BUILDING BETTER NONPROFITS:
THE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS INITIATIVE

The Greater New Orleans Foundation’s Organizational Effectiveness Initiative recently released its first Needs Scan Report, an in-depth look at the health of the nonprofit sector in the Greater New Orleans area. Based on survey results from 135 nonprofit organizations, the report outlines the sector’s challenges and needs while providing insights for addressing them.

“Of all organizational effectiveness issues in need of improvement, fundraising is one of the most critical. Nonprofits need to be able to raise sufficient funds to meet their mission and support their programs,” said Joann Ricci, GNOF’s vice president of programs.

The report found that fundraising is a challenge for many nonprofit organizations. One-third of the respondents have less than a three-month reserve of rainy day funds. Of these, approximately 17% have less than two months’ worth, which is well below institutional donors’ three-month reserve requirements.

The report also found that many nonprofits lack the diversified funding necessary to build a sustainable financial future. Additionally, the report indicates that few nonprofits have established long-term donor relationships.

“Nonprofits need to develop a strong donor base and a sound strategy to address their funding needs,” said Ricci. “This will allow them to have a stable financial base to support their programs.”

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CREATING A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO REVITALIZATION

In some communities, residents may have access to affordable housing, but there is a scarcity of decent-paying jobs. Conversely, in high opportunity areas, there may be jobs, but no access to affordable housing. Compounding the problem is inadequate transportation. The Greater New Orleans Foundation and the Ford Foundation are working together to address these challenges holistically to make ours a vibrant region for all.

Taehwe Collins prefers to ride the light rail instead of driving. She lives in The Muses neighborhood, a vibrant community just north of the city’s central business district. She says the light rail has made her commute easier and has helped her save money. She no longer has to worry about finding parking or dealing with traffic.

“Light rail is a great way to get around,” Collins said. “It’s fast and convenient.”

The Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF) and the Ford Foundation have partnered to create a comprehensive regional transportation plan for the Greater New Orleans area. The plan includes improving existing transit systems, such as the light rail, and developing new ones, such as a high-speed rail system.

“The goal is to create a system that is accessible to all residents, regardless of income or location,” said Rachel Dilworth, executive vice president of CPEX.

One organization working to make that a reality is Transport for NOLA, one of the first Met Ops grants. Fueled by a group of transit riders, planners, engineers, and designers, they will create a comprehensive regional transportation plan based on equity, accessibility, and best practices. “We want to see a world-class transit system for New Orleans that is safe, affordable, efficient, and equitable,” said Jeff Schwartz, head of the Transportation for NOLA.

The Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) has also received a Met Op grant for its project, the Connect Coalition. The coalition brings together many organizations whose missions focus on transit, including Transport for NOLA, which will research best practices and advocate for better transit systems for the New Orleans area.

“Transportation access is going to be a major job opportunity and economic development,” said Rachel Dilworth, executive vice president of CPEX.

LONDON! NO, NEW ORLEANS—What if New Orleans had a world-class transit system? Without going underground, light rail could be added to an expanded system of buses and streetcars to connect our region with greatly improved access and efficiency. European transit systems such as the London Underground inspired Jeff Schwartz of Transport for NOLA to envision a system that would deliver the same quality for the New Orleans metropolitan area—all while staying above ground.
Edwin Riley was a commercial fisherman until the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico last year wreaked havoc on his community and livelihood. Since then, he has been receiving assistance from Catholic Charities at the oil spill relief center at St. Thomas Catholic Church in Plaquemines Parish. “They’ve been here since the oil spill, helping a lot of commercial fishermen,” said Riley.

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans and Catholic Charities Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux are both recipients of grants from the Greater New Orleans Foundation’s Coastal Communities Fund. The Fund was created after an anonymous donor established the $20 million Fund for Gulf Communities through the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors to assist people living in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas who are still struggling in the wake of the oil spill. The Greater New Orleans Foundation is responsible for granting $5 million of the $20 million to nonprofit organizations providing services to residents within Louisiana’s coastal communities who were affected by the oil spill.

“Regional leaders like the Greater New Orleans Foundation have a deep knowledge of communities throughout the region and a history of trusted, effective grantmaking at the neighborhood level. Their on-the-ground experience and relationships make it possible to identify and support local groups that are addressing problems in their communities in the wake of the region’s economic challenges,” said Amy Holmes, a senior philanthropic advisor at Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

“All the grants from the Coastal Communities Fund are helping individuals and families return to financial, emotional, and physical stability from the lingering effects of the oil spill,” said Marco Cocito-Monoc, director of regional initiatives at the Greater New Orleans Foundation.

For a list of all the grants from the Coastal Communities Fund, visit www.gnof.org.

When asked what he likes most about teaching, José Guadarrama finds it difficult to choose. “I love seeing my kids so eager to share an answer that they know to be right after much practice. I love hearing my kids encourage each other when confronted by a challenge. I love the relationship that is formed through teaching and learning.”

Guadarrama draws upon the training he received from Teach for America every day in his job at John Dibert Community School in Mid-City. Teacher training through Teach for America has received support from the Chevron Energy for Learning Fund at the Greater New Orleans Foundation. Chevron has also used the fund to support educational initiatives through the Greater New Orleans Foundation’s IMPACT program, which provides grants to help the “best of the best” area nonprofits to strengthen and continue their programs in a difficult economic climate.

“GNOF provides an abundance of expertise and guidance,” said Karen Rawls, Chevron’s public and government affairs representative for the Gulf of Mexico business unit. “They are on the ground and know the actual needs of the community and really do an impeccable job of matching community needs to the supporting corporations and organizations to bridge those gaps. GNOF provides a pipeline to the educational and training programs that are central to building capacity and sustaining long-term economic development.”

Sign up for our email newsletter at www.gnof.org/email-newsletter-sign-up to learn more about our IMPACT program and other Foundation news.
Meet Lafayette

Giving While Living stars Lafayette LeChat, the French Quarter cat. Modeled after a children’s storybook, but intended for adults, Giving While Living follows Lafayette and his fat-cat lawyer friend Claude as they do all their favorite New Orleans activities in one day. In between munching on po’boys, riding the streetcar, and dancing in a second line, Claude teaches Lafayette about all the various ways he can make the gift of a lifetime to the city he loves.

To order a copy of the Foundation’s newest book, Giving While Living, email askLafayette@gnof.org or call 504-598-4663.

KATHLEEN MOORE VICK

Though her work and studies took her to Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C., Kathleen Moore Vick always returned to New Orleans. “She had a deep interest in New Orleans and Louisiana—New Orleans in particular,” said Jerome Reso Jr. of Baldwin & Haspel, who was Mrs. Vick’s friend Claude as they do all their favorite New Orleans activities in one day. In between munching on po’boys, riding the streetcar, and dancing in a second line, Claude teaches Lafayette about all the different ways he can make the gift of a lifetime to the city he loves. To order a copy of the Foundation’s newest book, Giving While Living, email askLafayette@gnof.org or call 504-598-4663.

LEAVING A LEGACY

ERNA DEIGLMAYR

Erna Deiglmayr has spent her life helping those around her. And, at 98 years, she continues to do just that. A member of the Foundation’s 1923 Legacy Society, Erna has pledged her support to helping the citizens of New Orleans, even after she’s gone.

Erna has always had a passion for helping others, and when the Nazis invaded her home country of Belgium in 1940, this passion was stoked even more. Erna was a 27-year-old social worker with the Belgian employment office in Antwerp. She soon learned that the job afforded her many opportunities to work with the Belgian Resistance. “You didn’t call it the Resistance back then,” Erna explains. “You knew it right away. You don’t talk, you don’t write things down.” Throughout the war, Erna escorted hundreds of children from occupied Antwerp to the relative safety of rural farm families. When one family wouldn’t take a sickly two-year-old girl named Josette, Erna took her in and cared for the girl for five years, until her parents reclaimed her after the war. Erna still has a framed photo of Josette displayed prominently in her apartment.

Near the end of the war, Erna went to Allied-occupied Germany to work in “doubled-peninsula” camps. These camps housed tens of thousands of refugees—survivors of concentration camps and labor camps, who had been forcibly uprooted from across Europe, and whose numbers included many orphans. They were displaced, distrustful, and physically and emotionally traumatized. Those from Eastern Europe could not safely return to their now Soviet-occupied home countries.

Erna worked long hours to improve the orphans’ lives in any way she could, including organizing schools and recreational activities for them.

Erna met her best friend, Eleanor “Bou” Ellis of New Orleans, during this time. It was because of Bou that Erna ended up in New Orleans.

“I went to several universities,” said Erna. “I didn’t wait for an answer from Taliesin, I just went.” Erna moved to New Orleans in 1952. She studied social work and political science at Tulane and continued to work for various social service agencies until she retired in her sixties. She’s traveled the world and kept in touch with friends from all over. A few years ago, she got a long letter from Josette, who, she learned, was happy, healthy, married, and still living in Belgium.

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WAYNE & BARBARA AMEDEE

For artist Wayne Amedee and his wife Barbara, philanthropy is very important. Longtime residents of New Orleans, Wayne and Barbara have been involved with the Greater New Orleans Foundation for many years. They are fundholders and members of the Foundation’s 1923 Legacy Society, which honors those individuals who have established a planned gift either to or through the Foundation. As members of the 1923 Society, the Amedees receive many benefits, including a listing in our annual report and invitations to special events—as well as professional advice and personalized services.

Their love of New Orleans, as well as a feeling of generosity, motivated them to establish their gift, which they set up through a bequest in their will. “We don’t have children,” Wayne explained, “and we felt it best to remember the Foundation because they do such incredible community work.”

“The Greater New Orleans Foundation is a great resource and a natural vehicle to do what Mrs. Vick wanted to do,” said Mr. Reso.

“The Greater New Orleans Foundation can help you leave a legacy and become a member of the 1923 Legacy Society, please contact VP for Development Alice Parkerson at 504-598-1291 or alice@gnof.org.

Requests are easy to set up, and are one of the most popular planned gifts to establish—adding a bequest to your will only takes a few sentences. The Amedees believe that philanthropy is important no matter where you live. “With the Greater New Orleans Foundation, we focus on our local community because we live here and we love it here,” Wayne explained. “We love the Foundation because of the work they do, and we feel strongly about supporting the work that they do, even when we’re not here.”

By setting up a planned gift with the Greater New Orleans Foundation, the Amedees can be sure that their passions, which include feeding the hungry and supporting the arts, will be fulfilled long after they’re gone. When asked how it felt to establish a planned gift, Wayne explained, “You don’t put up a billboard or call all your friends, but it’s a good personal inner feeling.”
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