

MESSAGE FROM MICHELLE

Dear friends,

As we approach 2014, I think it's safe to say that the culture of institutional philanthropy is not shifting. It's shifted.



In Fall 2007, MW&A was working with three new clients: a large Los Angeles based cultural arts institution, a national LGBT program, and an internationally renowned dance company. In short order we identified a large potential foundation funder for each and quickly developed LOI's. Within weeks all three clients had heard back--not with the expected invitations to submit full proposals--but with three checks...totaling over \$220,000!

Well, goodbye to all of that. In the new norm of grantmaking foundations are now examining board performance, succession planning, budgets, and annual financials more closely than ever. The good news is that this scrutiny is raising the bar on how nonprofits need to perform...and foundations are not without hearts--for the first time in many years unrestricted operating support is again a high priority for funders.

In this issue, you will see how MW&A has helped three clients re-frame and re-think their foundation grants programs--from redesigning how a grants department operates and how they educate their funders on critical needs, to creating a grants administrator position that will allow senior staff more time for relationship-building, to convening funders to introduce them to a new graduate school program for non-profits leaders.

Your foundation relations and grants program is only as strong as the effort you put into it. Reviewing the return on your investment goes beyond the cost of your staff and consultants.

NEW CLIENTS

California

Think Together:

Development Audit and
Development Plan
Executive Search:
Director of Development
Grants Administrator

National

Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet:

Executive Search for Director
of Development

International

American Friends of Les Ballet-de Monte Carlo

France: Annual appeal and
donor acquisition

RETURNING CLIENTS

Southern California

Caterina's Club:

Foundations Relations, Grant
writing and stewarding the
501c3 process

ProCon.org:

Foundation Relations and
Grants Development

Antioch University:

Foundation Relations

Anaheim Ballet:

- Are you communicating with foundation staff and getting their feedback on programs and organizational needs?
- Are you asking the right foundation for the right program investment?
- Are you staying in touch beyond the grant gift?
- Are your highest paid staff spending as much time on reporting as they are on cultivating?

These are all questions you should be reviewing annually. MW&A can help....

All my best,



IN THIS ISSUE

- **Grants we have procured for our clients in this past quarter!**
- **Keeping a fast pace: THINK Together**
- **What's New? ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY'S Innovative MA in Non-Profit Management**

Grants for our clients in this past quarter!

Voice of OC/Voice of SoCal:

The Ethics & Excellence in Journalism Foundation
\$75,000 General Operating Support

ProCon.Org:

The Annenberg Foundation
\$75,000 General Operating Support

Caterina's Club:

Edwards Life Sciences Foundation
\$5,000 in General Operating Support

Fresh Produce and Flower Council
\$20,000 in General Operating Support

Keeping a fast pace: Think Together



THINK Together

Teaching Helping Inspiring & Nurturing Kids

Foundation Relations and Grants Development

National

Ballet West

Identification of Regional and National Funders

Common Threads

Strategic institutional outreach and Foundation grants development for Los Angeles, Palo Alto, Chicago, Miami and Washington DC program sites

International

American Friends of the Tate Britain

UK: New Acquisitions campaign

Client Feature

The Organized Approach

Aligning an established Grants Development Team



Aquarium of the Pacific

(AOP) recently contracted with MW&A to conduct an audit of the Aquarium's existing development efforts, with a focus on its grants and foundation relations department.

MW&A conducted interviews with AOP's internal and external stakeholders and all signs pointed to solutions that could be found within the organization, given disciplined strategic planning that stretches months into the future.

"Because of her ability to efficiently focus an audit and

*The powerhouse statewide education non-profit **THINK Together** is a fascinating client, with a story worth sharing.*

THINK Together is not so far away from its modest beginnings. In 1997, under the leadership of Founder & CEO Randy Barth, the organization began offering after school academic support for low income students in Costa Mesa. **THINK Together** successfully and steadily attracted two types of funding-- major gifts and program reimbursement through Proposition 49 funds.

Today, the organization has an operating budget of \$60+ million. The organization's critical mission and measurable impact changing the lives and opportunities of educationally disadvantaged youth has always made a strong case to donors. What's curious here is where the money comes from, and how that is about to shift.

THINK Together thrives because over the years, they've proven to be a consistent provider of stable, high-quality after school tutoring, mentoring and other programs in low-income Orange County neighborhoods. From its expanded base in Costa Mesa and Santa Ana, **THINK Together** is now changing lives in 41 school districts statewide.

How to respond to so much growth? Grow the giving to match. From the bottom, up. "We brought in Michelle because we recognized we needed some re-thinking to support the evolution of our organization," says Tim Shaw, **THINK Together's** Chief Development Officer, and former head of the Irvine Schools Foundation. Shaw's a bit of a maverick on the OC fundraising scene, with his penchant large scale initiatives. "We'd put so much into our programming, now it was time to focus on the community-level support."

As programming and credibility grew, **THINK Together** established itself as an obvious choice when major donors like **Donald Bren**, **Walmart** and **The David and Lucille Packard Foundation** decide how to give. The group has also been savvy about tailoring some of their offerings to the eligibility criteria for Prop 49 funds and contracts, to access funds made available by California's 2002 statewide initiative to support after school programs. A track record of success and strong data to support those successes soon translated into demand to replicate the programs...quickly.

Shaw says he saw enormous potential for all stakeholders around the **THINK Together** initiatives: "Our model could be exported, and, we wanted to grow," says Shaw. With the help of MW&A conducting a comprehensive development assessment and subsequently designing a plan, it was clear there was a strong need to cultivate a cohort of community based donors, enhance the

offer pragmatic recommendations, I've called on Michelle in the past four organizations where I've worked," says Christopher Conway, the Aquarium's Philanthropic Counsel, who most recently spent eight years at the Joffrey Ballet as CEO. "Michelle has the innate smarts to survey, see what's working, what's going to work, and how to deploy the assets we have intelligently."

For the Aquarium, Conway says, MW&A's report and insights are invaluable. "The AOP had staff and generous foundation donors, what they needed was some understanding of the potential to grow it all."

MW&A encouraged every grants development officer to align efforts with precision, and clear scheduling for activity beyond proposal and reporting deadlines. This created a super-systematic and super-specific plan. "That ensures every development team member is scheduled, within a range of dates, to be prospecting, producing LOIs, grant writing and reporting. When you see it all filled in on the calendar, it becomes very clear."

A full calendar that resulted from the MW&A assessment still allows for some flexibility to handle unanticipated opportunities, but it also protects employees from months-long diversions that are off-mission. "This happens at every organization, because things come up, partnerships evolve, ideas turn into events," says Conway. "But knowing what you need to get done and not getting too far off track is critical. The organization is depending on you to have an organized approach that yields results. MW&A really helped us identify what was working, what needed work, and a clear way forward."

non-profit's visibility with strategic marketing efforts, and add two new positions to support a successful grants program and build individual support. "We are going to condition the marketplace for our expansion," Shaw says, "and essentially we are starting from scratch - we are poised for massive growth in community giving."

Restructuring the **THINK Together** board and launching a campaign for public awareness with defined goals for community giving are imperatives in this case, and every case where rapid growth follows great success. "MW&A has been an outstanding partner in guiding us forward. The observations and input Michelle and her team offer come from a fresh perspective, and that's vital."

What's New? ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY'S Innovative MA in Non Profit Management



Antioch University LA (AULA) launched its innovative **Master's in Non-Profit Management (MANM)** program this fall with the inaugural cohort on campus in October. Designed specifically for high-potential early career and

mid-career non-profit professionals, the program intentionally emphasizes cross-functionality.

The basis for the design of the MANM program was a Weingart Foundation 2010 study of the capacity-building needs of the nonprofit sector in Los Angeles (www.weingartfnd.org/fortifying-las-nonprofit-organizations). The program curriculum will provide classroom and community learning experiences that will prepare graduates to address critical region-wide deficiencies identified in the Weingart report.

"We are responding to a real need for capacity building within the non-profit sector," says Susan Nero, chair of the MA program. "It is increasingly important for all non-profit professionals -- and especially at the director level-- to understand how each area and each colleague functions. If you are in programming, it's still important to understand the budget, and governance."

That interdisciplinary approach informs the program's curriculum, as each of the six quarters is organized around a specific area of practice: programs, advancement, administration and finance, governance and finance, the non-profit system, organization sustainability.

The AULA MA will also require six quarters of experiential site work. Nero says that unique component of the curriculum is essential. "Even if our students are currently employed at a

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MW&A's eNews Quarterly Editor

Editor Jody Becker

Jody Becker is MW&A's newsletter and publications editor. Jody is a seasoned journalist and award winning documentary filmmaker in Santa Monica, California. She works as a producer and editor for National Public Radio, most recently contributing to "All Things Considered Weekend."

non-profit, they will spend hours at other organizations to observe and consult," says Nero. "It's very important to see a range of operational styles and challenges."

MW&A is delighted to have worked in cooperation with AULA in identifying the need for this program in Los Angeles, and to introduce local funders to a curriculum that will support the range and diversity of our local non-profit ecosystems. Over the coming months, MW&A will be convening local Foundations through a series of events to meet the faculty and students, and gain a broader knowledge of how AULA will be training the next generation of nonprofit leaders.

Scholarship Awarded

Mario Davila, the Founder and Director of LA Art LAB and Director of Arts Programming for LA's Best afterschool programs is the MA in Non-Profit Management's first full scholarship recipient. "Mario is incredibly impressive," says Susan Nero. "He's very generative and creative, he's started many of his own organizations, and he undertakes projects all over the community." As a bonus, says Nero, "Mario is also now involved with the Institute of Design at Stanford in problem solving. We felt all that he brings would be very enriching for our cohort."

Her work has also appeared on The New York Times.com, The Atlantic.com, Huffington Post, on PBS, and in several other websites and print publications.

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