



September 2005

Greetings!

We are pleased to bring you the September edition of the VANNO Voice - your link to news and interest to Virginia's nonprofit sector! We encourage you to forward this valuable information to your nonprofit colleagues.

We are also pleased to report that several work groups are now being formed to develop specific pieces of VANNO's growth and development. If you think you might be interested in participating in one of these committees, contact Katie Campbell, VANNO Administrator, at info@VANNO.org or 804.794.8689. All are welcome to get involved!

Independent Sector 25th Anniversary Conference

The Center for Nonprofit Advancement is pleased to announce a partnership with INDEPENDENT SECTOR in its **25th Anniversary Conference, "Reshaping the Social Compact," October 23-25, 2005, in Washington, DC**. This conference gives you an opportunity to join 1,000 CEOs and senior-level executives of America's foundations, corporations and national, regional, and local nonprofit organizations, as we focus on the social compact, particularly the charitable community's role in its definition and fulfillment. Theme tracks for 2005 include: Engaging the Community, Shaping Public Sector Responsibilities, and Embracing Ethics and Excellence. In addition, there is a CEO track, including the CEO Summit featuring Senate Finance Committee Chair Charles Grassley (R-IA).

As non-profits we have an opportunity to volunteer at the upcoming Independent Sector Conference in exchange for attending the other portions of that day free. Because of the quality of their programming and speakers, many of you might be interested in signing on. You can check out the preliminary program on the Independent Sector Web page. The electronic sign-up for volunteers should begin by September 1st.

Each volunteer is asked to volunteer a minimum of two shifts. Each shift is approximately 2 hours long. If you break this up to do one shift over two days, you can attend both days free. There is a limit to one meal event

each day for free, i.e. you would not be able to attend both the luncheon and dinner on the same day free.

Once they have the volunteer page on-line, you will be able to see some of the responsibilities and benefits. The conference at the discounted rate would cost us each \$695 to attend! Doesn't volunteering sound like a bargain right now?

If you have any questions, please contact VANNO Board Member Mary Agee at 703.219.2100 or e-mail her at magee@nvfs.org.

For a list of specific programs, a schedule-at-a-glance and full conference details and registration...

Elect No Strangers!



On November 8, all 100 members of the Virginia House of Delegates will be elected to two year terms. These delegates will help shape the budget for the Commonwealth, and they will vote on other legislation that concerns nonprofits in Virginia. We have the summer and fall to get acquainted -- before the election.

VANNO offers this assistance to our members (and to prospective members): Contact VANNO Administrator, Katie Campbell, and ask for a gift copy of **Elect No Strangers**, a pocket size publication filled with all of the essential contact information.

Then, help all nonprofits by electing people we know and people who know us.

Training Opportunities in Charlottesville

The University of Virginia School of Continuing and Professional Studies offers several half day and full day seminars to help professionals and volunteers in the nonprofit sector. Seminars such as Basics of Nonprofit Governance, Starting a Nonprofit in Virginia, Board Development, and Grant Writing are designed specifically for nonprofit leaders. Other seminars of interest include Organizational Culture, Building Productive Working Relationships, Marketing Plan 101, Situational Leadership, Creating Customer Loyalty, Management Fundamentals and more. All courses meet in Charlottesville.

The Nonprofit Council of the Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce also provides half day seminars in Charlottesville for staff and volunteers in the nonprofit sector. Courses offered this fall include: Endowments: From Dream to Reality; Board Responsibilities: Three Viewpoints; Obtaining and Maintaining Your Tax-Exempt Status; and Nuts and Bolts of Tax-Exempt Accounting and Tax Issues. Just \$15 for Chamber members; \$20 for non-members. Please contact Jann Ross at 434.295.3141 for more information.

[Click here to learn more or to register for the UVa seminars...](#)

Are You in the Money?

WE'RE IN THE MONEY: DIFFERENT WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT INCREASING REVENUE

- "ESPECIALLY FOR NONPROFITS" ANNUAL CONFERENCE
- OCTOBER 6, 2005
- 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM
- Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond

All nonprofits are constantly in search of the next dollar. The day-to-day pressure to raise these funds is ever present and is exacerbated by the challenges of maintaining organizational integrity and delivering high quality programs. This conference will offer the opportunity to step back and think about some of the main sources of nonprofit support from a different perspective and get new practical insights into how to develop revenue strategies ... and get your hands on more revenue.

This year, the Especially for Nonprofits Conference is partnering with the National Center on Nonprofit Enterprise (NCNE) to present a panel of nationally known and eminent thinkers about nonprofit management who will provoke thought and debate about this critical issue. Each of them will explore the essential nature and emerging trends of one type of support, and pinpoint the practical implications of these:

- Michael Ruston from Georgia State University will speak on Government Funding and Incentives
- Patrick Rooney of Indiana University and the Center on Philanthropy, Indiana will examine Charitable Giving by Individuals
- Renee Irvin of the University of Oregon will discuss Barter and Collaborations
- Richard Steinberg from Indiana University will talk about ways to enhance Membership Income
- Dennis R. Young of Georgia State University will explore Fee Incomes and Commercial Ventures
- Richard Brewster, Executive Director of NCNE, will facilitate conference sessions

Virginia Network of Nonprofit Organizations (VANNO) is proud to be a Conference partner. Given the topic and high caliber of speakers being planned this year, the event is being promoted statewide. We strongly encourage you to make the trip to Richmond for a very "rich" day of learning!

There is a registration fee involved; please contact Especially for Nonprofits for more information at 804.827.0246 or nonprofit@vcu.edu.

[For more details...](#)

Annual Giving - Many Ways of Making the "Ask"

Although the concept of an annual giving program is familiar to most nonprofit managers, it is possible to lose sight of just what is involved. At a recent conference on fundraising, the elements of an annual giving program were aired, including a basic understanding of what it is and what the component parts of an annual fund are.

An annual giving program is any planned activity that seeks to generate revenue from donors or prospects on a recurring basis.

An annual giving program should be started first, followed by a major gifts program and then by a planned gift program. The annual fund is the building block for all fundraising. It serves to establish a base of donors that can serve as an effective device to involve, inform and bond a constituency to an organization.

With these ideas in mind, consider the various possible components of an annual giving program. They can be divided by the "Hard Asks" and the "Soft Asks."

Under the Hard Ask:

- A year-end appeal
- Year-end follow-ups
- Special appeals, such as programmatic or hot issues and seasonal giving
- Telemarketing
- Event invitation (annual)
- Acquisition appeals

Under the Soft Ask:

- Newsletters
- The annual report
- Holiday cards
- Donor surveys
- Planned giving information
- Event invitations (other than annual)
- Major donor society invitations

Source: NPT Instant Fundraising [newsletter@nptimes.com], August 18, 2005

What Do Funders Want to Know about Your Board?

More funders are paying special attention to the governance of the organizations they consider funding. In the eyes of funders, a good board adds value to the organization by improving its accountability, demonstrating leadership, and ensuring proper oversight of the use of funds. In addition to providing a list of your board members, you might want to do the following:

- Emphasize the diversity and inclusiveness of your board.
- Indicate that your board has a good sense of the mission and direction for the organization.

- Show how board members are personally involved in promoting your organization.
- Demonstrate that the board has chosen a strong chief executive to manage the organization.
- Show how the board and the chief executive form a solid partnership.
- Point out that your board financially supports the organization (e.g., 100 percent of the board's members contribute).
- Have a board member sign a thank-you letter to a major funder.

Source: BoardSource August E-Newsletter [e-news@boardsource.org], August 4, 2005

Free Teleconferencing Resource

Need to call a committee meeting of folks from across the state? Want to avoid all that travel time and expense?

[Click here to explore a great solution that may work for you!](#)

Technology Innovation Award

Applications being accepted from local nonprofits through September 16

NPower Greater DC Region, a local nonprofit organization that provides technology services to other nonprofits, today announced the debut of its Technology Innovation Award. This award, sponsored by Accenture, will recognize those nonprofits in the DC region whose innovative use of technology has helped them improve key aspects of their operations and more effectively fulfill their missions.

The award, to be presented in October 2005, will honor a winner and two other finalists that best demonstrate how technology advancements have had a positive impact on 1) their overall mission; 2) the efficiency of day-to-day operations; 3) the effectiveness in serving clients and key stakeholders; and 4) their fundraising, advocacy or volunteer efforts. Winners will receive free technology consulting and software products valued up to \$35,000. Interested local nonprofits can apply by downloading an application form online or by contacting NPower DC Region directly to request an application. The deadline for submitting an application is September 16, with winners to be announced in late October.

[Click here to apply online...](#)

Nonprofits Maintain Credibility

Nonprofit organizations are viewed as highly credible organizations in comparison to the business, government and media sectors. The Edelman public relations company's "Sixth Annual Trust Barometer" also found that those surveyed have grown more confident in the work of nonprofit groups in recent years.

[Click here to obtain a summary of the survey...](#)

Eight Quick Ways to Improve Board Meetings

1. Name tags (or tent cards) for everyone, every meeting. It helps newcomers to feel welcome, and prevents embarrassing moments for all.
2. Post an acronym chart. Make a poster of frequently used internal and external acronyms and post it on the wall of every meeting. (A paper copy is soon misplaced.)
3. Include an "anticipated action" note for each agenda item. Examples: "Finance Committee report, brief questions and answers, no action needed." Or "Public Policy Committee: vote on organizational statement to city council re zoning changes." This helps everyone stay focused appropriately.
4. Make sure each person says at least one thing at every Board meeting. "Cecilia, you haven't spoken on this issue yet. I'm wondering what you're thinking about it" or "Matt, at the last meeting you made a good point about the finances. Are there financial issues here that we aren't considering?"
5. Do not allow one-way communication from staff. If you have a regular Executive Director's Report on the agenda, or if a staff program manager is giving a briefing, be sure that such presentations request a response or input from the Board. Otherwise, put the information in writing in the Board packet and just ask for any questions.
6. Encourage "dumb" questions, respectful dissent, authentic disagreements. Find a chance to reinforce these actions at every meeting: "Sylvia, I'm glad you asked that question. I didn't know the answer either." "Duane, I appreciate the fact that you disagreed with me in that last discussion. Even though you didn't convince me, your comment helped make the discussion much more valuable."
7. Note to the Board president: When introducing a topic for discussion, refrain from stating your own thoughts and opinions until others have commented. If you jump right in, others may be reluctant to express an alternative viewpoint, or may assume that you've already made the decision and don't really want an open dialogue. Maintaining a "neutral" stance until the conversation has run its course often yields the best decision in the end.
8. Adjourn on time, or agree to stay later. Check in with the group before the end of the meeting if you are not where you expected to be with the agenda. "If we continue this discussion we will have to stay fifteen minutes to handle the last item of business. Can everyone stay that long, or should we end this discussion and move to that last item immediately?"

Source: Adapted from article by Jan Masaoka, Board Cafe e-newsletter, January 2002

Older Volunteers / Aging in Place

Older volunteers are a tremendous asset and potential talent pool. First, recognize that today's "senior" needs to be approached by level of activity, not just date of birth:

- Young seniors are often very active and fully capable of helping in any volunteer role. In fact, they can apply all sorts of formerly job-connected skills and devote lots of time to your organization.

Female seniors in this age range may well have workplace credentials as well as homemaker talents.

- Middle seniors may still be very competent, but may also have health, sight or hearing problems. They may limit their driving. They may also be resistant to things like electronic technology (though don't assume this - many seniors love the Internet).
- Older seniors are the fastest growing age category in our society. Everyone ages differently, but many of these volunteers may have limited physical capacity.

A related, but sometimes more problematic category, is the volunteer who is "aging in place." This is someone who joined you when s/he was younger and fit, but has grown older and now has diminished capacity. The quandary, of course, is that you feel loyalty to a volunteer who has contributed many hours of devoted service and it is awkward to have to confront the changes in ability that age may bring. But for the sake of your service recipients and the volunteer personally, you must find ways to balance the best interests of everyone.

Supervision tips:

1. Know the volunteer's sight and hearing limits and give written material or oral instructions with this in mind.
2. Pay attention to physical fatigue and talk with the volunteer about his/her strength and endurance. This may be a way to encourage him/her to gradually reduce involvement.
3. When possible, buddy them up with younger volunteers. This technique is especially good for volunteers "aging in place," who know the job but could benefit from some support and perhaps oversight.
4. Insist on a rotation policy for everyone so that no volunteer becomes so entrenched in one assignment that it's impossible to make a change. Offer an "aging in place" volunteer an alternative assignment that makes use of long-time service experience, such as helping with new volunteer or staff orientation - but only if s/he would be good at it!
5. Don't ignore a deteriorating situation. Sometimes starting a concerned (but caring) conversation gives the volunteer the opening to admit feeling insecure and less able to do the work s/he formerly considered a breeze.
6. Only when appropriate, consider involving the volunteer's grown children in approaching their parent about changing abilities, or even the family physician.

Source: Excerpted from *What We Learned (the Hard Way) about Supervising Volunteers: An Action Guide for Making Your Job Easier*, by Jarene Frances Lee with Julia M. Catagnus, copyright 1998, Energize, Inc. <http://energizeinc.com>

Electronic Filing for Nonprofits: Less Hassle, Less Paperwork!

Nonprofits or professional preparers can use the free IRS-approved filing software offered by the National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute to complete their organization's IRS Form 990, Form 990-EZ or Form 8868 (request for extension).

Features of filing online include: calculation of totals and checks for missing items and errors; attachments can be imported from Excel; a help menu and tips are offered; and you can create a PDF for printing or, if you wish, for posting to GuideStar or your own website.

Save time! No special computer knowledge is required. No more mailing forms back and forth to the IRS. Just attach an electronic signature to the completed form and transmit via a secure website to the IRS. No more re-entering data from last year's return. It is transferred automatically from year to year.

Save money! Reduce copying, filing and storage costs. There is free technical support available, and no cost for electronic submissions to the IRS.

For more information...