high standards for everyone involved. Violations of our policies, whether staff-to-member, staff-to-staff, or member-to-member, are grounds for termination and dismissal from the organization and subject to appropriate legal action; and

A consistent practice of thoroughly investigating any issues brought to our attention. We have in place a Whistleblower Policy and an anonymous reporting form at <http://oregoncrusaders.org/whistleblower>. The form has served as an important catalyst for convening key stakeholders to evaluate concerns quickly and completely, and it is now being used by DCI as an example for how to make such reporting as frictionless as possible.

But there's even more that can be done. We are working toward even more transparency, clearer procedures and policies, and strategies for better training and practices for our staff and membership. When current revisions are completed we will be posting them to the public, and will continually review them.

And we also believe that even though DCI is a cooperative association of individual drum corps organizations, DCI can serve an even greater role in driving a higher standard in the activity. Our Board of Directors unanimously supported the Cavaliers' letter to DCI in February, "Request for Action to Initiate Uniform Policies" in an effort to get more uniform policies across the activity in this area. We agree that each of these areas is important to address:

1) Ensuring staff and volunteers within each organization who work directly with performers people are properly vetted, and 2) Ensuring that the services and/or activities provided by each organization does not expose performers to the risk of harm, abuse or grooming.

We also agree that a safeguarding policy across all DCI organizations should include:

- How each organization will ensure that staff and volunteers are suitable to work with young people;

- The codes of practice and behavior that staff and volunteers are expected to follow when working with young people and on tour;
- The codes of practice and behavior expected of young people towards staff and volunteers;
- The codes of practice and behavior expected of young people, staff and volunteers while on tour;
- The standards of practice expected of each organization, including timely filing of taxes and 990 forms, whistleblower policies, insurance and other issues as addressed in the handout provided at Convergence; and
- Steps to be taken to ensure that these codes of practice are being followed.

This is an important time. It's a time of great enthusiasm as the winter season peaks and the spring training camp season begins for what will undoubtedly be one of the best years ever in drum corps. And on a personal note, we want to express our great regard for the performers, staff and volunteers of the Cadets' organization. You will be visiting us in the Pacific Northwest this year for the first time in many, many years. And when you do, you will be met with tremendous love and enthusiasm. Your artistry, your legacy of great achievement, and your optimism for the future are inspiring to all of us. If it's possible to reach out to you with one, giant, crowd-sized hug, we will make it happen!

If anyone has any questions about our policies or procedures, you may direct your questions to Mike Quillen at director@oregoncrusaders.org.