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ANCOR Links

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Columns

CEO Perspective: The Power of Silence

Renee L. Pietrangelo, PhD

Summer means time for silence and reflection.



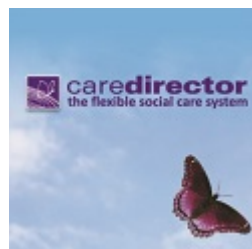
We're well into summer and many of us have taken much-needed time off to recharge, reflect and, hopefully, experience the healing a respite can bring. It has, after all, been an extremely challenging few years. Federal, state and local governments are trying to gain the most while giving the least. And many of us are beleaguered with figuring out the future, while at the same time sustaining the present in the new normal.

Time for reflection is a healing imperative. As so many of us have come to understand, "seeing" is the beginning of healing, bringing with it a new kind of power. As poet Mary Oliver writes, "I'm not the river/that powerful presence;" seeing what we are not reveals to us what we may yet become, individually and organizationally.

What do we know about really seeing? Probably much less than we think. To slow down, to really see what is right in front of us---that experience is something like a miracle. Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote, "How hard I find it is to see what is right in front of my eyes!" Seeing is power. And being able to follow our own subtle promptings about what direction to take in any given circumstance and how to get there is yet another kind of power.

Power is experienced through silence and reflection. Founding Father George Washington exemplified the benefits of emotional heroism by keeping his sensitivity intact, even on the battlefield, tempering great passion, ambition and fierceness with personal restraint, adaptability, equanimity and empathy. Dag Hammarskjöld is another example. His monastic lifestyle provided the time and deep reflection he needed; under his leadership the world backed away from the brink of a third World War. "If we are to prevail," he once told an audience, "we must be seers and explorers." Hammarskjöld brought spirit into public life and learned through public life to care even more for the point of rest at the center of each of our beings. With the cacophony of "noise" that bombards us daily, it's near impossible to "see" effectively. It behooves us to turn of the noise off now and then and just listen to the silence.

Author LINK: Renee Pietrangelo is CEO of ANCOR. She can be reached at rpietrangelo@ancor.org.



President's Corner: We Bid Adieu to Performance Excellence

Dave Toeniskoetter

ANCOR's Performance Excellence program is no more; focus on quality remains.



During its annual retreat meeting last month, the ANCOR Board of Directors made a decision to terminate the Performance Excellence benchmarking program. This was a difficult decision and the conclusion of several years of Board discussion about the program. The decision was personally difficult for me, as Dunganvin has been a full participant in the benchmarking program from its inception, and I personally believe a focus on the measurement of service quality and the promotion of best practices are important objectives for ANCOR.

The seeds of ANCOR's Performance Excellence initiative were sown about 10 years ago, when the Board of Directors made a commitment to position ANCOR as a leader in the field of quality measurement. ANCOR's Performance Excellence Committee partnered initially with The Chimes and subsequently with Deyta, Inc. to develop a national benchmarking program. Deyta was chosen as ANCOR's administrative partner because of its experience and success in administering a national benchmarking program for the hospice and palliative care field.

ANCOR's Performance Excellence benchmarking program was launched in 2007 with high enthusiasm and participation by about 65 member agencies. Then, the national economic recession arrived and everything changed. Member participation in the performance benchmarking program declined steadily after the first year. I believe much of that decline was caused by the economic pressure of the national recession upon our members. As much as we care about quality membership and improvement, it is difficult to focus on those subjects when members are fighting for the survival of their agencies and services.

When ANCOR started the Performance Excellence initiative, our leadership believed CMS would ultimately require direct performance measurement of specified outcomes for our members as a condition of Medicaid participation. Certainly, CMS is focused on quality and measurable outcomes, but it now appears that focus will continue to be implemented through and by individual states as part of the federal/state Medicaid partnership.

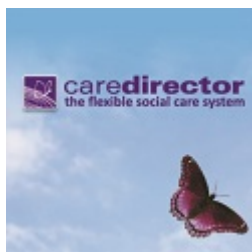
In the spring of 2012, our initial contract with Deyta expired, and we experienced a large increase in the cost of administration of the benchmarking program. The Board of Directors determined it was not prudent to increase ANCOR's investment in the program, so it was placed on hiatus in order to allow time to study alternatives for the future. Despite the efforts of the Performance Excellence Committee over the past year, which included sponsoring a quality summit with stakeholders and investigating opportunities for collaboration with other organizations, the Board of Directors ultimately concluded it would not be good stewardship of ANCOR's resources to attempt to resurrect the performance benchmarking program at a time when the Association and our members are experiencing an unprecedented need to stretch our resources to address other priorities.

The decision to terminate the performance benchmarking program doesn't mean ANCOR will lose our focus on quality of services. We will continue to lift up the ANCOR Principles, Standards and Quality Pledge, that has been signed by more than 90% of our members. We will continue to look for opportunities for our members to share leading practices in service delivery and performance measurement. And, we will continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with other organizations to advance the objectives of performance excellence.

As we move forward with this decision, I wish to acknowledge the tremendous effort and commitment of ANCOR staff, members and partners to the Performance Excellence program over the past decade. Give yourselves a pat on the back for a valiant effort. As the saying goes, "timing is everything," and this program had the misfortune of coming to fruition at the worst possible time, as everything changed (and not for the better) in our environment. Despite our disappointment, we have learned much from this experience. I believe our conversation about quality measurement and quality improvement will—and must—continue.

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State Association Execs Corner: Growth Seen in State Budgets in Most of Country

Diane McComb

A run-down of what happened in the states in Fiscal Year 13.



State general fund spending grew by 4.1 percent during FY 13, according to the National Association of State Budget Officers' most recent report. For many agencies supporting people with disabilities, this is good news. For the first time since the beginning of the recession in 2008, spending actually exceeded pre-recession spending with only eight states remaining below that mark. Forty-two states are experiencing positive growth. At the same time, several states required mid-year funding adjustments in their FY 2013 budgets. Medicaid cuts were made in multiple states in 2013 (**CO, CT, KS, LA, MA, MI, RI, SD, VT, VA**) and were recommended in still others (**AZ, IN, KS, MD, MI, UT, VT**) in 2014.

States balanced budgets using a variety of measures including increases to sales tax, personal and corporate income taxes, tobacco, motor fuel, alcohol and increases to a variety of state user fees. Several states also cut taxes and reduced or eliminated fees. Twenty-four states are moving forward with Medicaid expansion, twenty-one are not moving forward, and six are still debating the issue.

Every state except for **Wyoming** and **Alaska** now has some form of managed care for acute health care and the number looking to integrate and coordinate long term services and supports (MLTSS) is rapidly expanding. IDD advocates' efforts failed to retain the IDD carve out for **Kansas'** KanCare program and will now be included beginning in January 2014. Other states are advancing MLTSS including Illinois, **New York, New Jersey** and now **Texas**, along with a handful of others evaluating whether or not to include IDD in statewide efforts.

There are many signs that state revenues are becoming more stable. In a recent survey of ANCOR State Association Execs and Board of Representatives 62% reported an increase in providers' overall funding for FY2014. A few states reported funding increases going to serve people from waiting lists rather than provider rate increases. Only 3% reported a cut to funds at the time of the survey which is a huge improvement over prior years. **Massachusetts** appears to be the big winner with a projected 10-15% increase in rates for FY 14 yielding a total budget greater than prior to the recession.

Nearly half of the respondents reported rates holding steady while the other half (**CO, FL, IA, KS, MT, ND, NJ, NY, OK, OR, UT**) acknowledged rate increases. Despite a better year than the prior, several states (**CO, IL, IN, KS, MN, RI, TX, VT**) reported funding levels still below what was received prior to FY 2009.

States continue to see DOJ involvement in a variety of issues including *Olmstead* and ADA enforcement, inaction on waitlists (**KS**), children in nursing homes (**FL**), lack of meaningful opportunities for employment (**OR, RI**), out of state placements (**NY**), and more. Litigation issues in states range from denying people who marry services (**NY**, and this is being resolved), challenging guardianship on the part of an individual with IDD (**VA**), sheltered workshop closure (**OR**), labor (**MN**), adult protective services (**VT**) and by parents wanting their adult children to remain in state institutions (**NJ**).

Several states passed disability specific legislation including Employment First Initiatives (**IA, IL, ND, NJ**), expanded services for individuals with autism and traumatic brain injury (**ND, UT**), Medicaid re-design including IDD (**TX**), the closure of state institutions (**OK**), and approval of a 1925 K state plan amendment (**OR**). **Colorado** reorganized state government, transferring the Division for Developmental Disabilities from the Department of Human Services to the Department of Health Care Policy and Finance. The move created a single State Medicaid Agency. **Minnesota** passed legislation creating an entirely new rate system and new regulations governing services to individuals with IDD. **Arkansas** expanded a children's day habilitation program for medically fragile children and laid the groundwork for combining this program with day habilitation services for children with developmental disabilities.

Here are some snippets from states...

Connecticut is looking at a potential rate cut to providers with an overall increase to the system for expanded services to individuals on the waitlist.

Florida added \$36 in IDD Medicaid Waiver waitlist funding for about 1,000 persons. Adult day providers received a rate increase. The Governor asked the state DD agency to study Provider Service Networks and determine if they would improve

the State's DD service delivery system. The VR program received no funding cuts, and mental health services saw an increase in funding.

Indiana has been under a 3% rate reduction since 2012 which was revised to just a 1% rate reduction for ICFs.

Iowa saw an increase of 3% for DSPs. There is also a transition to medical health homes which will subsume targeted case management.

Massachusetts appears to be the big winner with a projected 10-15% increase in rates for FY 14, yielding a total budget greater than prior to the recession.

Missouri // DD services were appropriated over \$787 million in Fiscal Year 2013 to serve approximately 33,000 individuals. The state institution population is at a low of 453 as of July 2013. Self Directed Supports now has 956 participants. The number of people enrolled in community employment services has increased from 300 in Fiscal Year 2011 to 600 participants in Fiscal Year 2013.

New Jersey received funding for transitioning youth and to move people out of institutions, but no rate increase. The IDD system is moving to Medicaid FFS and providers will begin billing Medicaid directly.

New York received 30 responses to their RFP to establish managed care DISCOs and will begin piloting with two or three.

Pennsylvania programs did not see a rate increase, but did see funding for their waitlist.

Ohio received an increase for DSP wages and is still undecided about Medicaid expansion. There is a technology pilot underway, and the state is looking at applying managed care principles but keeping savings in the system.

Author LINK: Diane McComb is the Liaison to State Associations and can be reached at dmccomb@ancor.org. The full report of the Fiscal Survey of States, Spring 2013 can be downloaded at <http://www.nasbo.org/>.



Wage & Hour: When Americans Care They Let Their Views be Known

Joni Fritz

DOL is considering new rules for companionship. Comments are in and the decision will soon follow.



At least that was true in 1964. In what was one of the largest mobilizations against a U.S. Department of Labor rule, young fans from around the country sent letters and petitions asking then Secretary W. Willard Wirtz to rescind a regulation they thought would ban foreign entertainers. The teens were especially concerned about four Englishmen who had recently revolutionized popular music. Their names? John, Paul, George and Ringo.

According to a DOL Newsletter, in 1964 the department feared that American entertainers were facing unfair competition and proposed tightening rules on foreign talent seeking to enter the U.S. That year the Beatles racked up the top two hits on the Billboard 100 and released the album *A Hard Day's Night*.

Many press articles at the time incorrectly reported that the new rules would ban music groups like the Beatles from coming to the U.S. forever. In fact, the Immigration and Naturalization Service provided numerous exceptions to those rules, including allowing foreigners with unique talent to enter the states. Secretary Wirtz responded to one fan by stating "While the government of the United States is old, it is not run by old fogies."

Companionship comments swamped DOL officials

The department's Wage and Hour Division has dealt with what may be the largest response to a proposed rule ever – which would significantly change the federal exemption for companions. This author just wishes that the comments to these proposals were as easily resolved as comments to the 1964 rule. Of course, the current ability to submit comments via email has made it much easier to let DOL know what one thinks, and Americans did when it came to companionship. Literally tens of thousands of comments were received, and they represent a broad range of opinions. All were reviewed and considered before the final rule was drafted, but it took considerable time.

Currently, the final rule is circulating both within the department and among others in Washington. No estimate is made as to when we can expect a final rule to be published. When it is we will be told what groups commented and how decisions were reached. Time also will be given to come into compliance.

In addition to the comments ANCOR submitted during the original comment period, we recently sent a letter to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that calls for a full impact analysis, including specifically the impact to services for people with disabilities, and requests that if DOL intends to finalize the rule as proposed a three-year implementation period be allowed to give states time to try to identify additional sources of revenue.

Author LINK: Joni Fritz is a Labor Standards Specialist whose guidance is free to ANCOR members and to those who attend a Wage and Hour Workshop or participate in a teleconference she that has conducted. Any ANCOR member who wishes to make arrangements for consultation or workshops with Joni must first contact Barbara Merrill, ANCOR Vice President for Public Policy, for a referral at (703)535-785, ext. 103 or bmerrill@ancor.org.



This Month's Focus: Funding

Sharing Stories, Connecting Donors

Karen Knavel

At New Avenues to Independence, success in fundraising has come from a long-term, systematic, strategic approach.



At New Avenues to Independence, fundraising is about sharing life stories and connecting potential donors with the pieces that inspire, touch and encourage them to act. For those of us who work in the field of developmental disabilities, the stories are endless, and I frequently have the opportunity to gather stories, interacting daily with many of the over 700 children, men and women, such as Nancy, who are served by our agency.

Nancy, a participant of our Supported Living program for nearly five years, resides in a home in suburban Northeast Ohio with two roommates. She loves horses and participates in therapeutic riding as often as possible, soaking up the love of the large, gentle animals. Her favorite movie is *The Wizard of Oz*, and when she is in her room, you can almost always count on the movie playing on her DVD player.

Although Nancy receives assistance from Medicaid for both her long-term and health care, it does not provide coverage to meet all of her needs. For example, because of the recent progression of her seizure disorder, Nancy now uses a wheelchair for her safety. Frequent use of the wheelchair has greatly diminished Nancy's activity level, and she is experiencing weight gain. With the assistance of a grant from a local foundation whose mission is to help with non-reimbursable medical needs for those living in poverty, Nancy works with a dietician, learning to make better meal choices, prepare nutritious foods and maintain healthy eating habits.

Like many nonprofits, New Avenues relies on the generosity of its families, friends and community to help achieve our mission of *helping individuals with disabilities become more independent*. Our approach to fundraising is similar to how we approach any revenue stream. We use a long-term, systematic, strategic approach with short-term measurable goals. Our

implementation and success depend on the expertise of a team -- a team comprised of our development, marketing and communications staff along with a cadre of administrative and management personnel, direct support professionals and volunteers.

Understanding the needs of the people we serve has been critical to the success of fundraising at New Avenues. Our team works to communicate and link those needs (whether they're medical, like Nancy's, therapeutic, assistance with housing costs, food, recreation or employment) with the passion of potential donors -- individuals, corporations and foundations. The opportunity to work with a dietician would not have been possible for Nancy without the assistance of the foundation, and because we were able to match Nancy's need with a donor, Nancy's health has improved, and she is beginning to lose weight!

Author LINK: Karen Knavel is the Community Relations and Housing Director for New Avenues to Independence, Inc. She can be reached at kknavel@newavenues.net.



Art From the Heart

Nancy Silver Hargreaves and Aneta Hazen

What began as a way to help individuals express their creativity and engage in activities has grown into a self-sustaining side business for one organization.



The Art Initiative Program at WCI - Work, Community, Independence, originated in 2007 with the idea to offer small art groups to individuals as an added expressive activity when they were not working in the community or volunteering. The Employment/Day Supports program supported approximately 17 people at the time, each of whom had a variety of work options and other activities during the day. WCI formed a landscaping business, a cleaning business, coordinated a "Meals on Wheels" program in the Cambridge/Somerville area, ran errands for WCI and other miscellaneous activities. All of the people supported by this small program had intellectual disabilities, autism and/or psychiatric and behavior challenges. They primarily needed a variety of activities during the day and could not stick to one job throughout the day.

At the time, the Director of the Employment/Day Supports program was also an artist himself, who painted with acrylics. He had a vision and wanted to teach people how to paint. He also realized that he had to teach the direct support staff who worked in the program his techniques in order to support people to create their own paintings. He could not do it alone.

Over the past five years, the program evolved from its original groups to a program that offers therapeutic and skill building opportunities through jewelry creation, crafts, and weaving, as well as painting. Among the benefits that are brought out by the art activities are: a. increased attention span, b. choice making, c. improved social skills, d. strengthened fine motor skills; and e. feeling of pride that is brought forth when a project is completed.

Most of the completed projects are a collaboration of individual steps done by different people. Some projects, like weaving or assembly of soda tab bracelets, are done almost completely by one individual. The program operates with a premise that everyone can create something and persists in the belief that improvement and independence will come, regardless of how much hand over hand assistance or adaptive equipment is required in the beginning. It has been shown that it may take a few years, but people will improve existing skills as well as learn new skills.



The program currently offers two groups daily to individuals in our Life Skills Day Habilitation and Community Based Day Supports. Each day, eight to 12- individuals have the opportunity to paint, assemble earrings or can – tab bracelets, create bookmarks, or stencil out coasters. The program is run by Art Coordinator Dona Jarvis, who took over when the original director left three years ago. Although not an artist by trade, she had been a teacher and worked for WCI for several years. She always had done drawing herself and has an eye for new and creative techniques and crafts. She states that she gets

“so much satisfaction from teaching [the individuals] new skills and seeing the satisfaction that they get from creating a finished product.” The end result is a beautiful painting, bracelet, earrings or scarf.

Dona develops each new idea with people’s skills in mind. For example, recycled paper bead-making was introduced because the program supports an individual with Autism who likes to draw with crayons on sheets of paper with specific colors and patterns. The colored sheets that he creates are cut out into strips by someone else, which are then rolled into beads on a special jig. This jig was designed with people in mind who have vision impairments and have limited fine motor skills. Another project that was introduced with specific individuals in mind was weaving. This new activity was specifically chosen so that individuals who are blind or deaf can challenge their gross motor and fine motor skills and be able to produce an end product to show off and admire. By introducing new ideas with specific purpose or people in mind, the program continues to excite the individuals it supports. They all look forward to creating new items everyday.



Over the course of the past five years, the paintings and crafts created by the Art Initiative Program have become very popular and the sales of those products have funded the materials and special events run by the program. The items produced are sold at local town events, at state conferences, in local shops and at agency sponsored events, such as the Annual Art Show or the Annual Wine Tasting and Silent Auction event. The agency utilizes its community connections for display and sales of Art products. Furthermore, it advertises its products on the Art Initiative website, www.wciart.com. The vision of the program is to continue to expand its offerings with people’s skills and abilities in mind.

Author LINK: Nancy Silver Hargreaves is President and CEO and Aneta Hazen is the Employment/Day Supports Division Head for WCI – WORK, COMMUNITY, INDEPENDENCE, a private, non-profit organization supporting over 200 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. You can learn more about its supports and services by going to www.wearewci.org. Nancy can be reached at Nancy@wearewci.org.



Verland: Growing Through Community and Foundation Support

Carol B. Mitchell

Verland taps into new funding streams through a host of fundraising events and focus on foundation relationships.



In the early 80s when Verland was in its infancy, Carol B. Mitchell, its co-founder, President/CEO, along with a creative development director, conducted Verland’s first Capital Campaign lasting five years, raising several million dollars.

Pittsburgh is known for its generosity, and its foundations were attracted by Verland’s start-up story, which included a donation of 13 acres of prime land; the discovery of a glitch in the then-government regulations allowing a higher client reimbursement rate than the then-going rate; passing a tax-exempt municipal- bond issue to build ten client homes and additional ancillary buildings; and other remarkable events. The foundations gave Verland \$4M for further work on its main campus and to help start its endowment.

Next, came several remarkable board chairs, L. Colvin McCrady, Art Tresch, James A. Gordon, Ross J. Nese and other great directors. These men established the Annual Verland Open, and years later the John Siciliano/ Verland State-of-the-Heart® Golf Tournament. The Verland Open, in its 31st year, raises over \$150,000 annually, and the John Siciliano/Verland State-of-the-Heart® Tournament, celebrating three years, is on its way to achieving the same. Board and family members, particularly Ross and Jim, vendors, and corporate supporters have made these events huge successes. An annual sporting clays shooting event “Shoot For Our Stars” begins this August, started by another board director, Colleen Pietrusinski.

Since 1978, another foundation has been highly impressed by Verland’s work with our now 232 individuals living in 52 homes. This entity has provided an annual gift for 35 years straight and was immensely helpful in growing our endowment to almost \$11M.

By 2007 with needs growing and funding declining, Verland began a more vigorous, systematic approach to Pittsburgh's foundation community. A new development director captured the essence of Verland's work and brought that to foundation leaders, with proposals and invitations to visit and see Verland's remarkable outcomes first hand.

Proposals included the miracle of teaching a nonverbal individual to speak using a Dynavox computer where touching a picture of a drink or a blanket would enable her to "say" what she needed. Other proposals explained that individuals whose muscles need more range of motion could have them restored by ongoing "restorative" therapy, delivered by trained Direct Support Professionals who worked with the individuals to retain their muscle use. The value of aquatic therapy and the emotional/physical benefits of equestrian therapy were also proposal topics too. Also, therapeutic whirlpool tubs and overhead lifts to move the swimmers demonstrated to donors the value of such equipment in improving Verlanders' quality of life.

Finally, making dozens of Verland homes accessible, including appropriate equipment and furnishings for wheelchair users, enabling independence, like getting a snack on one's own, and the satisfaction derived by doing so, was clearly demonstrated, helping win the hearts of the foundation and corporate staff to whom proposals were sent.

All in all, seeing is believing in our case, and our community financial support continues to grow on all fronts.

Author LINK: Carol B. Mitchell is CEO of Verland. She can be reached at CBMitchell@verland.org.



Art Without Walls

Arthur Ginsberg

St. Johns' program ART Options brings artists with disabilities into the community. The program is touted as a great way to gain experience in the art world, and creates a unique funding stream.



St. John's Community Services (SJCS) has supported the Washington, DC community since its founding in 1868 and is one of the oldest continuously operating non-profit organizations for children in the nation's capital. Throughout its history, SJCS has changed and adapted to meet evolving community needs as first a hospital, then an orphanage, and later a school for students with intellectual disabilities. Today, SJCS provides comprehensive, community-based services for children and adults with intellectual, developmental and other disabilities across four states including the District of Columbia.

After the closing of VSA Washington DC in August 2011, St. John's Community Services successfully transitioned the program, its staff, and artists to ART Options. ART Options is a community-based, arts-infused program which supports the development of employment, social and life management skills for people with disabilities ages 16 and older. Consistent with other St. John's Community Services' programs, ART Options operates as a "program without walls." The artists engage in a variety of arts-based activities in community settings in which participants enhance their personal and professional skills and prepare for and attain careers in the arts field. ART Options focuses on applied, fine arts and digital design instruction, internships and jobs, public programming, museum and gallery visits, the development of salesmanship and communications skills guided by the participant's goals, and utilizes the resources of the vast Washington, DC arts community as its classroom. This enables artists with and without disabilities to develop relationships and collaborate on projects in an array of creative and inclusive environments.

One component of the program is to determine opportunities to exhibit artwork created by the artists in the community and teach skills related to creating, commissioning and selling their art work. ART Options has held several exhibits at which many pieces of art have been sold. The artists receive 70% of the sale price while the remaining 30% purchases art supplies for the program. The Every Dog Has Its Day exhibition, a collection of commissioned and for sale pet-themed artwork, opened July 18, 2013 and runs through August 23 at the Pepco Edison Place Gallery.

In addition to selling the art work, the program has received funding from the DC Arts and Humanities Commission, and is a recipient of a contract from The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to provide community-based arts education in

the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) to students with disabilities. Through the contract, SJCS-DC's ART Options program staff provide visual arts instruction and related activities for thirteen students with autism, intellectual and other developmental disabilities in SJCS-DC classrooms located in two DCPS high schools; thirteen other students with disabilities in these schools are included in programming under this contract.

St. John's is proud of the newest addition to our service delivery system and the opportunities it affords artists with disabilities to expand their skill set and grow into careers of their choice.

Author LINK: Arthur M. Ginsberg, MHA, FACHE is Chief Government Affairs & Advocacy Officer and State Director for the District of Columbia for St. John's Community Services. He can be reached at aginsberg@sics.org.



Hammer Takes to Travel to Fund and Expand Mission

Josh Sensco

When Hammer set out to expand their mission and seek alternative funding streams, they never imagined their path would lead them to the travel industry.



In 2006, Hammer Residences, Inc. developed a five year strategic plan. This plan was shared with all of the employees within the organization at a companywide staff meeting. Two of these goals were especially interesting to a pair of Hammer employees, Tom Ryan and Josh Sensco.

The first goal was to expand the reach of Hammer's mission, to provide adults and children with developmental disabilities the opportunity to experience life to its fullest. The excellent support services Hammer Residences was providing was limited to the western suburbs of Minneapolis, and the board felt it was important to serve people in an increased capacity.

The second goal focused on developing a social enterprise, which fit within Hammer's growing desire to find a mission driven business that could generate revenue for Hammer and decrease the organization's dependence on government funding.

When this strategic plan was shared with Hammer's employees, Ryan and Sensco were managers at one of Hammer's community based homes providing residential services for six men with developmental disabilities. As part of their role, they were responsible for supporting the men to plan vacations. They quickly learned about the challenges surrounding a quality vacation for people with differing abilities (i.e., medication, behavioral, nutritional and accessibility support).

Surprisingly, these challenges were easily averted due to their experience providing direct care for people with diverse needs. When Ryan and Sensco read Hammer's new strategic plan, they quickly started writing a business plan for a travel business. This plan incorporated Hammer's two goals of expanding the mission and creating a business model to generate additional revenue for Hammer.

With a business plan ready to go, they approached the CEO and Board of Directors with their idea. In truth, Hammer Travel was met with excitement and skepticism from the board. In order to advance the idea of Hammer Travel, the board wanted to see more research.

A competitive analysis was conducted to find the strengths and weaknesses of the potential competitors. Sensco and Ryan also conducted focus groups with family members, support staff and most importantly, potential travelers. Market analysis was done in order to see if there were enough potential travelers to sustain and scale Hammer Travel. Finally, a number of practice trips were conducted. These trips were offered based on the travel dreams of the individuals Hammer serves.

After a year or more of conducting this research, Ryan and Sensco again stood before Hammer's CEO and Board of Directors to show them the findings. This time they were met with more excitement than skepticism, and the board approved them to move forward with the development of Hammer Travel as a social enterprise of Hammer Residences.

Internal marketing was a challenge for Hammer Travel. Initially there was confusion amongst the employees of Hammer as to the purpose of Hammer Travel. Some employees challenged the notion of spending money on a new venture when so many businesses were cutting back. (Hammer Travel was launched during the financial recession in 2009.)

By utilizing Hammer employees as travel staff, not only did the travelers benefit from the experience of having well trained staff accompany them on trips, but Hammer's employees began to buy in to the dual purposes of Hammer Travel.

Getting support from the Board, CEO and staff weren't the only challenges Hammer Travel faced. Becoming a trusted source for travel was a giant hurdle for this organization. Many travel organizations had already developed reputations for the service they were providing. Hammer quickly learned their reputation as a leader in providing services was strong, but only in a close knit area of the Twin Cities. Therefore marketing to potential travelers and family members across the country required a new outlook for this midsized Minnesota nonprofit. Hammer Travel needed to change from a "Field of Dreams" marketing model ("If you build it they will come") to a more active and strategic marketing campaign.

After this obstacle was overcome, another quickly appeared on the horizon. Ensuring quality service to all travelers – even with 200 percent annual growth over the first four years of service – was the next hurdle to overcome. By keeping the size of the trips small, Hammer Travel was able to ensure quality service through the engagement of knowledgeable, quality staff. While smaller scale trips limited revenue potential, it ensured the business would stay mission-focused.

Hammer Travel is currently generating revenue, but is still subsidized by Hammer Residences. However, annually the increase in travelers is trending upward. Therefore, we believe it looks promising for Hammer Travel to reverse financial roles with Hammer Residences in the near future with all profits going to support the mission of Hammer Residences.

Alternative revenue streams and expanded mission reach were the two primary goals at Hammer Travel's inception, but there have been other unintended benefits for Hammer Residences. First, the recognition of Hammer's name and mission has become much more robust, expanding beyond the Twin Cities' west metro. Secondly, potential investors, donors, board members and volunteers now have another unique way to get involved with Hammer. Lastly, Hammer has been able to learn more about the importance of quality services for people with developmental disabilities. By supporting people from around the country when they travel, Hammer staff and volunteers are further engaged with an organization strongly committed to enhancing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities in unique ways.

Author LINK: Josh Senso is co-creator of Hammer Travel. If you are interested in learning more about Hammer Travel please visit www.HammerTravel.org or call 877-345-8599.



Member Musings

Board Spotlight: Angela King

This month, LINKS begins its new series, Board Spotlight. We'll be introducing and profiling board members periodically throughout the year. We begin the series with Angela King, National Vice President of Aging Services with Volunteers of America.



What brought you to this industry? Why the intellectual disability field?

When I was in grad school, I began a part-time job at the Ft. Worth State School, the institution for people with intellectual disabilities. I worked on the weekends as a recreational staff member and our job was to take folks out for community trips. I found I enjoyed the work and the individuals, so I focused my MSSW work on the field of disabilities. I have worked for Volunteers of America for 26 years and my first job was in supervising group homes that were opened to transition people from the institution to community settings in Texas. After working in Texas for over 10 years, I began working at the

national level, assisting our local affiliates with the development of disability services and eventually, expanding to elderly services.

What aspects of your work do you find most rewarding?

Over the years, I have had numerous opportunities to move people from institutions, nursing homes, state hospitals and other segregated settings into the community. This has been very rewarding and allowed me to share best practices from one state to another, building on our agency's experiences and expertise.

What makes your organization unique?

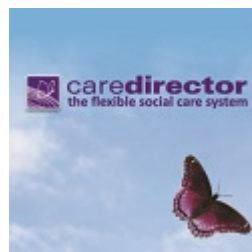
Because Volunteers of America is a widely diverse agency, offering a multitude of social service supports to various individuals, we are often able to answer more complex problems and integrate our service lines to provide housing, supports and a combination of interventions. For example, Volunteers of America is one of the largest providers of low income housing for seniors and people with disabilities, using this skill has resulted in affordable housing options for many of the individuals we serve across the county.

What innovations in service delivery has your organization brought about?

We have also combined our expertise in health care services to begin to discuss integrated care for people with disabilities in new services models, like PACE. We have also invested in technology alternatives for remote monitoring, particularly focusing on sleep patterns and related health indicators as well as technology for social engagement. We believe technology will need to supplement a shrinking workforce in the near future. We have engaged various consultants in behavioral health, managed care, and related fields to provide training and on – going support to our leadership across the county. We are also building a national outcomes project with a uniform software platform to gather data from all our services into a single data warehouse for reporting at the local and national level. This is a huge undertaking given the complexity of our service array and the various data inputs we are required to report from state to state and program to program, but we are making progress and expect to have this project complete in the next 3 years. We believe that reporting outcomes, measuring our successes and identifying areas for improvement will be essential in the future to maintain funding.

How has ANCOR membership affected your organization?

Volunteers of America has been an ANCOR member for over 20 years and our participation has increased as the complexity of our business models has increased. We depend on ANCOR to provide us information on federal legislation and rule changes, policy issues and to protect funding and quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities. Even as a national organization, we are not able to stay up to date on these issues and we believe our ANCOR dues are a realistic way to obtain the type of support/information we need to make informed decisions and to advocate at the local level.



If Funding Was Not an Issue

ANCOR members muse on what they'd do if funding wasn't an issue.

If funding was not an issue what dream program would you put in place?

"My dream would not include anything called a "program" because people we support tell us they object to the word "program," although I suspect most know what we mean when we use the word. My dream would be that funding, licensing, regulatory, statutory, public policy makers would assure there are no cumbersome barriers to choice. And also that provider leaders would strive to inform guardians and consumers to make true informed choice and that the end result would be that people are in the least restrictive support venue where they can be safe and happy but not receiving support they don't want or need."

Bonnie-Jean Brooks, President/CEO,OHI



In Other News

Siblings Leadership Network Opens Store In Quality Mall

SLN is now on Quality Mall

We love supporting anything person-centered, and we really love free. So it's no surprise we love the [Quality Mall](#), a clearinghouse for free information and resources for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

QM recently launched their new Siblings department, managed in part by Katie Arnold, Executive Director of the Sibling Leadership Network. Take the time to visit the Quality Mall and view the broad array of resources available there.

The Quality Mall is always looking for new products and services to list so if you know of any publications, web sites, organizations, programs or other person-centered resources for people with developmental disabilities, let them know via this [form](#).



Dakota Communities Changes Names

Dakota Communities has changed its name. As of August 1st, Dakota Communities in Minnesota is now Living Well Disability Services.



ANCOR Legacy Leader Julian Streett Passes Away



ANCOR is saddened to learn that Julian Duval Streett of Little Rock, AR, passed away July 16th. Julian, a long time ANCOR supporter, was named an ANCOR Foundation Legacy Leader in 2011. An attorney, he served in the Arkansas Legislature for multiple terms, where he was a strong supporter of civil rights and education. He founded Community Resources Network, the state DD provider association in Arkansas. He was honored by ANCOR with the Legacy Leader award for his outstanding work in preserving critical funding that preserved the day habilitation option used in 20 states at that time. Julian also worked closely with ANCOR governmental relations staff and other providers on national legislative matters. Our condolences to his family and many ANCOR colleagues in Arkansas.



Did You Know

Did You know: Harleysville

Did You Know...

...using the ANCOR Harleysville Insurance Program has resulted in significant premium savings for several members who have taken advantage of the program so far in 2013?

[Details](#)

"We saved \$7,000 by using ANCOR Services Corporation's partner Harleysville Insurance Company through the Shared Resources Purchasing Network. Thank you for forming that relationship with them."

Bob Bartles
Hope Haven



A Word From Our Sponsors

CareDirector: Automating Service Delivery and Documentation

Tonya Harmon

CareDirector offers paperless recordkeeping, potentially freeing up funds for other uses.

Today, new funding demands aimed at improving consistency and accountability are holding provider agencies to higher standards, with more program oversight and documentation requirements. As a result, providers are moving from paper to electronic recordkeeping systems like never before.

While many of the goals of these new mandates are aimed at improving quality through the achievement of better outcomes, increased independence, community integration and a reduction in institutional care, they are also clearly focused on controlling costs in order to keep programs sustainable.

A paper based system is administratively costly to manage and prone to error and omission. Providers are evaluating the use of a variety of technologies that can improve the efficiency, accuracy and the timeliness of tracking time and attendance, and tying this to quality indicators, outcomes and billing.

CareDirector has found that the area in which agencies can realize the most improvement and cost savings is in the automation of tracking service delivery, right from the initial point of delivery through to final billing. Coupling this with goal tracking and outcomes, provider agencies can instantly see where their programs, services and staff are making the most impact in the most cost efficient way.

CareDirector helps agencies reduce the amount of staff time it takes to record services, and it dramatically improves accuracy, reducing errors and omissions of service billings to single digit percentages. Further, the ability for supervisors and managers to see at a glance what has been recorded, what remains to be documented and billed, what units are remaining on authorizations and the ability to see which services are missing notes greatly improves accuracy and record keeping both for billing purposes and for licensure.

As Tonya Harmon, CEO at CareDirector USA, puts it:

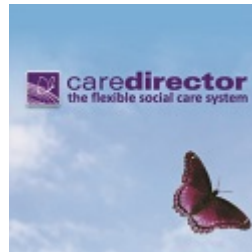
"In developing CareDirector for providers, creating a fast, easy and reliable service tracking solution was one of our main goals in the design and development of our product. We've spent years developing and perfecting our system with our customers as influential partners, until we've reached the point at which we are all more than satisfied with results."

Our latest version of CareDirector demonstrates this point well. From initial service authorization through documentation of services such as production, vocational activities, employment, residential room and board, in home services, independent living skills and much more, CareDirector has streamlined the process of electronic entry, documentation, management and invoicing from start to finish. Business rules, workflows and dialogs further automate the process and help reduce errors.

In spite of new demands and changes that have presented themselves recently, for providers, one thing will never change and that is CareDirector's unwavering commitment to deliver as high quality a product and service as possible. At CareDirector, we see ourselves as long term partners with our customers, with the end result being a direct and positive impact on the lives of the people who are served.

Author LINKS: Tonya Harmon is CEO of CareDirector USA. She can be reached at tharmon@careworks.ie. CareDirector recently changed the name of its U.S.-based business from CareWorks USA.





What Would Your Organization Do with More Time and More Capital?

Kate McNulty

Scioto offers various assistance programs to help free up and enhance funding.

Scioto is the #1 National provider of housing and real estate solutions for people with disabilities. We partner with over 65 organizations, many of these ANCOR members, in more than 30 states, to provide housing for the individuals they support. Our industry experience, capital resources and availability allow Scioto to add value to ANCOR members by:

1. **Understanding the role real estate plays in a provider organization and facilitating property acquisition and management to enable the provider to focus on core business.** This allows the organization to concentrate on the provision of services instead of worrying about real estate issues. Scioto has been an expert in the field of finding and purchasing homes since 1999, and is able to take all of the hassles of the process away from the provider. We do all of the upfront searching, inspections, appraisals and anything else necessary to secure the perfect home, based on provider and individual need, with no upfront costs to the provider.
2. **Reducing real estate debt on the provider's books.** Scioto's sale/lease back program allows provider organizations to sell the homes they own to Scioto and then lease them directly back. This, in turn, allows the organization to release and realize the capital they had tied up in the real estate, thus enabling them to utilize the capital for items more important than owning bricks. This brings an infusion of cash into the organization without having to make organizational changes, as well as taking away the burden of homeownership.
3. **Sourcing capital for provider growth.** Often a provider finds itself in the situation of having the opportunity to grow, but either not having the capital to do so, or not choosing to spend the capital to do so. Scioto has tremendous capital power and can move quickly and at high volume, if necessary, to purchase homes. Therefore, enabling providers to increase their growth rate and significantly expand services.
4. **Assisting providers with their respective state departments in downsizing and meeting their Olmstead compliance efforts.** Scioto has worked in many states to partner with provider organizations in moving individuals out of large institutional settings and into small, community based homes. This enhances the lives of the individuals, promotes growth for the provider organization, and supports the state efforts to successfully downsize.
5. **Building homes for specific provider and individual needs.** Scioto has many compelling floor plans, all utilizing Universal Design to allow individuals to age in place. We work with local contractors and builders to ensure a timely completion of the project.

These are a few examples of how Scioto successfully partners with provider organizations in increasing their prosperity and ensuring the housing needs of the people they serve are met. As a proud ANCOR Gold partner, we especially enjoy supporting the needs of ANCOR membership. Please let us know how we can assist your organization. You can reach us at 800-930-2892.





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