



Collaborate Kosciusko

a non-profit forum to further philanthropy

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Executive Summary

Kosciusko County has a strong tradition of philanthropy. The idea for Collaborate Kosciusko developed from a desire to honor that tradition by ensuring its presence in the future. To do this, we must equip the non-profit organizations serving our county with the essential tools to effectively provide needed services to our residents for years to come. This project began as an exploration to develop a tool that would do just that. As a result of our research, we discovered that what the non-profit community truly needs is more opportunities for collaboration.

It is from this understanding that we developed the idea for a non-profit forum that would bring leaders of the non-profit organizations serving Kosciusko County together to discuss trends, needs, current events, and to share resources. The quarterly meetings would also provide opportunities for face-to-face networking. By reaching out to other communities across the country, we have found other similar programs that have had great success. These forums have strengthened the organizations involved; ultimately impacting the residents being served.

Collaborate Kosciusko

A Non-Profit Forum to Further Philanthropy

Introduction

The term philanthropy is derived from the Greek word philanthropos which was coined to describe someone as loving mankind. If you were to look up philanthropy in the dictionary, you would find that it is still defined as having goodwill toward fellow man (Merriam-Webster). In more simple terms, we generally think of philanthropy as giving our time, talent, and treasure to help others. Kosciusko County has a strong tradition of philanthropy. The idea for Collaborate Kosciusko was developed from a desire to honor that past by bringing this tradition into the future. To do this, it is important that we continue to model the way for the future leaders of our community. This project began as an exploration to develop a tool to help strengthen the effectiveness of non-profit organizations serving our county so they could continue to provide needed services to our community for years to come.

Research

Survey Method

A survey was created to gain perspective on the administration of a non-profit organization and in what areas these organizations feel they need to improve. Topics included recruiting and retaining volunteers; training volunteers and board members; and the message the organization is trying to relay to the public. Currently, there are over 300 non-profit organizations (Internal Revenue Service) located in or providing

services to Kosciusko County. This list was narrowed down to include traditional non-profits providing services to our community. Therefore, churches, schools and government entities were removed from the list. A contact list of 109 individuals representing the identified non-profits was provided by the Kosciusko County Community Foundation. The survey was completed by 62 individuals, for a response rate of 57%.

Survey Data

Volunteers: The results were nearly split with 49% of organizations finding it difficult to recruit volunteers and 51% not finding it difficult. The number of volunteers organizations use ranges from 0-160 per week and 0-200 per month. The retention of volunteers was good with 95% of organizations saying half or more of their volunteers return after their first point of service. Of the 95%, 52.5% indicated that 75% of their volunteers return after their first time.

It was found that volunteers also represent varying demographics. The average age of a volunteer is 42 years, but the range spans from teens to retirees. A gap was identified in volunteers between post-college and becoming empty nesters.

Organizations with younger volunteers were youth-serving organizations in all cases. Nearly 46% of the responses said their volunteers were an even mix of males and females. The remaining organizations identified that males accounted for 13% and females for the other 41%. Respondents were asked to categorize their volunteers as follows: individuals (91.8%); students (49.2%); families (16.4%); church groups (19.7%); school groups (16.4%); work groups (19.7%); and other (16.4%).

Board of Directors: 70.5% of organizations currently provide training for their board members which ranges from meetings to retreats; packets to power points; and beyond. Of the 18 organizations which do not provide training, only half thought more training was needed. 61% of all respondents indicated they felt their board members need more training.

Messaging: Methods of communicating a non-profit's needs varied from social media (69.5%); website (72.9%); local newspapers (42.4%); face-to-face (89.8%); speaking engagements (61%); and other (37.3%) in which case the individual was asked to elaborate. When asked what message they wanted the general public to hear, most organizations stated their mission. Organizations listed numerous audiences as needing to hear their message with one broad theme...everyone.

Survey Findings

Based upon these results, we were unable to identify a single need in our non-profit community. Non-profits vary by age, size, field of service, expertise of staff, budget size, etc. The survey responses collected indicate that while each non-profit deals with similar day-to-day administration, the way in which they operate varies depending on their mission. While one organization may excel in a particular area, another may struggle. It is from this understanding that we identified a need for more opportunities to collaborate in order to strengthen one another.

By identifying this need, the idea to establish a non-profit forum in which organizations can share best practices, resources, needs, and community trends was developed. It is the intent of our team to initiate times for non-profits to meet regularly which will allow them to collaborate and capitalize on what others are doing well; essentially strengthening each other through the sharing of ideas. By working together and allowing each to do its part, the philanthropic future of Kosciusko County will be ensured.

Background

Past Efforts in Kosciusko County

Historically, the Kosciusko County Community Foundation and the United Way of Kosciusko County have been responsible for promoting collaborations among non-profit entities in our community. United Way hosted agency meetings from the mid-1990s until approximately 2007; however, these meetings were focused on agencies which received funding from United Way during this time. While United Way staff members were seen as hosts and facilitators for these meetings, many attempts were made to have executive directors of the partner agencies take responsibility for and leadership of these collaborative meetings. Patricia Coy, Executive Director of United Way, shared that she hoped agency meetings would become a place for an exchange of ideas, sharing of resources, and fostering support amongst directors and staff of non-profit agencies.

The Kosciusko County Community Foundation has also played an important role in fostering relationships between non-profit agencies through training and education.

The Community Foundation offers several workshops each year on popular topics of grant writing, marketing, development, and governance. They also host several events designed to match potential board members to non-profit entities seeking board involvement (KCCF).

According to Ken Locke, Director of Community Ministries through The Salvation Army in Warsaw, several formal and informal groups designed to bring together the staff of non-profit entities have resulted in the formation of Greater Warsaw Area Ministries and the creation of Volunteer Kosciusko. VolunteerKosciusko.org is an online clearing house, sponsored by United Way, for volunteer opportunities in our county. Non-profit entities are able to list their volunteer needs while residents are able to browse those opportunities to find possible matches.

Although it has been a resource in our area for about 20 years, the Indiana Non Profit Resource Network may be relatively unknown among local non-profit entities. There may be several reasons for this, among which may be a relatively high turnover among the staff of smaller non-profit agencies/programs. The Network was established in 1994/1995, borne out of the United Way/United Fund network of programs in Indiana and funded through the Lilly Endowment (Lamphier). The goal of this organization is to provide training and support to non-profit entities across Indiana. The Network is divided into five regions throughout the state so as to better provide local support to charitable organizations. Locally, the office for our region is housed in the offices of the United Way of Elkhart County. According to the northern Indiana regional director, Denise Lamphier, she works to support the work of non-profit entities by assisting

directors and staff through board trainings, volunteer development, time management, mission refinement, public relations and resource/fundraising development (INRN).

From a historical perspective, there have been many opportunities for charitable organizations to collaborate with each other; however, it appears these have not been viable for longer term success. In speaking with the professionals in our community, there remain many more possibilities to develop networking forums to assist non-profit entities to tap the volunteer and financial resources of Kosciusko County.

Current Efforts in Other Communities

Using a listserv made available through the Kosciusko County Community Foundation, we reached out to other community foundations across the country to see if other non-profit forums or similar programs existed and to determine whether or not such a program could be successful in our county. Responders were asked to share how often the group meets, attendance rates, who is invited to participate, and how the meetings are structured.

We found that several communities have similar programs and all have found many benefits to providing opportunities for non-profits to network. As one executive director stated, most non-profit organizations find it very helpful to meet face-to-face since turnover can be high in the non-profit world. Another community foundation indicated that they have seen organizations share resources and collaborate on certain community events based on relationships formed at these meetings.

Many communities have seen these groups as an opportunity to address community needs and bring awareness to current trends not only in their county, but

impacting the non-profit sector as a whole. One group in Virginia opens the meeting with a featured speaker to provide educational opportunities.

The frequency of meetings ranges from monthly, to quarterly, to only once or twice a year. Some groups have taken on the form of an agency or association in which organizations are asked to pay membership dues. Those dollars are then used to bring in speakers. Other groups no longer hold face-to-face meetings, but organizations have access to a county-wide listserv or Facebook group in which they can share events, needs, announcements, etc. Several communities mentioned a mixture of both online and face-to-face formats. All responders said that face-to-face meetings are well attended.

Based on these responses, we feel that a non-profit forum would be successful in Kosciusko County with the proper format. This type of program will foster collaboration, increase awareness of services, and strengthen our non-profit community; ultimately benefiting Kosciusko County as a whole.

Proposal

Steering Committee

Based on our research, we felt that it was important to establish a steering committee comprised of non-profit leaders within our county. This steering committee will provide feedback to our team regarding frequency of meetings and meeting format and agenda. They will also have input regarding topics for group discussion and educational opportunities. We believe that bringing this group together will also foster buy-in from non-profit organizations in our area.

Members of the steering committee were selected from organizations that responded to our initial survey. Our goal was to create a diverse committee that represented various types of non-profit agencies and had different levels of experience working in the non-profit sector. Based on these criteria, we identified four individuals. They were asked to make a commitment of one year: four steering committee meetings to provide feedback and plan four forums. The steering committee includes:

- Randy Hall, Cardinal Services
- Trina Hoy, Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Chad Zaucha, Kosciusko Community YMCA
- Amanda Zambrano, Grace Village

Meeting Format

The name of this forum will be Collaborate Kosciusko. It will be open to all non-profits that received our initial survey. Meetings will be held quarterly and will last approximately one hour. The Kosciusko County Community Foundation has agreed to host the meetings and provide staff time to coordinate both steering committee meetings and general forum meetings. Each meeting will consist of an educational component, a networking opportunity, and time for organizations to share announcements.

The educational component will provide an opportunity to bring in a speaker or allow local non-profits to share best practices that may benefit others. It is our expectation that the steering committee will provide suggestions for topics to create the

calendar for the first year. Then, we will ask attendees to make suggestions for future meetings.

The networking component will include some structured “table talk” with provided conversation starters to focus on best practices, topics of interest and areas of struggle. Time at the end of the meeting will be allotted for organizations to share upcoming events or needs to foster collaboration. It is through these three avenues that we hope to provide value to those attending the forum.

Conclusion

Based on feedback from non-profit organizations serving Kosciusko County, we have identified a need for collaboration. We feel that a non-profit forum is the best tool we can use to provide opportunities for collaboration. It is through collaboration that we will begin to strengthen our community by helping others and solidify the philanthropic future of Kosciusko County.

Northenor Award Proposal

Collaborate Kosciusko is doable, sustainable and impacts our entire county. Our group has already begun the process of establishing a non-profit forum in Kosciusko County by forming a steering committee and acquiring a sponsor to sustain the program. The Community Foundation has agreed to host the meetings and provide staff time to coordinate meetings. We have also identified a steering committee of four non-profit leaders that recognize the value of a forum to their individual organizations. The steering committee will work in tandem with our KLA group during the first year. However, our goal is to eventually allow the steering committee, as representatives of the non-profit community, to determine the future direction of the forums with Community Foundation staff maintaining the responsibility of meeting logistics.

The non-profit agencies in our county serve a diverse group of individuals and reach countless others through volunteer opportunities. It is difficult to determine the number of people in our county that are impacted by these organizations on a day-to-day basis. Invitations to attend the forums will be sent to the 109 organizations serving Kosciusko County who received our initial survey. It is our hope that as the forum develops the number of attendees will continue to expand.

As our team envisions the future of this forum, we are excited by the possibilities! We see the potential for a listserv that would connect organizations in between meetings, we see the flexibility of the forum to become anything that the organizations involved desire, most importantly, we see the forum strengthening Kosciusko County's non-profit community. The Northenor Award would assist in promoting the forum and securing a featured speaker for the first meeting to draw the attention of the non-profits

and establish some credibility to the forum. We envision the forum being here in Kosciusko County for years to come solidifying the philanthropic future of Kosciusko County by equipping non-profits to continue doing good in our community.

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Appendix

Power Point Presentation Slides