NONPROFIT Advantage

WINTER 2016

NONPROFIT Advantage

A Quarterly Publication of

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION of NONPROFITS

75 Charter Oak Avenue, Suite 1-100
Hartford, CT 06106
Tel: 860.525.5080
Fax: 860.525.5088

www.ctnonprofits.org

Article Submission:

We welcome submissions. Articles should be submitted electronically to jpeifer@ctnonprofits.org for consideration. All articles are subject to review and approval by Connecticut Association of Nonprofits. Submission is no guarantee of publication.

Articles should be targeted to nonprofits in general concerning laws, employment/human resources practices, best practices, governance, administration, organizational capacity building, etc.; and should be informational rather than commercial in nature.

For more information, please call 860-525-5080 x1029.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DESIGNED BY
Tashyana Lowe-Chin, Database & Office Administrator, CT Nonprofits

EDITED BY
Jennifer Peifer, Director of Communications, CT Nonprofits

CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION of NONPROFITS | *...to serve, strengthen and support Connecticut's nonprofit community.*

We help nonprofits help Connecticut.

There are thousands of nonprofits in our state – each trying to make a difference on their own. We bring them together so that each member can benefit from our collective strength.

Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CT Nonprofits) is the largest membership organization in the state dedicated exclusively to working with nonprofits in Connecticut. By connecting organizations with information, education, advocacy and collaboration, we help members focus their energy on the people and communities they serve.

CT Nonprofits can provide your organization with vital cost-saving opportunities, a dedicated public policy and advocacy team, specialized training and education programs, information on nonprofit trends and best practices and connections with nonprofit colleagues throughout the state. **Learn more at www.ctnonprofits.org or call us at 860.525.5080 x1014.**

My Time at CT Nonprofits

By Patrick Johnson, Interim Executive Director

Many years ago a friend of mine told me that as you get older time accelerates. I now know that from experience, and never has time gone by so fast as the last nine months. I have found myself surrounded by an extraordinary team of people that, despite the challenges, has a true passion for the mission of CT Nonprofits. Their dedication and commitment is nothing short of inspirational. I am honored to be among them, and honored to be serving as the Interim Executive Director of CT Nonprofits.

I have managed human services in Connecticut for 47 years, and have managed nonprofits for 35. Never in all that time have I seen such threats to the nonprofit sector, particularly originating from public policy decisions. We face enormous challenges. I also have to say that never in those 35 years have I seen nonprofit organizations at every level working so closely together with common messaging. We have realized that we can't survive alone out there and that we have to overcome the efforts to keep us divided.

Nonprofit organizations make up about 14% of GDP in Connecticut. We employ 12% of the workforce (196,520 people) and we deliver over 70% of human services to half a million people. Our culture and arts centers are a vital spark in our cities and towns. Nonprofit organizations are economic drivers! We will be a more powerful influence in our communities as we become better organized and work even more closely together. It will require thoughtful planning, dedicated resources, passionate involvement, and assertiveness. No one can afford to stand on the sidelines. If you are not a **member of CT Nonprofits**, what are you waiting for?

Our **Center for Professional Development** (CPD) continues to provide state of the art training and professional development opportunities for scores of nonprofit professionals each year. The CPD staff listens to the needs of our members and brings the best available expertise to respond.

Our **Career Center** is a clearing house for nonprofit organizations and job seekers to find a match. It is the largest nonprofit jobs database in Connecticut. This is where talent meets opportunity, and has proven time and again to be a popular value to our members in search of new or experienced staff that are passionate about mission based careers in the nonprofit sector.

We constantly strive to find new and creative ways to work together. Consider the **CT Nonprofit Center**, which I have seen grow to full occupancy over the past nine months. It is now the 2nd largest of its kind on the East Coast with a roster of 23 organizations who share meeting space, services, and most importantly a collaborative community to have a greater impact on those they serve. I also think of the #People Matter coalition, which brought diverse groups such as trade associations, family advocacy groups, organized labor, and others together to influence public policy.

The state of CT can and will learn much from how nonprofit organizations have survived the fiscal hardships of the last two decades. We are, after all, in the solutions business.

As I write this I am fresh from our 13th annual Nonprofit Conference, the largest in our history, with over 600 people attending. Our theme of "Innovate and Elevate" resonated with everyone there. The time is ripe for change, imagination, and assertive advocacy. It is time for us too to take a longer view and lay out an ambitious strategy for the next three years. Ours is a most important message to be heard because it is about people, their dreams, and the quality of life. It is also about nonprofit organizations as employers, job creators, and economic drivers— essential to the economy of the state.

I am very excited and honored to be here among our members, our volunteer Board, and the best staff any administrator could ask for. Time may be going faster, but I have felt myself growing younger over the past nine months. It has to be the energy and perseverance of all the wonderful people who surround me. ***THANK YOU ALL!***

Dan Pallotta Wants Us to Rethink Charity

By Patrick McKenna, CT Nonprofits

Dan Pallotta thinks our ideas about charity are antiquated and dead wrong. The activist and Ted Talk favorite stood on the stage at CT Nonprofit's 13th Annual Conference as the keynote speaker and delivered this powerful message to the sold out room of over 600 people.

In the face of so many serious issues, Pallotta challenged the idea of the small nonprofit, working on a shoestring budget and trying to maximize every dollar. He focused on the differences between the nonprofit sector and the rest of the economic world, questioning the double standard between charities and businesses. Pallotta then went on to explain how this way of thinking puts nonprofits at a disadvantage and affects them in many important ways.

"The first is compensation. We don't like nonprofits to use money to incentivize people to produce more. A for-profit can dedicate millions of dollars to developing staff in order to sell sugar water to nations around the world, but a nonprofit organization cannot do the same to help their community. (The Sector) cannot get the best and brightest because of the difference in reward being offered."

Pallotta illustrated his point by citing a Business Week study that showed that the average yearly salary for a person 10 years removed from school with an MBA is $400,000, while CEO's of hunger charities make a median income of $84,028 a year. This large pay gap presents young professionals with a very clear decision—sacrifice money to work for 'good' in the nonprofit sector or increase personal stability by entering the for-profit world. According to Pallotta, we must fundamentally change how we think about incentivizing our nonprofit employees in order to attract new leaders and complex thinkers to the field.

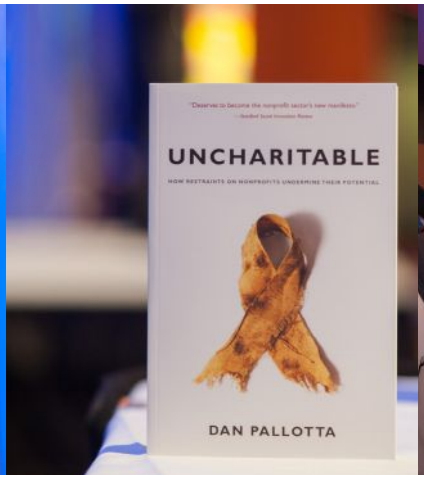
Another discrepancy between nonprofits and the corporate world can be found in advertising and marketing. According to Pallotta the idea that nonprofit organizations can create visibility and market value through free advertising and social media is an unrealistic expectation. Particularly when compared to large corporations who are encouraged to spend heavily on promotion.

> ***"We have big problems. A low literacy rate and a high suicide rate. Five million more children living in poverty now than in the 60's. For all of our work on the issue, we've barely made a dent in stopping breast cancer. What if all we've been taught about charity and nonprofit practices is wrong? What if these ideas are undermining our work solving the great social problems of our time?"***

"We don't like to see our donations spent on advertising in charity. We want them to go directly to the needy, as if the money invested in advertising could not bring in dramatically greater sums of money to serve the needy."

Pallotta used his company's AIDS Rides program as an example of what can be achieved when money is invested properly in advertising. Over nine years, the group was able to bring together 182,000 people to raise a total of $581 million. Pallotta stated that these results would not have been possible without a full advertising blitz, which included purchasing full page ads in national papers and buying ad time on both radio and television.

Another major factor in keeping nonprofits from reaching their full potential is that many organizations are taught



to be risk averse in the pursuit of revenue. While private corporations pour money and resources into their products to create results, not-for-profit organizations are stuck pinching pennies, consumed by the fears of overhead.

"Nonprofits are scared of daring, large scale community fundraising endeavors. They know that if they invest heavily they will get killed by stakeholders and certain segments of the public for spending so much. Meanwhile, no one ever calls the attorney general after walking out of a very bad, very expensive Disney movie."

According to Pallotta, organizations are limiting their potential by running away from risk, and inherently innovation, which leaves them ill equipped to combat the many large scale problems their communities face. "We need to have the patience to allow long term success to develop. Amazon went for six years without turning a profit, but they were able to live with losses in the beginning in order to sure up their long term plan for success. We are not allowed to do that in the nonprofit sector."

The double standard that exists between the business world and the nonprofit sector in compensation, advertising, risk and time is extremely dangerous. This schism causes organizations to be reactionary and to taper big ideas, which stifles growth and puts nonprofits at an extreme disadvantage.

"If we have any doubts about the effects of this separate rule book, this statistic is sobering: From 1970 to 2009, the number of nonprofits that really grew, that crossed the $50 million annual revenue barrier, is 144. In the same time, the number of for-profits that crossed the $50 million line is 46,136."

In order for nonprofits to be able to level the playing field and make a real impact on society, we have to change 400 years of puritanical beliefs that have led to us thinking that there is no room for financial incentive or spending in charity, according to Pallotta. For too long far too great an emphasis has been placed on cost and overhead.

"We have been taught to spend as little as possible on overhead, things like fundraising, under the assumption

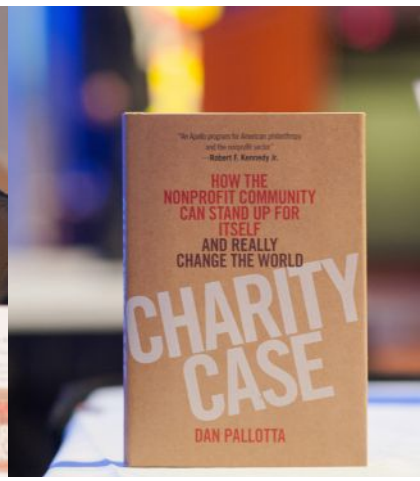
that the less money you spend on your fundraising slice of pie the more money there is available to go directly to the cause. However, if dedicating overhead to fund raising brings in more money and actually makes the entire pie bigger then we have it backwards. We should be investing more money, not less, in fundraising, because it has the potential to multiply the money available for the cause we care about so deeply."

Changing the way people think about charity and nonprofits is a herculean task, however momentum is starting to build as Guidestar, the Better Business Bureau and Charity Navigator have released a joint statement proclaiming that overhead is not a good measurement of organizational health and nonprofits should be spending more. Dan Pallotta has also started the **Charity Defense Council**, whose singular goal is to change the way people think about changing the world.

If we are able to change our perceptions of what a nonprofit's role in society is and the rules it must play by, we are opening ourselves up to the possibility that we actually can conquer the big problems facing our world today.

"We must dream wildly. We have to believe we can beat these problems. No one wants their epitaph to read, Kept overhead low. Instead we want it to read, We changed the world!"

Patrick Mckenna is the Training and Member Services Coordinator at CT Nonprofits. He is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and an alumnus of the Public Allies AmeriCorps program. Patrick plans, manages, and coordinates services for the Center for Professional Development, and is the member liaison at the CT Nonprofit Center.



Fish or Fowl? Establishing Your Nonprofit's Brand Personality

By Anita Ford Saunders, United Way of Central and Northeastern CT

Is your organization a Mac or a PC?

As obscure as this might sound, a question like this could help lead organizations to a clear organizational personality.

Many have seen the Mac vs. PC commercial. Each visual depicts a certain feeling – cool for the MAC and stodgy for the PC. Which brand would you rather be?

Brands are personal, as personal to the individual as they are to an organization. But why is establishing a brand so important to nonprofits when many of us are busy trying to do good work?

Sarah Durham, President of Big Duck was very clear. "Your brand has to come across in all the things you traditionally hold dear—mission, vision, and values," she announced.

The nonprofit sector is changing and branding is critical if we want to be successful. So where do you start?

Durham suggested a series of exercises that might help begin the process. First conduct a communication audit. Lay all your collateral materials out on a table. What image does your organization portray? Are the images and look related? If they all don't "ladder up," as Durham says, with a consistent idea, your brand may not be working.

Your brand personality should be the single idea you want people to hold in their minds when they think about your organization. Sharing examples such as ASPCA and Save the Children, we all could identify with the "feeling" those brands generate. Durham reminded us that personality can communicate faster than a lot of copy.

She outlined a successful nonprofit rebranding effort conducted by the organization that supports research around Spinal Muscular Atrophy or SMA. SMA is the number one genetic cause of death for infants.

Instead of fostering an image of hopelessness, they rebranded themselves as a place for hope. Their URL is **www.CureSMA.org**; their tag line, "Make today a breakthrough."

Finally Durham challenged this rapt room of nonprofit professionals to ask ourselves some questions about our organizational personality. She took us through one final exercise that we could conduct with our staff and volunteers. It's less about the questions and more about how they associate the characteristics with the organization.

1. If your organization were an animal, what would you want to be?
2. What kind of vehicle would your organization be?
3. What color would that vehicle be?
4. What would be your organization's anthem or theme song?
5. What actor or actress would you want to play your organization in a movie?

Her final words of wisdom summed up the caution and challenge. Develop a system where everything is connected to your organizational brand. Design an institutional framework. Organizations should change more things at once rather than one thing at a time. Revolution is better than evolution.

Learn more about branding your nonprofit at **www.bigducknyc.com**.

Anita Ford Saunders, APR, is the Director of Marketing and Communications for the United Way of Central & Northeastern CT.

Liquidity: A Key Component to Organizational Stability

By John Osterman, Families in Crisis, Inc.

Having adequate reserves to weather the inevitable storms that a nonprofit will face, and leveraging opportunities that arise, are two of the marks of highly performing organizations. While most nonprofit financial professionals suggest that 90 days of 'cash' should be considered as the bare minimum, beyond that timeframe the actual level depends on an organization's operating and funding model. What type of funding fluctuations can be expected? Is the organization heavily dependent on just a few funders? What type of facilities does the organization operate? The answers to these and other questions guide the determination of the appropriate level of cash reserve. Developing these reserves is challenging in a funding environment where many funders are not inclined to support the full cost of running a program, which includes an organization's shared administrative and infrastructure costs also known as overhead. So funding opportunities must be carefully vetted to determine their full financial and administrative impact.

"...any organization, nonprofit or otherwise, can only effectively carry out its mission if it has a stable financial and capital structure."

A high priority strategy for building liquidity should include the consideration of an annual contribution to the surplus operating fund. In order to communicate the need for holding sufficient reserves, a Board Designated Operations reserve can be included in the unrestricted net assets section of the Statement of Financial Position. While they are relatively few in number, some foundations such as Tipping Point Community, Weingart Foundation, and Clark Foundation provide targeted investment around an organization's financial stability. And Wallace Foundation, **through its website**, provides tools such as the Operating Reserve Policy Toolkit to assist organizations in addressing this need.

All of an organization's management and board of directors should be familiar with Liquidity, as well as the overall financial condition of the organization. This requires close monitoring and effective reporting on the part of finance staff. Program personnel can play a part in this reporting flow. The development staff is the organization's sales force and should understand and be able to communicate the organization's financial status to funders. More than ever, this includes educating funders and policy makers around the reality that any organization, nonprofit or otherwise, can only effectively carry out its mission if it has a stable financial and capital structure. While it is a challenge to do this at the very time funding is becoming more competitive, this trend makes it all the more critical.

John Osterman is the Director of Finance & Administration for Families in Crisis, Inc. They support families whose lives and relationships have been disrupted when a family member enters the criminal justice system. They strengthen communities by helping offenders rebuild their lives and re-enter society. Learn more at www.familiesincrisis.org.

Collaboration, Innovation and Preparation Key to Advocacy Success

By Jeffrey Shaw, CT Nonprofits

Partnerships are important. *'They are not just numbers on budget sheets; those numbers have faces.' 'We need you to help us think long-term.'* These were just some of the sentiments articulated by State Comptroller Kevin Lembo and State Rep. Cathy Abercrombie at CT Nonprofits 13th Annual Conference. Building off that framework, the Advocacy Panel breakout session featured a discussion on two major trending public policy issues facing nonprofits in our neighboring states of Massachusetts and Maine. Those trending issues are:

1. Proposals to eliminate or change property tax exemptions for certain nonprofit organizations
2. Proposals to reform how government pays for and contracts with nonprofit health and human services providers

Both proposals, if enacted, will have a profound effect on the future growth and ultimate sustainability of the nonprofit sector in Connecticut and across the country.

In Maine, Governor Paul LePage described nonprofits as 'takers, not givers' and suggested imposing property taxes on nonprofits to "chip in" for costs like police, firefighters, and snow removal. This proposal, and **others like it**, fundamentally changes the long-standing relationships nonprofits have with communities, which are built on the understanding that nonprofits deserve to maintain their property tax exemptions because they improve the quality of life and provide services that the government would have to otherwise. In response, the Maine Association of Nonprofits capitalized on this severely misguided view by mobilizing thousands of advocates across all sectors that shared this common concern and ultimately defeated the legislation. Nonprofits in Connecticut take note!

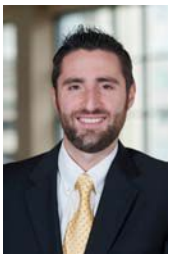
During the 2015 session, House Speaker Brendan Sharkey, concerned with rising property taxes in local communities, passed legislation that would, for the first time ever, allow cities and towns to levy property taxes on any private, nonprofit college student housing that is not considered a dormitory and on any new medical facility (previously on property tax rolls) acquired by a nonprofit hospital network. While that legislation targeted the so-called 'eds and meds' and is fairly narrow, the law's unintended consequence has highlighted a potentially new pot of money/revenue source for a cash-starved state.

There have already been comments from policymakers considering an expansion of this legislation to include private, nonprofit secondary schools. Should that 'revenue-starved' appetite grow, one would expect policymakers to eventually consider applying this

legislation to other (and any) nonprofit organizations.

Another proposal, this time a proactive policy that will ultimately establish a path to sustainability, if not prosperity, for nonprofits in Massachusetts, is Chapter 257. **Chapter 257** is a Massachusetts law that rightfully requires that the State must determine and pay nonprofits the true costs of delivering health and human services after decades of chronic underfunding. Sound familiar? A number of new contracting provisions, such as a two-year rate review, appeal process if rates are deemed too low, and geographic considerations (differences in cost of living, etc.) when determining rates will ultimately lead to an approximately $890 million infusion into the nonprofit sector, once the law is fully implemented.

In Connecticut, we are all familiar with the numbers; 80% of nonprofit providers report funding does not cover true cost of services, no cost-of-living adjustments since 2007; oversubscription of Nonprofit Grant Program by $100 million (showing the unmet need for capital investments), mid-year rescissions further harming at-risk programs and services so many people depend on, and so on. Fortunately, the Payment Reform Subcommittee of the Governor's Cabinet on Nonprofit Health and Human Services is drafting a rate setting provision (a similar concept to Massachusetts's Chapter 257) that would determine true costs of services and create a mechanism to adjust rates. Senator Beth Bye has already volunteered to introduce the legislation for the 2016 session. Oddly enough, the state's budget crisis may finally force policymakers' hands to making the long-term fixes to the entrenched failures of the current system. The nonprofit community, as diverse as it is, must come together and support these efforts.



Jeff Shaw is the Director of Public Policy at CT Nonprofits. He received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut, a Master's degree from Fairfield University and a second Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Connecticut School of Community Medicine. He is responsible for the overarching public policy issues championed by CT Nonprofits.

Losing Tim: How Our System Fails Our Kids with Mental Illness and What We Can Do About It

By Colleen Kearney, CT Nonprofits

In 1979, when Paul Gionfriddo, who is currently the President & CEO of **Mental Health America** (MHA), entered the CT State Legislature, he had no idea how closely the issues he would tackle in his role as House Chair of the Public Health Committee would affect his family. In the early 1980s, there was a movement to transition individuals living in psychiatric hospitals back into the community. Gionfriddo advocated for community-based mental heath and substance abuse treatment programs, care coordinators, and for moving young children back into their public schools. But the investment the Legislature made to the community services wasn't enough to meet the need and the public schools were not prepared to educate children and teens with serious mental illness in a traditional classroom setting. Sadly, both the juvenile and adult correctional system filled the gap then, and it still does today.

Losing Tim

While he was serving in the Legislature, Gionfriddo began to suspect something was going on with his five year old son, Tim. By age six, Tim was having trouble with friends, focusing, and following directions in school. Then Tim began to display very unsettling behaviors. Despite the obvious signs, it took 3 years for Tim's school to implement an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and Tim was diagnosed with a multitude if illnesses. Gionfriddo was thoughtful and persistent with Tim's IEP and challenged his many medical diagnoses. But despite Gionfriddo's advocacy, fifth grade would be the last full year of school that Tim would complete on time, and none of the treatments or therapy's seemed to relieve Tim's symptoms. Tim's challenges escalated greatly over his adolescent years. However, it wasn't until age 17 that Tim was finally diagnosed with schizophrenia. Tim would eventually become a victim of the 'revolving door' that individuals with serious mental illness often face. Address changes between hospitals, jails, and the streets.

B4Stage4

Mental illness is the only chronic condition that society waits until stage four to treat. **B4Stage4** is Mental Health America's overarching message. With early intervention and treatment the vast majority of chronic conditions can be managed very effectively or even cured. But when you wait until stage four to treat any disease, it can be too late. MHA is working in four key areas: prevention; integrated services and care; early identification and intervention; and recovery. MHA has also developed online screening tools, which have been accessed by nearly one million people. Paul Gionfriddo's passion for early and effective integrated care is abundantly clear. After all, it's personal.

Colleen Kearney is the Public Policy Specialist at CT Nonprofits. She is a graduate of Eastern Ct State University and holds a Master's degree in Public Administration for Florida Gulf Coast University. Colleen provides advocacy and support to the Behavioral Health and Children & Youth Services Sectors.

Capital Campaigns In A Crowdfunding World

By Emma Palzere-Rae, Safe Futures

We are a conduit to change the world, said Sharon Danosky, whose enthusiasm for philanthropy caught the attention of her audience of nonprofit directors. ***Enthusiasm gives us the ability to change the world with each campaign.*** And so the session *Capital Campaigns in a Crowdfunding World* began. The similarities and differences between capital campaigns and crowdfunding were clearly laid out. Each has their benefits and uses, but one doesn't replace the other.

With every campaign, the objective is to raise funds in a structured manner. They each require preparation and the necessary elements of a story to tell, people to ask, and volunteers to participate. Both can exceed goals, or fail miserably. Both take a lot of planning and hard work. Success can come from using the right type of campaign – capital or crowdfunding – at the right time.

Among the primary differences between the two types of campaigns is that capital campaigns raise significant capital versus the specific purpose funds of a crowdfunding campaign. In other words, fewer gifts of larger amounts versus lots of gifts that total a significant sum.

When choosing what type of campaign to use, capital or crowdfunding, it's also helpful to think about the donor base and which approach will work best for each donor. Naturally, generational differences play a role here. There is a strong case for doing feasibility studies before any major campaign because there is value in the process alone: at the end of the study, the organization has a prepared case statement and has identified and engaged donors.

In addition to outlining the features of each type of ask, Ms. Danosky also shared best practices to using both types successfully. The two methods don't need to be exclusive – the last 20% of a capital campaign can come from a crowdfunding approach, getting many small gifts to close the gap.

With many curious about new 'social' ways to raise money, this clear, well-organized workshop provided excellent information and tools to analyze which type of campaign to use to maximize results -- and ultimately have the greatest impact. And when that happens, 'us & them' becomes 'we' and a difference is made in our world—enthusiastically.

Emma Palzere-Rae is the Director of Development & Communications at ***Safe Futures*** *in New London. Safe Futures saves lives, restores hope and changes the future for those impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault in Southeastern CT. Ms. Palzere-Rae is also a produced playwright specializing in one-woman plays and historical theater.*

Crafting the Online Ask: A Donor-Driven Model

By Amy Albert, Middlesex Habitat for Humanity

Crafting the Online Ask, the conference session hosted by Rob Leighton, Principal at **iMission Partners**, was an engaging and enlightening workshop where we learned the tricks of the trade on how to specifically fine tune an 'ask' using webpages that streamline the 'give'. Your Website, the online 'ask' tool, should ideally be a mobile responsive one, containing Amazon-like one-click components to make it easy to donate.

An example of a Website that makes giving easy is one that offers donors a choice of small amounts to specific areas before it asks for personal or transactional information. This method helps the donor decide quickly and commit before the hurdles of what-is-your-expiration date appear. Deciding quickly and committing are important because it is the urgency of the need that calls someone to action. Examples such as "Today your gift will ..." make it easy for donors to get instant gratification for their altruism.

If you want your donors to act on the impulse to donate, their financial impact should be clearly communicated. They want to know how their money will be used and how soon. The multiplier-model is the secret to exponential growth in giving. If donors know they are giving to a cause that has momentum and that their funds will be matched, it is the same effect as a 50% off coupon. A donor will feel that they were smarter and more efficient with their choice of how to contribute their money.

Asking for an initial small donation of even $5 helps an organization determine if someone will donate, and with enough thank yous and proper stewardship, whether they are able to be converted into long-term donors.

Ultimately, the successful online ask maximizes a high-conversion Website with an engaging landing page and timely choices of where the donor's money can go (almost like a shopping bag), with the checkout coming last. The chances of one time donations are high, and the pot-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel is to convert one-time donors to recurring donors, which the proper Website makes very simple and easy. Donors choose the amount, how often, and where the money will go, and your organization takes off.

*Amy Albert is the Development Manager for **Middlesex Habitat for Humanity in Cromwell**, CT. She is an early adopter of new technologies and is particularly interested in the way online giving will change fundraising in the future.*

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

TO OUR CONFERENCE GIFT DRAWING WINNERS

Carlyn Arruda, MARCH, Inc.

William Casali, STAR, Inc.

Suzi Craig, Mental Health CT

Verla Michel, Community Solutions, Inc.

Timothy Peiffer, Community Partners in Action, Inc.

Lynn Warner, Options Unlimited

Discover Your Next 1000 Donors

A Different Kind of CPD Training

A sustainable future for every nonprofit requires the supporter base to grow fast enough and large enough to make a real difference in available resources. The good news is that all levels of charitable giving are growing, including major gifts as well as crowdfunding and peer-to-peer fundraising.

However, with changes in technology, demographics, and donor expectations a new playbook is needed to succeed.

Starting in February 2016, CT Nonprofits will launch an innovative training initiative that helps nonprofits combine information technology, marketing, and strategy to achieve fundraising and advocacy goals. This initiative will blend collaborative work sessions at the CT Nonprofit Center with online, on-demand classes.

"What we heard from our members is that they really benefit from the personal exchanges that happen here at the Center," says Karen Maciorowski, CFO/COO of CT Nonprofits. "But they also want more in-depth trainings that can fit into their very busy schedules. Courses coupling online, on-demand classes with face-to-face collaboration satisfy both sets of our members needs."

CT Nonprofits has invested in state-of-the-art technology over the past year, and will be leveraging this technology to support this initiative. They've partnered with **iMission Institute** to create and deliver the course. iMission Institute is a Connecticut benefit corporation dedicated to nonprofit training in the connected age.

In the first course, ***Discovering Your Next 1000 Donors***, nonprofit staff and board members learn a proven game-changing engagement process. Course participants use both online and offline tactics to bring more visitors into their communities, and then learn to move them to become donors and advocates.

This course includes 3 two-hour working sessions in February and March, and a series of short online classes including ***The ABCs of Online Donor Targeting***, ***The Essentials of Nonprofit Branding***, ***Crafting the First Ask***, and ***Calculating Engagement ROI***. With a step-by-step approach, course participants build and launch their own online engagement campaign.

Later in 2016, two other courses utilizing this innovative model will be offered. ***Building Your Nonprofit's Social Networks - Online and Offline*** in April and May, and ***Board Orientation & Development in the Connected Age*** in the Fall of 2016.

"With technology, we all are discovering new, more effective ways to help nonprofit staff and boards build capacity," says Rob Leighton, executive director of the iMission Institute. "Our partnership with CT Nonprofits will help its members to move forward in these challenging times."

Register for Discovering Your Next 1000 Donors today!

Looking for Grant Money? Ten Steps to Help You Gain Funds

By Jason Chmura, Society for Nonprofit Organizations

How can I find a grant to help fund my organization's work? This is the question we hear most often at the Society for Nonprofits. We've honed our answer into 10 steps that will help you build a strong grant seeking program:

1. Research funders to find one whose mission matches that of your organization. A good way to start is with **GrantStation**, an online service that provides tools to help you find grant sources and write winning grant proposals. As a **member of CT Nonprofits**, you can join the Society for Nonprofit Organizations (SNPO) for only $35/year. Membership with the SNPO provides free access to GrantStation, (a $599/year value) with instant access to over 5,500 grant makers via the Find-a-Funder searchable database.

2. After you've narrowed your search to the funder whose mission aligns best with yours, find out all you can about that grant maker. Ask your board members if they have any insider knowledge or contacts that can give you an edge. The more research you can do, the better. Study the funder's Website, annual report, and information about past grantees.

3. Get in touch with someone at the granting agency. If one of your board or staff members knows someone there, use that contact. Otherwise, you should be able to find contact information either through GrantStation or on the funder's Website. Call the contact person and ask some specific questions. Make sure your queries show that you've read all the information on the funder's Website and are looking for another depth of knowledge. Keep the conversation short and friendly. This step assures you'll have an ally later during the funder's decision-making process, which will be invaluable.

4. Read the grant application thoroughly. It is vital that you follow the directions to the letter. It's at this step that the bulk of grant applications get tossed in the rejection bin – simply because grantees asked for the wrong thing, in the wrong way, or at the wrong time.

5. Make a case for why the grant maker should fund your proposal. Don't look at the proposal as a way to present your needs but, rather, to show how you can help meet the funder's needs. Looking at it from the perspective of those at the funding agency, help them imagine the wonderful results their gift to you will bring. Show them how giving to your organization will help them make an impact on society. That's their primary purpose, and if you can help them reach that goal, they'll be eager to fund you.

6. Ask all your staff members for their input into the proposal. The personal knowledge and passion they can bring to the process will be more valuable than what any proposal writer can provide. Grant proposal writers can be helpful, but never turn the project over solely to them. Instead, treat them as a member of a strategic proposal writing team.

7. When crafting the proposal, write clearly, without jargon. Begin your proposal with a straightforward, powerful summary of what you hope to do to help the funder make an impact. Don't bury the message in later pages of the application. Spend time honing that message so it's compelling and impossible to miss. That's your ace in the hole.

8. Have as many people as possible proofread your grant proposal. By the time you've finished writing it, you're probably too close to it to catch all the small mistakes and typos that have inevitably crept in. It would be a shame to lose a grant because of sloppy editing and proofing (it happens every day). Have your staff and board members ask their friends and family to read over the proposal. Your spouse and even your children may be the ones to catch overlooked misspellings and errant punctuation that would land your proposal in the "no" pile.

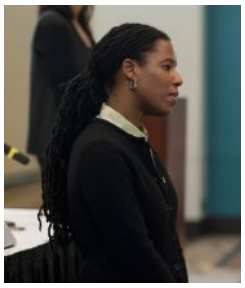
9. Say thank you. Whether your proposal is accepted or not, contact the grantor to express your gratitude for being considered. Find ways to convey your appreciation not just once but many times, in many different ways. If your application is rejected, in addition to thanking the funder, ask what you can do to improve your chances of receiving a grant next time.

10. Look beyond grants. If grants are your only source of income, plan now to add another source. Karen Eber Davis, who writes a column ("Your Ingenious Nonprofit") for *Nonprofit World*, notes that there are seven streams of income for nonprofits: grants, corporate funding, in-kind gifts, earned mission-related income, donations from individuals, government funding, and unrelated business income. By exploring all of these options, your nonprofit can gain a stronger financial foothold to achieve its goals and fulfill its mission.

Jason Chmura is the Membership Director for SNPO. You can reach him at jchmura@snpo.org.

Love the Ones You're With: Cultivating New Leaders With Familiar Faces

By Alexandrea Papp, Mental Health Connecticut



> ***"...the ability to positively influence groups of people to achieve shared goals."***

Meghan Lowney and Nicole Lindsay of ZOOM Foundation's interactive session titled, *Next Generation Leadership: The Future is Now*, sought to reach out to both senior and emerging agency leaders to strategically develop their own leadership skills and opportunities, as well as those of the agency as a whole.

Nicole Lindsay and Meghan Lowney

Leadership was defined as the ability to positively influence groups of people to achieve shared goals. There are two types of leaders—emerging and senior—and both types play important roles in helping to develop an organization's leadership talent pool. Too often, high-level leaders are focused on succession planning rather than sustainability and developing the next generation of leaders. It is the responsibility of everyone in an agency to carry the agency forward, not just those in positions of power.

Love the Ones You're With

Meghan and Nicole proposed a call to action to foster the leadership development of our current staff and ourselves. This means creating and prioritizing real opportunities for leadership development above learning in the field through trial and error. Participants were asked to consider an experience that was critical to their growth as a leader or a time that they helped another person develop as a leader. It's those experiences that contribute to an agency's success.

On an organizational level, it is important for senior leaders to implement plans for developing their current staff into leaders, and for emerging leaders to learn to better manage themselves and create opportunities to improve their own leadership skills. There are a number of recommendations for doing this. These include:

1. Familiarizing yourself with the talents of each team member
2. Encouraging everyone in the organization to have a valued voice and responsibility
3. Remaining accountable to the agency's strategic plan
4. Ensuring individual goals align with the agency's strategic plan
5. Providing additional growth opportunities and challenging assignments to high-potential staff
6. Asking for and then acting on feedback from others
7. Seeking opportunities for "stretch" assignments to showcase your own growth

The session wrapped up with a video by Box of Crayons titled, ***The Alchemy of Great Work***. The video was an illustration of the formula for doing great work and avoiding a work rut, which is to have Focus, Courage, and Resilience.

With the discussions and tools experienced in this session, I left with revived plans for ensuring the continuity of effective leadership within our agency, and I suspect that others had the same experience.

*Alexandrea Papp is the Director of Employment and Education Services at Mental Health Connecticut, a statewide nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve mental health for all Connecticut Residents. For more go to: **www.mhconn.org**.*

New Ideas: Tools for Discovery and Implementation

By Sedrick Miles, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

Think of one word that describes the state of your nonprofit. Anne Yurasek began her session, *New Ideas: Tools for Discovery & Implementation,* predicting that the answers would be as varied as the goals of the nonprofits represented in the room. She was correct in her prediction. Exciting, competitive, lean, saturation, diverse, in transition… These were some of the responses from the audience about the current state of their organizations. Yurasek confirmed the audience by explaining how there has not been a moment in the history of nonprofits that has been more disruptive.

"Our nonprofit environment is changing quickly and this can be exciting or very challenging and difficult. Disruption can come in a range of forms, from the 2008 economic crisis to the social media revolution," said Yurasek.

The session was framed by an explanation of the two types of responses organizations have when facing moments of disruption in the sector. Organizations can respond as Attackers: inventive, creative and open to new processes; or as Incumbents: large, process driven, and unbothered by trends.

What are the other differences in these two types of responses to social sector disruptions? Incumbents are organizations that are great at making incremental changes, but spend a lot of time defending themselves against change. Attackers, however, frequently try new ideas, and prefer to be on the offense by responding to future possibilities. For organizations who want to move from being incumbent-like to being on the offense and more innovative, the key is to not wait too long to try something new! The quickest way to innovation is to capitalize on the connective nature of ideas, or the "adjacent possible." This is a reference to the theory by biologist Stuart Kauffman which describes the adjacent possible as "the space inhabited by *what could be* based on *what currently is*."

What does this mean for nonprofits? Organizations who want to truly innovate must do two things to build their capacity for new ideas beginning with breaking down departmental silos. Silos make organizations risk averse and afraid to fail. Secondly, nonprofits must invest in employees and board members that challenge limitations. By making these changes, organizations make it easier to see what's possible by creating an open environment that fosters innovation.

Sedrick Miles is the Knowledge Management Officer with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Learn more about the foundation ***here.***

From the Nonprofit Board Chair Seat

Are you a nonprofit Board Chair who has a board development or management issue, concern or challenge keeping you up at night (and who doesn't)? Let me know. I'll try to provide a response that can help you sleep better. So, please, send your questions to: **mikeb@bwbsolutions.com**. This on-going column is dedicated to questions and answers to simple and complex nonprofit governance challenges.

Question: On-boarding appears to be the new language referring to how a board should introduce new board members to their jobs. What's the thinking about what should happen in "on-boarding"?

Answer: Yes indeed, on-boarding has become the latest buzz-word for what many of us older folks refer to as board orientation. Language aside, it is important to do something to orient new board members to their new positions.
One hint: attending their first board meeting the day their term begins is not the singular best approach, albeit commonly practiced, for introducing a new board member to the board.

The work of board members is transactional (discussions, decisions, actions) and relational (the fuel that makes transactions comfortable and effective). A board orientation should be about building relationships as much as is about providing the beneficial information for being an effective board member.

Core to effective on-boarding, consider having the following on-boarding tools in-place:

A meet-and-greet event where current board members meet incoming board members with some formal and some informal activities.

A mentoring program that matches current board members to incoming board members.

A board manual that includes ***Organizational details such as:***

- Theory of Change, Mission, Values
- Strategies and Goals Program Overview
- Current Budget
- Current Year/Quarter Budget vs Actual
- Current Year/Quarter Profit/Loss

Board details such as:

- List of Board Members
- Board Agenda and Board Reports
- Board Meeting Rules of Order and calendar of meetings
- 6-months Board Minutes

Operational forms such as:

- Conflict of Interest Statement
- Board responsibilities statement (including amount $ to give)

Organizing documents such as:

- Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, IRS letter, recent Tax Return
- D & O and Commercial liability insurance, investment, diversity, whistleblowing and related risk management policies

The formal "on-boarding" new member session should be just that: formally structured to ensure that an incoming board member will become knowledgeable and even conversant in the culture and ways of the board and the nonprofit. Do be sure to **incorporate learning styles effectively** using all the senses (yes, food matters).

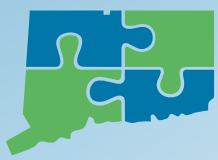
While it is traditional to have the nonprofit's exec/CEO and the board chair or the governance committee chair conduct the on-boarding event, experience indicates that having as many members of the rest of the board as well as senior staff, and even programming staff presenting their stories, will provide the new board member with a warmer welcome and an added depth and insight that might not otherwise be present with just two or three presenters.

To think more about designing and conducting a board orientation, **BoardSource** offers the title: *Getting on Board with Effective Orientation*. You might also, instead of making lots of paper copies of all the materials board members will need both for orientation and continued transactions, consider instead going "live" and either creating or subscribing to services like **Board Effect** saving trees and reducing members' needs to carry around reams of paper to do their jobs.

The first principle of on-boarding—do it. Make the introduction to your new board members an experience that will serve them throughout their tenure.

*Mike Burns is a partner in BWB Solutions. He writes the **Nonprofit Board Crisis** blog and is adept at helping nonprofits develop solutions to internal challenges (especially board/CEO) and assess their readiness for mergers and revenue generating ventures.*

Welcome to our newest members!



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION of NONPROFITS

...to serve, strengthen and support Connecticut's nonprofit community.

New Members

Advocacy Unlimited, Inc.

Alliance Francaise de Hartford, Inc.

Board of Management of Harrybrooke Park

CT Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Connecticut Experiential Learning Center

Connecticut Farmland Trust

Connecticut Odyssey of the Mind

Greater New Britain Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Inc.

Hartford. Health. Works., Inc.

Health Equity Solutions

Hope After Loss

Housatonic Youth Service Bureau

Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Hartford

Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven

Mandell Jewish Community Center

New England Science and Sailing

Scranton Academy for Financial Education

Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition

St. Brigid School

Stamford Peace Basketball Club

The Discovery Center

New Associate Members

Automation, Inc.

BELIMO Aircontrols, Inc.

Best Practice Energy, LLC

Veterans Helping Veterans, LLC

PREFERRED VENDOR SERVICES OF CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF NONPROFITS

Being a member of CT Nonprofits gives you access to the combined buying power of more than 500 nonprofit organizations.

For more information on our products, preferred vendor services & membership with CT Nonprofits, please contact Joshua Lipshitz at jlipshitz@ctnonprofits.org or 860.525.5080 x1014.

UST Save Money. Build Assets.

People's United Insurance Agency
A subsidiary of People's United Bank

ebenefits group
employee benefits made easy

FoodSource plus
Food & Supply Specialists

IP Genie

DonorPerfect
Fundraising Software

NTEN
Nonprofit Technology Network

MONITOR
LIABILITY MANAGERS, LLC
A BERKLEY COMPANY

SECURE ENERGY
what's your strategy?

ACT GROUP

SOCIETY for NONPROFITS

Workers' Compensation trust®

motorlease

clean choice

Here are just a couple of the great trainings we've got planned...

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH PROSPECTS AND DONORS

January 26, 2016 | 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | CT Nonprofits, Hartford

GETTING YOUR NEXT 1,000 DONORS

Learn how your nonprofit can build, launch, and manage a tech-powered new donor acquisition process. With a step-by-step approach that combines online and on-demand learning, as well as face-to-face coaching, CT Nonprofit's ***Getting Your Next 1000 Donors*** *series will help you make a lasting impact on your organization!*

Class I: Strategic Overview
February 10 | 9:30 am – 12:00 pm | CT Nonprofits, Hartford
*Online Lessons 1-8 – Moving Online Visitors to Donor Prospects
*Online Office Hours: 2/17, 2/24, 3/2 | 9:30-10:30 am

Class II: Coaching and Peer-to-Peer Collaboration
March 9 | 9:30 am – 12:00 pm | CT Nonprofits, Hartford
*Online Lessons 9-16 – Moving Prospects to Donors
*Online Office Hours: 3/16, 3/23

Class III: Launching Your Engagement Funnel
March 30 | 9:30 am – 12:00 pm | CT Nonprofits, Hartford

To view upcoming tranings, register online or download a registration form, visit us at **www.ctnonprofits.org**

Check out all of our Winter 2016 Trainings online!

CPD
CT NONPROFITS · CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

75 Charter Oak Avenue, Suite 1-100
Hartford, CT 06106
Tel: 860.525.5080
Fax: 860.525.5088
www.ctnonprofits.org