

**KRONKOSKY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION  
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

**TOPIC:** Organizational Effectiveness

**DATE:** June 27, 2002

**PREPARED BY:** Eusebio Diaz, Grant Manager

**PARTICIPANTS**

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**Invited Agency Representatives**

- Chris Sinick San Antonio Children's Museum
- Tony Hargrove Ella Austin Community Center
- Elinor Forland Child Advocates San Antonio
- Mark Richter San Antonio Pocket Opera
- Mary Bullock San Antonio Kids Exchange
- James Bias Humane Society/SPCA Bexar County
- Deborah Kruciak Rainbow House
- Carl Pfeifer House of Neighborly Service

**Foundation Staff**

Palmer Moe	Executive Director
TomMcGuire	Grants Manager
Eusebio Diaz	Grants Manager

**PURPOSE**

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The purpose of this roundtable was to discuss current and ongoing organization effectiveness issues pertaining to non-profit organizations, in an attempt to gain a better understanding of these issues, and how they impact these organizations. Specifically, the purpose was to define the attributes of well-run organizations, to identify barriers to improving organization effectiveness, and to suggest ways to improve a non-profit organization's effectiveness.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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- Child Advocates San Antonio (CASA) provides court appointed sponsors for children to make recommendations to the court so that a determination can be made that takes the child's best interest into consideration.
- San Antonio Children's Museum provides exhibits and interactive activities for children.
- San Antonio Pocket Opera provides operatic programs in San Antonio.
- San Antonio Kid's Exchange provides sponsored visitation and programs for parents going through a divorce.

- Rainbow House provides residential services for mentally and physically disabled adults.
- Humane Society provides for the adoption of cats and dogs and support for responsible pet ownership.
- Ella Austin Community Center provides various programs for low-income children and elderly.
- House of Neighborly Services provides multiple services to low-income families as well as child care services.

## **ISSUES AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

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- For-profit organizations have taken an increased interest in fields that have been traditionally dominated by non-profit organizations, placing added pressure on the non-profit organization to become more efficient and competitive.
- Competition for government funding has intensified, as there are more organizations competing for fewer dollars.
- Non-profit organizations must deal with an overall lack of infrastructure support, such as computer resources, training, and skills development that are essential in establishing an efficient organization.
- Growth within the non-profit organization usually means increased revenue, increased services provided, and increased service dollars having to be administered; all without additional support to administrate these activities.
- Professional skill development, such as time management and motivation, to become effective administrators is often lacking. Administrators rarely receive mentoring, training and executive guidance on how to develop subordinate staff.
- Hiring and retention of quality staff.
- Recruiting and retaining an effective, working Board of Directors.

## **OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

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### **Staff development**

- Board members and Executive Directors need to support staff development.
- Training not only helps keep staff skills sharp, but also shows the staff person that the organization is investing in them.
- Staff development is both an individual and Executive Director responsibility.
- Grant support for Capacity Building, to include staff training, is essential for the long-term growth and success of the organization.

### **Staffing issues**

- The Board and Executive Director need to agree on staffing.
- Recruiting, hiring and retention of staff requires dedication and focus on the part of the Executive Director, often taking up a significant part of their time.
- Staff cross training is essential as most non-profit staff positions are only one deep in knowledge and experience.

- Non-profits are constantly competing with government agencies for the retention of quality staff.
- Executive Directors have to find innovative incentives for retaining quality staff.
- Loss of a key staff member negatively impacts productivity.
- It is getting harder to find quality applicants for non-profit staff positions.
- Internal staff development is important, as it will lessen the impact of someone leaving the organization.
- Executive Directors must ensure staff expectations are known and standards are enforced to meet these expectations.
- Some Executive Directors feel that their organization is a training base for individuals who are seeking to gain experience in order to move on to government jobs that offer higher pay and better benefits.
- Finding potential staff applicants that are dedicated to the mission and not to watching the clock is a real challenge.

### **Interns and Volunteers**

- Many organizations use non-compensated college and high school interns for research and projects.
- Some organizations use college and high school interns that receive compensation from third-party programs.
- Because of the types of services provided, such as those requiring the establishment of trust and rapport with a client, not all organizations are able to use interns.
- Some organizations find that needs are better met through the use of volunteers.

### **Development**

- Non-profit organization administrative support requires financial support.
- Systems need to be in place to allow an organization to achieve a level of excellence.
- Funding from government sources for nonprofits can be problematic because cash reimbursement gets to be a problem—services are provided and money is spent on a program, but it can take up to 60 days to get reimbursed.
- Funding from government sources is getting more and more difficult because they are often competitors for the same grant that they are asking Requests for Proposals.
- Funding for computers, copy machines, printers, phone systems and the accessories required for effective operations is extremely hard to find.
- It is a challenge to build up a three-month reserve of operating expenses when funding agencies require those funds to be expended on other projects before they will consider funding.
- Some Executive Directors feel that nonprofit organizations are still being managed the way they were in the 1940's and 1950's, and that help is needed to push for new trends, such as budgeting for supplies and incidentals needed for the running of an organization.

## **BOARD DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Board Effectiveness**

- Board members need to be included in all aspects of training that are key in accomplishing the organization's mission.
- Board members need to know how to read and use financial reports.
- In prospecting new board members, look for individuals who have a specialty to offer to staff support and development, such as marketing directors, CEO's, and CFO's.

### **Board Retreat**

- Board retreats provide a time for focusing on the organization's strategic plan.
- Board member time constraints impact some organization's ability to have board retreats.
- Board retreats with boards from like organizations have been effective.
- Not all organizations feel that a board retreat is necessary.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Continuing Education**

- Developing Executive Directors for the arts is difficult.
- Executive Director development courses do not teach basic survival skills.
- Continuing education for Executive Directors is essential for the growth of the individual and the health of the organization.
- Executive Director mentoring and coaching programs for new Executive Directors would be helpful.
- Training in cutting edge information and practices is needed in order to be able to run an organization effectively.

### **Mentoring and peer support**

- Various types of Executive Director network meetings provide a forum to discuss common issues.
  - Access to mentors would provide a resource to obtain advice and counsel on a variety of topics that Executive Directors are exposed to on a daily basis.
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