

@ Health & Well-Being ISSUE

a publication of the rapides foundation summer 2006

FOCUS: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKS



Helping Nonprofits Profit



Community Development Works Staff (standing), Akeshia Singleton, CDW Program Supervisor, (seated l-r) Felicia Walker, Learning Lab Technician, and Amanda Weatherford, Program Assistant.

Nonprofit organizations, also known as 501(c)(3)s, are an integral part of any strong community. They are intricately woven into the fabric of our nation – contributing a wealth of volunteer manpower, resources, and services to people in all walks of life. Their absence in our communities' infrastructure would be unthinkable.

(continued on page 2)

Community Development Works - Overview

Helping Nonprofits Profit

(continued from page 1)

"We understand the vast importance of nonprofits in any community," said Joe Rosier, President and CEO of The Rapides Foundation. "Their contributions are immeasurable. It's exactly that recognition of their importance that has led us at the Foundation to work closely with many of these organizations. We've even helped set up a number of nonprofits that now offer needed services to the people of Central Louisiana.

"One of the most effective tools we've designed," Rosier added, "is our program called Community Development Works. The idea behind it is to provide nonprofit training, leadership development, informational resources, and grassroots organizational development. In other words, we want to help the area's nonprofits to profit from our services and to add value to our communities."

Akeshia Singleton is the Program Supervisor for Community Development Works. She defines CDW as, "A place where nonprofit organizations can get information that they can use in their services, whether it be for grant writing or program development. It's also a place where they can get training on different aspects of nonprofit management."

Singleton also detailed how CDW's information services for nonprofits can be customized. "It's a customized relationship in that the information we're providing is tailored to the organization or individual. There is so much general information out there that it's easy to get bogged down with it because you're not really sure if it's useful to your organization or if it's even relevant. And that's where CDW can come in and help guide you through that information, through all the clutter, and come out with what is relevant and useful information for the organization."

In the area of training, Community Development Works each year offers a series of training sessions (see page 13) that cover a wide

range of issues facing nonprofits, such as board development, staff development, fundraising, marketing, and forming effective committees. According to Singleton, nonprofit organizations too often place significant emphasis on their programs and not enough on the issues that affect the organization itself. "It greatly affects their sustainability because if you don't look at your infrastructure and you just focus on programs you're probably not going to have an organization to support that program in the long run."

(continued)

"One of the most effective tools we've designed is our program called Community Development Works. The idea behind it is to provide nonprofit training, leadership development, informational resources, and grassroots organizational development. In other words, we want to help the area's nonprofits to profit from our services and to add value to our communities."

*Joe Rosier, President and CEO,
The Rapides Foundation*



Community Development Works - Overview



(front row l-r) Wyman Lewis, Jr. and Wyman Lewis, Sr. take part in a CDW leadership development class at the Learning Center for Rapides Parish, while instructor Sharon W. McCall (standing) answers questions for other class members.

(continued from page 2)

There is also leadership development training that is provided by CDW – geared to board members since the boards of nonprofits have a unique and vital role to play as stewards of nonprofit organizations. *Board Works* (see page 4), is such a program, targeting “seasoned” or experienced board members to help them share learning around board development issues, thereby becoming more productive board members and community leaders. Then there is a program begun in 2004 called *Board Builders* (see page 8), aimed at developing young leaders to assume positions on nonprofit boards of directors.

For Singleton, the work of CDW has an indirect but positive effect on the health of the community. “CDW helps develop the community through nonprofit organizations. Our work here makes the community stronger by the fact that nonprofits, through our training and access to relevant information, make themselves stronger and better able to deliver services. So if we can assist a nonprofit to achieve its goal and meet the needs of the community then the community will be stronger because of that. And that, in the end, is what CDW’s goal, our primary goal is – and that’s to build stronger communities.”

Board Works

The Heart and the Head to Serve



Ivory Brown, Volunteers of America of Central Louisiana board member, and past board president of the Alexandria Museum of Art with two of her granddaughters, Morgan (left) and Madyson Brown at a River Oaks summer art class.

This is a story of three Central Louisiana nonprofit organization board members. Each has a strong desire, almost a calling really, to be a positive force in their community. They want to give something of themselves and their passion to worthwhile nonprofit groups or causes that have somehow captured their heart. Each attended courses in *Board Works*, a program of Community Development Works designed to help nonprofit board members be better informed on the latest sector trends and be more productive in their board service.

(continued)

The Heart and the Head to Serve

(continued)

Ivory Brown

"I'm a miracle, thank God," vehemently asserts Ivory Brown who underwent a heart transplant in 1994 at the age of only 45. That adversity certainly hasn't stopped her from caring about her community; in fact, her resolve to help out where she can is as strong as ever. She is a retired elementary teacher of 20 years, a mother of four children and a grandmother of six children. She is on the board of Volunteers of America of Central Louisiana, as well as the Alexandria Museum of Art of which she is the immediate past president. Brown says these nonprofit organizations are both, "worthwhile causes and really dear to my heart."

Linda Hutson

Our second board member is Linda Hutson who is both a staff member of a nonprofit, (Development and Community Relations Director at the Food Bank of Central Louisiana), and a board member of another nonprofit (The Extra Mile, Region VI). Six years ago she had never even heard of The Extra Mile, which handles clients served by the state mental health system, until a public relations job put her in touch with them. "I became involved through this anti-stigma campaign. I grew to love the organization and its mission, so when I was asked to serve as a board member I jumped on board and have been there ever since." She has also served on the board of the Rapides Children's Advocacy Center.

(continued on page 6)



CDW Training class instructor Sharon W. McCall works with Linda Hutson, board member of The Extra Mile, Region VI and staff member of the Food Bank of Central Louisiana.

**"I grew to love
the organization
and its mission
... and have been
there ever since."**

*Linda Hutson, board member of
The Extra Mile, Region VI.*

Board Works

The Heart and the Head to Serve

(continued from page 5)



John Hall, Administrative Director of Cardiovascular and Radiology Services for CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital is a board member with Renaissance Home for Youth

John Hall

John Hall is the Administrative Director of Cardiovascular and Radiology Services for CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital. Still in the early stages of his career, he wanted to go beyond his professional commitment so he signed up

for CDW's first class of *Board Builders*, a program for young professionals who want to serve on a nonprofit board. "I wanted to be on a board to serve my community as well as grow and network professionally," said Hall. After finishing *Board Builders* he was matched with Renaissance Home for Youth. "It's been a good match."

These three board members had the desire not only to serve, but to serve well. When they learned of the special series of training sessions offered by CDW through its *Board Works* program they eagerly signed up to learn more about such topics as the importance of developing effective committees, strategic fundraising, the components of a successful strategic plan, and the role of a board versus the role of the staff. CDW specifically designed these sessions for experienced board members who want to strengthen their expertise in recognizing and handling board-related challenges, and to be exposed to new ideas and methods for effective board governance.

"I think I would have been more reluctant to pursue a board position and had a lot less confidence going into serving on a board had I not participated in both *Board Builders* and *Board Works*," said Hall. "They both have definitely prepared and excited me to serve on a board."

Hall has been on the Renaissance board since January 2005 and likes it just fine. "In some capacity I'd like to make serving on a nonprofit board an ongoing practice of mine."

Linda Hutson really appreciated the opportunities *Board Works* made available for networking and sharing ideas and experiences.

The Heart and the Head to Serve

(continued from page 6)

"Each of the group sessions was small enough so that we were able to interact with each other and ask questions. You were given ideas and new ways to look at things not only from the people who led these sessions but from other board members who could tell you what other boards are doing and what results they've had."

Hutson also envisions her future with continued board work. "Once you become involved with one organization, it seems to become part of your life, part of who you are because you want to continue to help."

Ivory Brown thinks *Board Works* saves so much

time and energy by equipping people with information that can readily make them a more productive board member. "It gets right to the point," she said. "So many times people go into an organization or on a board and they're trying to find their way around; but if you have something to work with, some kind of background or information, they can work to much better advantage."

Through *Board Works*, nonprofit organizations and board members alike are finding ways to collaborate and share knowledge that will help to improve effectiveness and productivity. As these three board members can attest, *Board Works* really works and our communities will be healthier for it.

Meeting On The Mezzanine

"Where can we meet?" is a question that crops up at times for many nonprofit organizations and business groups. Community Development Works can furnish an answer – the Mezzanine level of The Rapides Foundation building which is located at 1101 4th Street in Alexandria.

The Mezzanine room is completely furnished with tables and chairs for up to 45 attendees in classroom or theatre-type setting. A flip chart, TV/VCR and overhead projector are available, as well as a fully functional kitchen.

Open Monday-Friday from 7am - 9 pm, the Mezzanine rents for only \$20 for up to 4 hours; \$30 for 5 or more hours.

It's just another way CDW is fulfilling its stated goal of "helping people build communities in Central Louisiana."

For more information contact Amanda Weatherford at 318-443-7880 or 1-800-803-8075.



Board Builders

Don Poole, CEO of the
YMCA of Central Louisiana



It's Not About A Paycheck

Community Development Works (CDW) launched a program two years ago called *Board Builders*. Unlike *Board Works* which targets experienced board members, *Board Builders* seeks out younger professionals (ages 21-40), usually underrepresented on nonprofit boards, to train and place them in board leadership positions. The success of the program depends on the cooperation among Central Louisiana businesses, nonprofits, and emerging community leaders.

(continued)



Tony Boire (right), Plant Manager of Kerotest Manufacturing, Inc. in Mansura in Avoyelles Parish, goes over product details with production specialist Jeffery Augustine.

“It is an opportunity for people in middle management to give back to the community.”

(continued from page 8)

“It is an opportunity for people in middle management to give back to the community,” said Tony Boire, Plant Manager of Kerotest Manufacturing, Inc. in Mansura in Avoyelles Parish. Kerotest manufactures and distributes industrial valves. Boire has been on several boards; “I like to give back to the community, and I try to do various things to help out.” Boire saw the notification for an upcoming session of *Board Builders*, liked the idea, and signed the company up to participate in the program as an Employer Partner. He singled out one of his employees who showed an interest in being on a nonprofit board and gave him the time and the support necessary to attend not only all the *Board Builders* training

sessions, but also later the board meetings for the organization with which he would subsequently be matched. That’s what it means to be an Employer Partner.

“I visited with the first candidate to go through *Board Builders* about the sessions and then later about his board meetings” (the employee was matched with First Tee, an organization that helps develop youth through golf), Boire remembered. “He was very happy with the training he got. He had nothing but positive things to say.”

Board Builders consists of an orientation session in August, followed in September and October by four bi-weekly, half-day training sessions on fundamental governance topics.

(continued on page 10)

Board Builders

It's Not About A Paycheck

(continued from page 9)

Then participants and the nonprofits are brought together in a special session and matched up according to interests and needs. The process culminates with a graduation ceremony in late November.

Upon completion of this comprehensive process, the *Board Builders* graduates are ready to assume their roles on the nonprofit organization's board of directors, where they will also receive a mentor to guide them on this new endeavor. The YMCA is one of these Nonprofit Organization Partners that has mentored a *Board Builders* graduate. "The YMCA is a volunteer-based organization so naturally we're always looking in the arena of developing volunteers, both on a program and a policy level," said Don Poole, CEO of the YMCA of Central Louisiana. "When I saw the notification of the *Board Builders* program it presented a great opportunity for our YMCA in Central Louisiana to tap into some new resources for individuals interested in the policy side of volunteer development." (continued)



Jennifer Moreau, an in-house architect with the Miguez Deloach Company goes over plans with Wayne Murrell at a job site in Pineville.

“It is such a good feeling to know that some of your energies and talents can go to help others without any motive attached. It’s not about a paycheck. It’s about helping others ...”

Jennifer Moreau, an architect who serves on the board of the Friendship House Adult and Daycare Center.

Board Builders



Susan Broussard, Manager of Corporate Communications for Cleco with Linda Hutson, Development and Community Relations Director for the Food Bank of Central Louisiana.

Board Builders

It's Not About A Paycheck

(continued from page 11)

The board member the YMCA received from *Board Builders* has consented to serve as mentor to the next board member they hope to recruit from the upcoming *Board Builders* session. "The training is invaluable, not only to the organization but to the individual," said Poole.

The link between the Employer Partner and Nonprofit Organization Partner is the young professional who is willing to volunteer his or her time and resources to serve on the board of a nonprofit organization. Jennifer Moreau, an in-house architect at Miguez Deloach Company in Alexandria in Rapides Parish, is one of these. "I was at a point that although my professional life was fulfilled there was still something missing. I needed an outlet to kind of give back to the community."

And she found it on the board of Friendship House Adult and Daycare Center. "It just struck a chord with me that this is someplace I can make a difference and these are people that will be receptive to new ideas. And it's such a worthy cause," said Moreau. "It is such a good feeling to know that some of your energies and talents can go to help others without any motive attached. It's not about a paycheck. It's about helping others and that really hits home with Friendship House."

She believes *Board Builders* gave her a boost up. "Without the training that CDW and *Board Builders* provided, I think I would have been lost and overwhelmed. I think the *Board Builders* program allowed me to participate a lot sooner than I would have without the training."

Susan Broussard, Manager of Corporate Communications for Cleco is another *Board Builders* graduate. She had tried some board work previously but felt she hadn't been as successful and engaged as she could have been. "I believe in community service because I feel very strongly that it's part of our responsibility as citizens of our community and of our country."

Broussard went through the first *Board Builders* program and was matched with the Food Bank of Central Louisiana. By her second year on the board she was elected to serve as president. "I believe that I know more about how a board should work and the operations of a board because of the *Board Builders* program. I also think that had a lot to do with me being President of the Board right now."

Like Jennifer Moreau, Susan Broussard adheres to the principle that community work should be selfless. "The needs in our community are way too great for us to take selfish positions on a board for our own benefit. These are opportunities primarily to help our community, to help our people who are in need whether it's from a human resources standpoint or even from an arts and humanities standpoint. These are opportunities for service first, and the personal benefits I get as a board member are certainly secondary and they should be. The *Board Builders* program helps you understand that."

The 2006 *Board Builders* program is about to begin. Since 2004, over 26 nonprofit board leaders have been trained through this program – the graduates will continue to add an infusion of vitality and expertise to nonprofit organization boards all across Central Louisiana.



(continued)



Barbara Johnson, founder of Seeds Of Harvest

Is a 501(c)(3) The place for me?

Many people want to work to improve or add to their communities, but they simply don't know how to go about it. That's where Community Development Works comes in with its various services and tailored approach that can help individuals contribute through nonprofit organizations.

A nonprofit organization becomes federally recognized by successfully obtaining 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. However, with this recognition comes the need to develop and maintain a sound foundation for the organization, which can be ensured through effective nonprofit management.

Training Calendar



Seeds of Harvest staff (standing back row) Elouise Peterson, (middle row l-r) Deanna Mitchell, Phadra Johnson, Jorre Price and Judy Murdock, (seated) Barbara Johnson and Orval Nix, resident of Pine Grove Apartments.

All this information and training CDW provided made Johnson much more confident when she applied for a grant from The Rapides Foundation. “The grant has allowed us to get some structure in the ministry, and that’s what we’re doing now; board development and media marketing.”

Barbara Johnson, founder of Seeds of Harvest, a nonprofit organization

(continued from page 13)

One of the ways CDW achieves this is with its Training Calendar program that offers free sessions on the various aspects of nonprofit management. There you'll find courses pertaining to the nuts and bolts of grant writing, the procedure for forming a nonprofit, the purpose and nature of nonprofits, volunteer recruitment,

working with the media, recruitment and development for boards of directors, and basic financial management.

Barbara Johnson took a number of courses once she decided to form a nonprofit organization. She is the founder of Seeds of Harvest, a nonprofit organization which works to

(continued)

The place for me?

(continued)

enhance the quality of life for senior citizens by providing ordinary aid; necessary services for them that they can't provide for themselves. A nurse since 1975, Johnson had the strong desire to help elderly people stay out of a nursing home as long as possible. "Seeds of Harvest is the call on my life by God because I had no idea I would be doing this. I mean that's the truth. I just saw a need for the elderly people that live alone to have someone take care of them, to meet their needs and do things for them they can't do for themselves." Her help is offered in a number of ways. "What we do is sweep, mop, clean their bathrooms, change their beds, grocery shop, read their mail to them, help pay their bills; anything

(continued on page 16)

"I have lived in communities where these kinds of things were offered before but you had to pay 200, 500, a thousand dollars for what The Rapides Foundation is offering free."

Pastor Neil Early, founder of the Central Louisiana Storytellers Guild



Pastor Neil Early of the First Christian Church in Leesville and founder of the Central Louisiana Storytellers Guild and his wife Mary.

Training Calendar

The place for me?

(continued from page 15)

that they need that helps them stay at home," said Johnson. "I also find out anything I can about what's available for the senior citizens in the community, and then I take that information to them and later go out and get these things for the seniors. There's just such a great need for this."

While Johnson had fire and passion behind her idea to help the elderly, she didn't have any know-how about how to make her dream a reality. She went to Community Development Works for suggestions. She was given reference books, and ideas and advice on forming her own nonprofit organization, which of course she did. She also enrolled in classes offered in the Training Calendar program. Johnson felt her confusion begin to evaporate. "The classes that they offer are just so informative. They're showing me where I need to be and what I need to do to help make this ministry work so it will be a better, effective service to the elderly," Johnson stated with confidence. "It's amazing how things are moving. It's absolutely amazing."

All this information and training CDW provided made Johnson much more confident when she applied for a grant from The Rapides Foundation. "The grant has allowed us to get some structure in the ministry, and that's what we're doing now; board development and media marketing," said Johnson rushing on with the news that "since I started the media marketing we've already gotten 11 volunteers. That's just since last month and I'm really excited about it."

In Vernon Parish Pastor Neil Early of the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Leesville has also signed up for Training Calendar sessions. Almost 11 years ago, Early founded a nonprofit organization, the Central Louisiana Storytellers Guild, and for all but six months, has served as its president. He is also founder as well as the first and only president of the Louisiana Storytelling

Association. In his religious life he is the president of the Leesville Area Ministers Alliance (LAMA).

Unlike Johnson who had little experience with nonprofits, Early is steeped in nonprofit experience as he has sat on numerous boards and commissions throughout the years. But he wanted to know more. "I'm one of those who knows full well that I haven't learned everything there is to know yet, and if you've got something, I'm just probably going to be curious enough to find out what it is," said Early who felt the courses he and his wife sat in on were beneficial for "gaining in skills, and gaining in awareness." A feature of the sessions they particularly liked was the "hands-on" style. "All the workshops my wife and I have attended have had some major hands-on components where we got to do some things and get immediate feedback. We both appreciated the fact that the facilitators are always people who are open to actually being questioned on things."

Early also said the price was right. "I have lived in communities where these kinds of things were offered before but you had to pay 200, 500, a thousand dollars for what The Rapides Foundation is offering free."

Early also credits "some of the concepts and ideas from the training sessions" for laying the foundation for the formation by the Ministers Alliance of the Vernon Parish Community Coalition, which works under the credo that, "more of the organizations, and service groups, and civic groups could accomplish better things for communities if they would work together." He was joined in the efforts to develop the coalition by two other Leesville residents who had also gone through the CDW training: Leesville's newly elected mayor, Betty Westerchil and LeRoy Stokes, Director at the Martin Luther King Community Center.

(continued)

(continued)



“If you have a nonprofit organization that is stagnant, attending these courses can help revive it, and from where I sit that improves client care.”

*Donna Swisher, clinical supervisor
for the Allen Parish Outreach
Addictive Disorders Clinic*

Training Calendar

The place for me?

(continued from page 17)

So convinced of the value of the workshops, Early even worked with CDW to bring a couple of them to Leesville so area residents could get the benefit of these classes without the need to drive to Alexandria. "One of the things we have been doing is bringing Community Development Works 'on the road' here. Last year we brought in the basic grants class and this year we scheduled strategic planning and implementation."

Donna Swisher, the clinical supervisor for the Allen Parish Outreach Addictive Disorders Clinic is another one of the CDW Training Calendar alumni. She took the job at the clinic about a year and a half ago and knew she had work to do. The clinic's funding comes mainly from the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Addictive Disorders. In addition to her full-time duties as counselor, she also served as liaison to the clinic's 12-member board of directors. She had mounting questions about things like: a) how nonprofit boards work, and b) how best to deal with them, c) how to write a grant, and d) the remaining avalanche of issues she found herself confronted with and unsure about how best to proceed.

And the Training Calendar program gave her answers. "It increases my knowledge about what's available out there. It's a good way to network with other nonprofits. It also helps me be more confident about the organization I work for and how to get support for some changes that I want to make in the future," Swisher said.

One of the changes she wants to make is in the stagnation she fears her board is suffering. She's interested in finding ways to get them more focused and motivated. "Hopefully, while I'm here, I'm going to try to change some of that stagnation. Try to get them to realize that in order for the clinic to survive we have to have active people." Swisher wants to breathe more life into the organization, work to get more funding, and

encourage board members to also attend some of CDW's training seminars. "If you have a nonprofit organization that is stagnant, attending these courses can help revive it, and from where I sit that improves client care," she said. "I would recommend it for newly formed nonprofits to help structure their organizations or for nonprofits that have stagnated and need to regenerate themselves."

Over in Grant Parish, Avery Hamilton got together about a year ago with his brother, Gerald, (the current mayor of Colfax), and two other interested citizens (Ollie Goudeau and Greg Morris) to discuss this problem: "We have nothing here to really offer our youth. There's absolutely no community centers here, no Boys or Girls Clubs, nothing," bemoaned Hamilton. "There's absolutely nothing for children to do so we're having trouble with behavior and hanging out at late hours. So the first thing we wanted to do as a group was to have a community center." And not just any community center. Hamilton would like it to have a gym but also classrooms and exercise rooms. The center could also serve the needs of senior citizens.

To help achieve their goal they formed the nonprofit, Colfax Community Development Corporation, with Hamilton serving as its president. He had immersed himself in CDW training to help his fledgling group get off the ground and remain strong and focused.

(continued)



(continued)

“The information they disseminated was extremely helpful,” Hamilton said. “But even beyond that, meeting other individuals from other communities and sharing ideas with them and learning from them really enhanced the benefits of the training.”

Hamilton said two others in the organization plan to take CDW training classes. “Since I took the classes I have encouraged others to take them as well.”

In the meantime, they’ve had their first fundraiser and have already scheduled activities at various tentative sites while they build up their monetary resources to build a community center.

Community Development Works, through its Training Calendar program, is giving citizens all across Central Louisiana the knowledge and resources necessary to make major contributions to their communities and the lives of their neighbors.

“Since I took the classes I have encouraged others to take them as well.”

Avery Hamilton, Colfax Community Development Corporation president



Avery Hamilton, Colfax Community Development Corporation president visits with his daughters (l-r) Adriana Hamilton, Autumn Hamilton and Keira Jenkins at Colfax Elementary School.

Learning Lab

Everything you ever wanted to know about Nonprofits and then some

One of the truly great support mechanisms that has been developed by Community Development Works is the Learning Lab. This unique library contains over 500 resources, including books and articles, along with instructional audio and video tapes, that cover the gamut of issues surrounding nonprofit organizations and community development. Its online databases can help nonprofits to identify prospective funding sources; databases like The Foundation Center Directory, housing information on over 70,000 foundations worldwide.



Community Development Works
Learning Lab

The Learning Lab can help organizations find resources on new and innovative programs and offer a place to gather and network with other community leaders, board members, volunteers, and program officers. CDW also sponsors a number of Learning Lab training courses.

And the best thing of all is the personal assistance that is available to users of the Learning Lab. The CDW staff will always be on hand to help people locate, understand, and interpret the information they need, and further, to help them determine how best to make practical use of that information.



is published by The Rapides Foundation

*The Rapides Foundation continues
a legacy of community healthcare
initiated in 1903.*

President/CEO:

Joseph R. Rosier, Jr., CPA, CFA

Editor:

Vicki Bernard

Contributing Writer:

Anne L'Heureux

For additional copies or to be added
to the mailing list contact:
The Rapides Foundation
1101 Fourth Street, Suite 300
Alexandria, LA 71301

Tel: 318-443-3394

Fax: 318-443-8312

Toll Free: 1-800-994-3394

Internet: www.rapidesfoundation.org
e-mail: info@rapidesfoundation.org

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ALEXANDRIA, LA
PERMIT NO. 20