

GRANTMAKERS of Oregon and Southwest Washington

AN ASSOCIATION OF GRANTMAKERS INSPIRING EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY

For the New Year: 10 Tips for a Successful Board Retreat

If you are planning to start the new year with a board retreat focused on accountability or other issues, here are 10 key tips for a successful experience:

1. Plan Ahead

Take the time to fully plan your retreat, otherwise you run the risk of board members feeling like they have wasted their time. Identify one or two clear retreat objectives, and plan a detailed retreat agenda to help you achieve the objectives. Assign a few board members to serve as the retreat planning committee.

2. Seek Board Members' Input

Seek the input of board members in planning the

retreat. This will help them feel more invested in the activity and more committed to the results. An accountability self-assessment tool is one key way to gather board members' input. The planning committee can also survey or interview trustees to solicit their ideas on retreat objectives and to get a sense of the issues weighing most heavily on their minds.

3. Choose a Good Facilitator

Most successful board retreats use an outside facilitator for at least part of the time. A skilled facilitator can help board members engage in productive dialogue, explore critical issues in depth, and negotiate conflicting views. The board chair or another board member could play the role of a

facilitator, but that will prevent them from participating in the discussions and they won't have an outsider's objectivity, which can be invaluable in guiding board discussions. Look for a facilitator who has experience working with boards and is familiar with philanthropy, and be sure to involve the facilitator early in the retreat planning process.

4. Location, Location, Location

Retreats are times for board members to get away from the typical board room setting, so try to find a retreat location that is far removed from the typical board room setting. In most parts of the country you can find retreat centers located in inspiring

Continued on Page 2

Board Retreat Q&A

Q: Should we let board members bring spouses or significant others to a retreat?

A: The answer depends on the organization. Many organizations find that a board retreat can be more effective if spouses and significant others do not come along. This allows board members to focus fully on the retreat's objectives and get to know each other as a group. On the other hand, some foundations have a long tradition of involving spouses and significant others in their retreats, and find that it can enhance the important social aspects of the event.

Q: Can we pay for spouses' retreat-related travel expenses?

A: The law allows a private foundation to pay for its board members' meeting and travel expenses, including those for a board retreat, but in general a foundation may not pay for travel expenses of board members' spouses, for a retreat or any other purpose (unless the spouse is also a foundation employee or is performing necessary services for the foundation). Paying spouse travel expenses will in many cases be an act of self-dealing for a private foundation, unless the expense is treated as compensation to the foundation's managers.

Q: What is the right amount to spend on a foundation retreat?

A: Under the Tax Code, expenses related to a retreat where a private foundation considers its charitable programs and governance are considered administrative expenses that can be included in the foundation's 5 percent payout, as long as the expenses are "reasonable and necessary." (If any portion of the retreat addresses investment issues, expenses related to that part of the retreat cannot count toward the payout but can be used to offset the foundation's investment income). It can be difficult to define "reasonable and necessary," but one good rule of thumb is to ask yourself if you would feel comfortable justifying a particular expense to the IRS or seeing the expense splashed across the front page of your local newspaper. Research and document what other funders of similar size and type in your area spend on retreats, which can help you develop your budget and justify the expenses.

Source: Includes information from "Principled Planning: A Guide for Family Foundation Retreats," Council on Foundations, 2006.

Holiday Greetings

Megan and I extend our best wishes for the holidays and the new year to come. It is a privilege for us to be able to support all of you in the work you do to create better communities. We hope you enjoy this special time – a season set apart for remembering family and friends, for reflection on all that has past, for the renewal of our spirits and in hopeful anticipation for the future. May the new year be merry and bright for us all.

Joyce & Megan

Grantmaker FOCUS

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We encourage members to contribute information as short news items about new program initiatives, recent publications by their organization, personnel changes, and other items you wish to communicate to fellow members.

Please submit items to jwhite@gosw.org or by mail to Grantmakers of Oregon and Southwest Washington, P.O. Box 6381, Portland, OR 97228-6381.

Gray Family Fund announces new Environmental Education Program.

The Gray Family Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation is announcing an Environmental Education Program seeking to encourage a strong local land ethic, sustainable communities and stewardship of the natural environment by citizens throughout Oregon. The Fund is committed long term to institutionalizing a series of age appropriate experiences that build a sense of place and responsibility towards Oregon and the region. Up to \$500,000 will be available for grants in the 2008 calendar year.

The program will support four general goals:

- Strengthening and developing programs that provide outdoor experiences for youth from early childhood through grade 12;

- Creating, expanding and improving programs that connect schools with their communities and provide students with practical hands-on experience in addressing environmental issues both locally and globally;
- Creating lasting change in education systems to foster improved understanding of and interaction with our natural systems;
- Encouraging programs that connect creativity with the natural environment.

For more information on the fund, contact Lara Utman at The Oregon Community Foundation, 503.227.6846.

Retreats continued

nature-filled settings, or consider renting an historic bed & breakfast. The location need not be expensive; in many communities you can find good retreat centers with reasonable rates operated by academic institutions or other nonprofits.

5. Set Ground Rules

Setting some ground rules can help you maximize the benefits of the retreat environment. For example, you can encourage people to think creatively by borrowing some brainstorming ground rules ("There are no dumb ideas," "Don't criticize other people's ideas," etc.). To help board members truly get away from the office, consider restricting the use of cell phones, computers and/or e-mail during the retreat. Communicate the rules to everyone at the start of the retreat and keep them posted as a reminder throughout the gathering.

6. Demonstrate Support From the Top

As with most efforts, clear support from the top of the organization can make or break the success of a board retreat. The board chair should extend the official retreat invitation, and can play a key role in communicating the importance of the retreat, stressing the necessity of all board members' attendance, and committing to the retreat agenda and activities.

7. Avoid Typical Board Meeting Patterns

Since a retreat is a chance for the board to break out of the typical board meeting structure, avoid the trappings of a typical board meeting. That means you should not have a tight agenda, but one that allows flexibility to explore unexpected ideas or take the conversation in new directions. It also means you should not conduct any voting during the retreat, and should avoid the temptation to tack on a quick board meeting to take care of some business.

8. Allow Plenty of Free Time

One key goal of any good retreat is to build board relationships and camaraderie, so allow plenty of time for meals, breaks and socializing. If possible, plan a retreat lasting one or two days with an overnight stay. This can allow for an agenda-free dinner or social event, which is an ideal time for board members to relax and get to know each other in ways not possible at other times of the year.

9. Ensure Lots of Interaction

Adult learning principles stress the importance of providing people with opportunities for interaction, which is especially critical if you hope to hold your board's attention for a retreat lasting one or more days. Make sure your retreat agenda includes plenty of activities and exercises that will encourage all board members to interact with each other in creative, thought-provoking and, yes, even fun ways.

10. Follow Up

Allow adequate time at the end of the retreat to identify the next steps for addressing issues, problems or ideas identified at the retreat. Once the retreat is over, write a summary of the proceedings and the next steps, and use future board meetings to update board members on the progress made on key retreat action items.

Whether you use a board retreat to focus on accountability issues or other important aspects of your work, the retreat experience can increase your board's ability and effectiveness in advancing your organization's mission. For more information, tools and other assistance to help you plan and conduct an effective board retreat, consult the resource list on this page.

Retreat Resources

Accountability Self-Assessment Tool
GRANTMAKERS of Oregon and Southwest Washington, Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers, 2006
www.gosw.org

Principled Planning: A Guide for Corporate Grantmaker Retreats
by Elaine Gast, Council on Foundations, 2006
cof.org/files/Documents/Publications/PrincipledPlanningCorp06.pdf

Principled Planning: A Guide for Family Foundation Retreats
by Elaine Gast, Council on Foundations, 2006
cof.org/files/Documents/Publications/PrincipledPlanningFamily06.pdf

Grantmakers CALENDAR

Corporate Funders Learning Exchange—PGE Foundation
Corporate Learning Series, 3 of 3: K-12 Public Education and its Impact on Workforce Needs
Thursday, December 13, 2007
11:45 am–1:30 pm
Sponsored by PGE Foundation
World Trade Center, Portland

Corporate Funders Learning Exchange
Thursday, January 3, 2008
7:30–9:00 am
Location to be determined

Northwest Environmental Grantmakers: Oregon—Washington Funders Gathering
Friday, January 11, 2008
1:00–4:30 pm Program
Northwest Health Foundation
5:00–7:00 pm Reception
Keen, Inc., Portland

Third Thursday Program
Alliance for Justice
Thursday, January 17, 2008
9:00 am–2:00 pm
YWCA, Portland

Special Program—Philanthropy Northwest & GRANTMAKERS of Oregon and Southwest Washington
Peter Karoff, The Philanthropic Initiative
Author of “The World We Want”
Friday, February 15, 2008
11:45 am–1:30 pm
Location to be determined

SAVE THE DATE!
GRANTMAKERS Tour of Warm Springs
April 28–29, 2008

GRANTMAKERS of Oregon and Southwest Washington
2008 Regional Conference
October 15–17, 2008
Five Pines Resort
Sisters, Oregon

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

2008 National Conference
March 10–12, 2008
Palace Hotel
San Francisco, California

The nonprofit sector is built on big ideas and visions of change. Effectively implementing those changes is the hard part. GEO's 2008 national conference and 10th anniversary celebration, held in partnership with Northern California Grantmakers, will explore actions grantmakers can take to improve their support of nonprofit results and advance their visions of social change. Sessions will cover a variety of topics, including the following:

The art of “sticky” storytelling—Chip Heath, author of the best-seller *Made to Stick*, will explore ways grantmakers can effectively share the powerful stories in the field in a way that will inspire action

The power of the individual—Steps individual actors—within both foundations and nonprofits—can take to lead change.

The importance of inclusiveness—how grantmakers effectively tap into the experience and ideas of nonprofits and other stakeholders for improved results.

Philanthropy's change agenda for the next decade—what has the field accomplished over the years, and what is our vision for the future?

Registration and Hotel Information can be found on the GEO website, www.geofunders.org.

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations is pleased to offer members of GRANTMAKERS of Oregon and Southwest Washington a free year of premium membership in GEO. As a GEO premium member, you have access to their network of foundations and infrastructure groups and discounts on all GEO events. You will also be plugged in to the latest information on organizational effectiveness through GEO's e-newsletters, the more than 2000 resources on organizational effectiveness in GEO's online content database, and free copies of all GEO's publications. To learn more about GEO, visit www.geofunders.org. To take advantage of this free one-year premium membership offer, please contact Laurel Jacobsen at Jacobsen@geofunders.org. The offer is only good through December 31, 2007.

Board Business

At its Annual Meeting on November 16, 2007, the membership recognized **Kathy Bryon, Gordon Elwood Foundation** for her years of service on the GRANTMAKERS of Oregon and Southwest Washington Board of Directors.

Also recognized were **Linda Wright**, formerly of **US Bank** and **Linda Traeger**, formerly with **Equity Foundation**, both of whom resigned from the board earlier in the year. Linda Wright was a founding member of GRANTMAKERS in the 1980s. Each of them contributed substantially to the organization.

The following individuals will lead the organization in 2008:

President

Doug Stamm, Meyer Memorial Trust

Vice President

Michele Goodman, J.W. & H.M. Goodman Family Charitable Foundation

Secretary

Ray Jubitz, Jubitz Family Foundation

Treasurer

Nancy Hales, Donor Advisor, The Community Foundation of Southwest Washington

Board

Joyce Akse, The Ford Family Foundation

Jeff Anderson, The Oregon Community Foundation

Shelley Hanson, Spirit Mountain Community Fund

Bruce Kelley, The Lora L. and Martin N. Family Foundation

Alissa Keny-Guyer, Penney Family Fund

Julia Novy-Hildesley, The Lemelson Foundation

Kandis Brewer Nunn, Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation

Linda Shelk, John & Linda Shelk Foundation

Von Summers, Northwest Natural

Jodi Jordan Vaughn, The Standard

New in the Library...

The Oregon Community Foundation commissioned a report on education in Oregon and the role for philanthropy in addressing education needs. The report highlights strengths and weaknesses in Oregon education and calls on OCF and others to play a larger role in improving education. The report, “**Opportunities and Options in Oregon Education Philanthropy**,” is available on the OCF website at: www.ocf1.org/news/research_reports.html.

IRS Issues **Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Private Foundations**. The IRS has released a new compliance guide for private foundations that

provides basic and specific federal tax and regulations information such as required disclosures, activities that may jeopardize a foundation's exempt status, and resources for private foundations. The resource can be found on the IRS website.

New Grantmakers for Effective Organizations Guide. What is general operating support? Why is it important? How are grantmakers providing it? Answers to these questions and more are included in a new **General Operating Support Action Guide** by Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO), inspired by a spirited conversation that took place earlier this year on GEO's listserv. To

download a copy or order a print version, please go to <http://www.geofunders.org/generaloperatingsupport.aspx>.

Foundation Center Chronicles Rise of Direct Charitable Programs—**More Than Grantmaking: A First Look at Foundation's Direct Charitable Activities** highlights the breadth of work in which foundations are engaged and sheds light on the often overlooked non-grantmaking programs of foundations. Findings are based on results of a 2007 survey of more than 900 of the nation's 3000 largest foundations in terms of total giving. The report can be downloaded from the Gain Knowledge area of the Center's website.

What's Happening

Members of GRANTMAKERS of Oregon and Southwest Washington were recognized for their charitable contributions to communities at an October Corporate Philanthropy Awards event hosted by the Portland Business Journal. The Business Journal produced a special edition of their publication honoring giving by local corporate giving programs and corporate foundations. Honorees included GRANTMAKERS members:

Bank of America Foundation

Comcast Foundation

Intel and Intel Foundation

Kaiser Permanente Northwest

Legacy Health Systems

Nike and Nike Foundation

Pacific Power

PGE and PGE Foundation

Regence Blue Cross Blue Shield of Oregon

The Register-Guard and Baker Family Foundation

The Standard and The Standard Charitable Foundation

Union Bank of California

US Bank and US Bancorp Foundation

The **M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust** announces the appointment of **Terry L. Stokesbary** to the position Senior Program Director for Enrichment Initiatives. In his new role Mr. Stokesbary will direct, coordinate, and facilitate the creation of initiatives that enrich the effectiveness of non-profit institutions and organizations and their leaders. Current Trust initiatives include capacity building programs, development seminars, and leadership development.

The **Northwest Health Foundation** has selected **Trevor Hall, PsyD**, an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics at Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) and director of the Neuropsychology Program at OHSU's Child Development and Rehabilitation Center, as the first

recipient of the Mark O. Hatfield Research Fellowship. The fellowship program was established in 2005 to honor the legacy of former U.S. Senator Mark O. Hatfield, founding Board Chairman of the Northwest Health Foundation and an advocate for medical research and the health sciences in Oregon and nationally.

Jennifer Martin Fuller joined the staff of the **Northwest Health Foundation** as Associate Director for the PIN program (Partner's Investing In Nursing's Future). Jennifer comes to NWHF from Acumentra Health, where she managed Oregon's Nursing Home Quality Initiative, a national initiative focused on improving the quality of care provided to people who live and work in Oregon nursing homes. Jennifer holds a BS degree from Ohio University and a master of public health degree from Portland State University.

Social Venture Partners Portland founding partner **Eli Lamb** was recently chosen to receive the Paul Shoemaker Leadership Award by a representative board of Social Venture Partners International. This award recognizes excellence in leadership among partners throughout the SVPI network. Eli served as the initial SVPP's Executive Director and President and as the Team Lead for the organization's first investment with Morrison Child and Family Services.

Paul Reich is the new Program Officer at **Meyer Memorial Trust**. Paul has over twenty-five years of senior and executive level experience in a variety of nonprofit organizations in Oregon and Washington. Outside of work Paul has a variety of interests - biking, drama club, and master gardening to name a few. Paul is originally from NYC. He has lived in the Pacific Northwest since 1973 and in Portland since 1990.

Kathy Bryon, The Gordon Elwood Foundation, has completed her second term on the GRANTMAKERS of Oregon and Southwest Washington Board of Directors. We thank Kathy for her commitment to her colleague grantmakers and to her community.

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