Over 500 conference attendees gathered at the Omni Hotel in New Haven on November 22, 2010. They represented many visions and many missions – yet they came together through the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits for one common purpose: the betterment of our communities.

The work that nonprofits perform is as varied and dynamic as the communities we serve – yet we are united around wanting to make our world a better place. This is the Power of Nonprofits. We are vision focused and mission driven. We are more than a bottom line – We are often a lifeline.

CT Nonprofits’ Annual Conference provides an opportunity to celebrate what it is to be a nonprofit, to come together and share ideas and inspiration. With a tremendous lineup of presenters and topics, attendees left the day both energized and armed with new strategies and ideas to implement at their organizations.

Keynote Address: Jan Masaoka
It’s Not About Surviving, or Even Thriving. It’s About Prevailing.

Jan Masaoka stood before the packed ballroom and proclaimed, “I think one of the reasons I was asked to speak to you today is because I’m a pessimist, which doesn’t just mean grumpy… Pessimism is about an assessment of the situation and optimism is an orientation of the spirit. So it’s quite possible to be pessimistic and optimistic at the same time… or [have] pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will.”

Jan was right – and not just about why she was asked to give the keynote address. As she explained, in order for nonprofits to prevail, we need to demonstrate optimism and act upon the needs of our communities. Right now, in the new economy, this requires nonprofit leaders to change the way they think and act.

Jan Masaoka is a leading writer and thinker on nonprofit organizations, with particular emphasis on boards of directors, business planning, and the role of nonprofits in society. She is Director & Editor in Chief of Blue Avocado (www.blueavocado.org), author of The Best of Board Café, and former Executive Director of CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, which she led for 14 years.

Her experience has given her many insights into the power of nonprofits; where we stumble; and how our outlook and vocabulary frame the way we run our organizations, and influence how we are perceived.

On shifting from surviving to prevailing

During the economic downturn, there has been a lot of talk about surviving. Jan argues that nonprofits “need to move away from the word ‘survive’ and substitute the word ‘prevail’…”

Surviving or thriving is about ourselves and is about growing. Prevailing is about other people, creating and being part of a community.” That’s what nonprofits are really all about.

“We tend to have the attitude that nonprofits are about ‘us’ helping ‘them’… but we’re really about ‘us’ helping ‘us’. Nonprofits are the way in which a community organizes to help itself.”

This shift in perspective can help nonprofits to “think a little bit less about what we want to achieve and ask instead ‘who is our constituency and what do they need us to achieve? … What kind of organization do they need us to be?’”

“Poverty, race, environmental health and democracy are the big causes that we are all, as a community, working on and benefiting from; and it’s exactly in these particular lights that we must change our outlook from trying to survive, which is about us, to trying to prevail, which is about our constituencies and what they need us to be right now.”

Continued on next page ▶
On making hard decisions

“The reality is that a decision is hard when a decision is unpopular.” Because of the rapidly changing economy, we are being forced to make decisions faster, which means, “We have less time to develop consensus. It means we are going to have to make more unpopular decisions.”

When an executive director makes an unpopular decision that helps ensure the long-term success of the organization, the board needs to support that decision. And while we can’t be proud of layoffs or cutting our programs, “We can be proud to be organizations that put our constituents above immediate organizational needs.”

We need to “get past the idea that growth equals good… Instead of priding ourselves just on growing… we need to be proud of our ability to grow and shrink different parts of our organizations… and [of] throwing out our strategic plan six weeks after we adopted it because it isn’t relevant any more.”

In order to facilitate critical thinking in our organizations, we can declare an emergency. “By declaring an emergency, we give everyone permission to think more creatively and to think of bigger and more dramatic ideas.”

On optimism

The power of nonprofits lies in our relationship with our communities. “We create so much more than our unduplicated service hours. We create networks of relationships that become important for lots of different things… We create symbols of community life.”

It’s not statistics about our service numbers that inspire volunteers, “It’s what we stand for in addition to what we do.” Optimism becomes the key to doing more than surviving. “Prevailing is about looking at what is really meaningful. It’s looking at other parts of our mission… the community we are building… and the sense of hope and optimism that people are building, and we should claim that as the mission of

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2010 Legislative Award
Senator Don DeFronzo

First elected in 2002 representing the 6th Senatorial District comprised of New Britain, Berlin and the easternmost portion of Farmington, Senator Don DeFronzo was recently elected to his 5th term in the General Assembly. He has chaired the Transportation Committee and has been a member of the Finance Revenue & Bonding Committee where he co-chairs the General Bonding Subcommittee. He also sits on the Environment and Program Review & Investigations Committee.

Prior to a legislative career Senator DeFronzo worked in state and municipal government as well as the nonprofit sector. He served at the Office of Policy & Management for 13 years and was New Britain’s Mayor from 1989 to 1993. His nonprofit career included employment at CW (then Constructive Workshop), the Connecticut Association for Human Services and most notably was the Executive Director of HRA (Human Resources Agency) Community Action Agency from 1995-2002 – a sizeable nonprofit in New Britain.

As Chair of the Transportation Committee he has worked with CT Nonprofits and our members to clarify and streamline complex and often contradictory standards and regulations that increased costs and hindered nonprofit providers.

His recognition of the contribution that nonprofits offer to the health and economic vitality of our towns, cities and communities has been embodied in

Continued on next page
part of our whole mission.”

“When you look at the for-profit sector and the nonprofit sector, the strategy is the same if we start with the question, ‘What do we want to achieve?’ What’s unique about the nonprofit sector is instead starting with our constituencies, our communities, and asking ‘What does our community need us to be doing right now?’”

On pursuing vision

Finally, Jan challenged the audience to shift the way they pursue vision. “As individuals we choose nonprofits as the vehicle by which to achieve our vision.”

For example, she said that, “Instead of asking, ‘What can the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits do for me?’ ask ‘What is my vision for the CT nonprofit sector and how can I make use of the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits in order to achieve that vision?’”

As we strive as a sector to create thriving communities, we ask that you follow Jan’s sage advice – Ask yourself how your Association can be used to achieve our joint vision for Connecticut. Then call us, tell us, and get involved. We are here to help nonprofits help Connecticut. Together, we can address the needs of our communities, and prevail for those we serve.

Nonprofits and the Changing Media Landscape: Attracting the Attention Your Cause Deserves
By Christa Allard, Connecticut Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure

Too often, nonprofits don’t receive media coverage for the great work they do – This is not a secret to those of us

in the field. But while we struggle with competing priorities and, in some cases, a lack of specialized staff trained in media relations, some of the obstacles facing nonprofits are out of our internal control.

As Christine Stuart, Founding Editor-In-Chief for CTNewsJunkie puts it, we have a “shrinking media landscape.”

Competition for coverage is greater than ever, due in part to smaller staffs at Connecticut newspapers.

But Keith Phaneuf, State Capitol Reporter for The Connecticut Mirror, thinks nonprofits have a more complex problem. “Shrinking budgets, less experienced staff with no institutional memory and less training” at newspapers also contribute to reduction in coverage.

Feeling frustrated? A panel of media specialists offered the following tips to work within the changing media landscape and get the attention of reporters.

Don’t ask for a meeting over coffee.

This get-to-know-you technique is old fashioned and no longer appreciated. It takes research, but learn how a reporter prefers to be contacted. Facebook, phone calls and email are all possibilities, but one size won’t fit all.

And, of course, making contact doesn’t automatically mean your story will be told. “You need to hone your message in order to get my attention,” Susan Campbell, Features Writer for the Hartford Courant said.

Be loyal.

Persistence can pay off. Even if a reporter is unable to publish a nonprofit’s story the first several times they pitch ideas, these steps are essential in creating the

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the various Bonding Acts approved by the General Assembly.

Senator DeFronzo has demonstrated his belief of investment in the nonprofit community through the maintenance of bond funds for various nonprofit purposes including fire, health, safety & ADA accessibility compliance, repairs, renovations, systems upgrades, and down payment assistance. Even as pressure to reduce bonding funds has mounted, Senator DeFronzo has continued a steadfast commitment to preserve nonprofit access to capital resources for housing, open space, economic development, early childhood education, arts projects, parks, hospitals, and community health and social services.

Most recently Senator DeFronzo was the moving force behind the creation of the Nonprofit Collaboration Incentive Grant program administered by the Office of Policy & Management which provides fiscal incentives to nonprofits which collaborate.

At the heart of his knowledge and experience is the nonprofit community. We thank him for his vision and leadership in areas important to the nonprofit sector and for making our communities a better place.

Christine Stuart, Founding Editor-In-Chief, CTNewsJunkie

Brad Drazen, NBC Connecticut Anchor, moderates the Media Panel Discussion

Norman Bell, Editor, Hartford Business Journal
2010 Legislative Award
Representative John Geragosian

Since 1994, John Geragosian has represented the citizens of the eastern and central portions of New Britain. He is the senior member of a high impact delegation of New Britain legislators. He has served on the Insurance and Real Estate and Legislative Management Committees. In 2008 Representative Geragosian was appointed as House Chair of Appropriations after having served as House Majority Caucus Chair and Assistant Majority Leader.

In his first term as Co-Chair of the Appropriations Committee, Representative Geragosian distinguished himself in asserting that the budget would not be balanced at the expense of our state’s most vulnerable residents. He has been a staunch defender of the social safety net and maintaining the essential services that more and more people are finding themselves in need of. He is also an outspoken advocate of universal healthcare, living wages, and changing the states burdensome property tax system.

Representative Geragosian is known for his willingness to listen and fight for what he believes in. This past year he ensured that funding was included in the budget to allow domestic violence shelters to be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Representative Geragosian is a constant presence and support for local nonprofit. His volunteer involvement and commitment to nonprofits in New Britain, and across the state is only outdistanced by his love of UCONN Basketball.

We thank Representative Geragosian for his unwavering leadership and commitment to the nonprofit community.

relationship. “Reporters are like stray cats,” Phaneuf said. “We will go back to the houses that leave food out.”

Be timely…or timeless.
Go beyond check presentations and ribbon cuttings, and “look for how your nonprofit can plug into existing opportunities,” said Norman Bell, Editor of The Hartford Business Journal.

“Nonprofits can be a way to broaden coverage,” said Brad Drazen, NBC Connecticut Anchor, especially when nonprofits can tie their news into a story already making headlines.

“You can deliver to me information I can’t get on my own,” Susan Campbell added.

Still, Drazen warned that “between 30% and 75% of what is scheduled doesn’t run because of the day’s happenings,” when breaking news takes priority. But because not all nonprofits’ stories are urgent in nature, this can work to their advantage. Pitch stories that can run a week or month after submission and remain relevant. This will allow for reporters to keep on top of breaking news and use nonprofits’ stories on slower news days.

Bypass the reporter.
This strategy may be right for certain stories or audiences, but be smart about it.
Editorials may be a way to go straight to publishing, but they need to be perfect. Keep them short and focused, use accurate statistics, and if you can piggyback on news already being covered, there’s a greater chance of publication.

Social media outlets may also be a way to cut out the reporter as middle man. Know your demographic for every story, and it just may be appropriate to put the news in front of people where they are, on Facebook or Twitter.

Create Powerful Partnerships: Inspire Greater Investment in the Community
By Richard J. Scaldini, Ph.D., Spearpoint Strategy Advisors

Nancy Roberts, President of the CT Council on Philanthropy, moderated an excellent panel of foundation representatives who addressed key characteristics of the recent and current philanthropic environment, including the non-grant activities of the foundations. The panelists included: Kate Miller, Executive Director, The Fund for Greater Hartford; Linda J. Kelly, President, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving; Susan M. Ross, President/CEO, Fairfield County Community Foundation; and Sue Murphy, Executive Director, Liberty Bank Foundation.

The philanthropic sector has spent the last year helping its nonprofit clientele to cope with extraordinary circumstances. This is not to say that the foundations themselves did not face crisis circumstances. From their peak in 2007, asset values at most foundations fell dramatically in 2008, often by as much as 25 or 30%. These contractions had an obvious negative effect on giving capacity. In 2009 and 2010, the foundations saw some recovery in asset values, but they are still not back to their 2007 levels. Despite these setbacks, the foundations have been resourceful in maintaining their giving as much as possible by seeking
support for their local programs from national foundations with similar program interests.

The central concern of both panelists and participants was the general state of philanthropy and how it was responding to the needs of the nonprofit sector in a still troubled economy. Each panelist recounted how their respective institutions had adjusted giving criteria in the past year to reflect the dire economic conditions, reductions in state support, and rapidly increasing demands for human services. Each foundation had found itself making more transitional operating support: that is, grants designed to address shortfalls in operating funds as traditional sources contracted or dried up.

It was expected that such giving would continue in the coming year despite evidence of an improving economy. Many of the problems that have shaken nonprofit organizations – foremost among them, the state budget deficit – will persist and leave organizations underfunded in their core operations. The panelists emphasized that they did not consider the contraction in state funding to be a cyclical phenomenon that would eventually correct itself. They recommended scenario planning and fundamental business analysis to determine how nonprofits should adjust to enduring changes in their sources of support.

Recognizing the depth of the economic crisis, the foundations also made available to nonprofit organizations educational programs designed to help them revise their business models and deal with environmental changes that were likely to be long-lasting. The panelists advised the nonprofit participants to seek out collaborations that could share expenses and resources. While mergers came up as a solution for seriously threatened nonprofits, a range of combinations short of merger was also proving effective. Nonprofits are seeking – and foundations welcome – capacity-building grants designed to help organizations adjust their business models to new realities.

In concluding, the panelists expressed optimism that economic indicators were trending positively, but also made clear that the stress and strain were not yet over.

**Courageous Community Leadership: Creating Capacity for Community and Leaders**

*By Christina Dokas-Friedman, M.A., The Mary Wade Home*

Finding balance as a leader requires self-assessment. Dr. Heidi Brooks, Director of the Leadership Development Program at Yale University, challenged her audience of leaders to ask one another, “What keeps you going?” Brooks asserted that leaders are responsible for “the vulnerable place where your works comes from, and inspiring others to do the same.”

At the heart of leadership is passion and the individual’s ability to defend it. This starts with articulating vision. If a leader cannot easily express their vision, they cannot illustrate it to potential supporters. Additionally, Dr. Brooks explained that during difficult economic times, courageous community leadership necessitates a core balance of relevance, rigor, and relationships. Relevance is a leader’s awareness of context, strategy, and consequential decisions, as they affect a time-sensitive system. Rigor is a leader’s vision of producing results to the highest standards available, using the best tools and practices. The leader’s creative capacity to grow and maintain effective relationships develops “buy-in” to community structure.

Brooks also challenged the group to understand how their emotions motivate their leadership styles and create progressive leadership. As leaders we consciously “balance out our impact” of relevance, rigor, and relationship to satisfy the heart of our visionary goals.

A large part of becoming a leader is modeling values through “your own discernment process.” Discernment is not merely listening to the self, but also listening to individuals and the community, and understanding the interaction of all three. Dr. Brooks asked attendees to perceive others and ourselves for differences, similarities, and gaps between our value systems. She argued that we cannot be “everything at once,” but we can be a “balance.” By assessing one another, we saw how others perceive our visions, and where there is need for improvement.

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**Senator Toni Harp receives the Legislative Award**

**2010 Legislative Award Senator Toni N. Harp**

Senator Toni Harp of the 10th Senatorial District representing western New Haven and northern West Haven was recently elected to her 10th consecutive term in the General Assembly. She continues for a fourth term (we expect) as the Chair of the Appropriations Committee while also serving on the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee.

Today in lauding the impressive record of Senator Harp, we are also honoring one of our own. For more than two decades Senator Harp has been employed in the nonprofit sector serving as the Homeless Service Coordinator & Director at the Cornell Scott Hill Health Center here in New Haven.

Nonprofits in the City of New Haven and throughout the State have been well served by her understanding of nonprofits importance to diverse communities. There are very few major legislative initiatives affecting the health & social welfare of Connecticut that have not had Toni Harp’s fingerprints on them.

After all this time, Senator Harp remains the individual legislator with the greatest understanding of the intricacies and complexities of health care and entitlement policy and regulation.

Senator Harp has been an unrelenting advocate for health care for children, families, and the uninsured, including mental health parity and eliminating disparities in health care, HIV/AIDS and other essential public health related matters. She is also a champion of child welfare and juvenile justice reform, supportive housing, economic development, education and arts & culture. Over the years, she has helped rescue many vital programs and services from cuts, gaping wounds, and fatal blows.

We are incredibly grateful for her commitment and devotion to nonprofits and those we serve and support.
Courageous community leaders must take three important actions:

1. Clearly identify and articulate your center/core/heart/purpose – “It is the core of your courage.”

2. Learn about your impact and how to balance perspectives for effectiveness. See both individual and organizational levels of analysis. Engage in relationships, provide relevance, and practice rigor in leadership.

3. Practice having increasing impact. Leadership develops with practice. Practicing with rigor “brings you to the game with familiarity, with an unconscious competence.”

The “drive” behind courageous community leadership is the implementation of core purpose through the balance of the three perspectives. Brooks urges us to see “the heart as the source of emotion” illustrating the leaders we are and will become. In order to become the leader you wish to be, you must first acknowledge the leader you are now and challenge yourself to find the necessary balance of values.

Nonprofit Sustainability: Developing Your Business Plan
By Sarah-Jane Ripa, Green Street Arts Center of Wesleyan University

Many nonprofit leaders still do not believe that it is possible to function like a good business without “feeling corporate.” This mind-set often results in organizations that are not efficient, well run, sustainable, or able to fulfill their mission. Jan Masaoka’s afternoon session, “Build Your Business Plan in 2 Hours,” addressed the misconceptions about nonprofit business planning and presented effective decision-making processes for nonprofit leaders to consider in overall and individual program planning.

Successful nonprofit business models, “Involve both financial viability AND mission impact,” and “are about how your activities (program and fundraising) fit together, and leverage each other.” This duality distinguishes nonprofit business planning from corporate strategies.

To efficiently and quickly assess and improve the nonprofit business model, leaders should create a snapshot. On a matrix; the horizontal axis represents profitability and the vertical axis represents impact. Each area of focus (i.e., Major Donors, After School Program, Newsletter) can be assessed in terms of its scope and placed on the matrix to present “a single compelling image,” making next steps easier to plan.

Programs high in impact but low in profitability are “Hearts” – They should be celebrated, costs should be contained, and they have to be open to change, not made into ‘Sacred Cows’ or closed because of low-profitability. “Stars” are high in...
Nonprofit leadership must be flexible and open to change in order to effectively fulfill organizational missions and serve communities.

Often people are afraid to ask for money due to lack of training, misconceptions, past bad experiences, vulnerability, and unrealistic expectations. However, asking for money face-to-face “is the most effective, sustainable way to raise money, regardless of age.”

To help fundraisers conquer the face-to-face, Bryan’s workshop examined resistance to asking for money; explored a paradigm that can reduce those fears; and discussed the art and science of face-to-face solicitations.

“Integrity is the single most important factor that impacts fundraising success for any organization,” Bryan explained. Fundraisers need to build trust between the donor and their organization.

Cultivating a relationship with a donor before soliciting money helps build that trust. “If you ask for money, you will get advice. If you ask for advice, you will get money.” When someone is personally engaged with an organization, they will have confidence in the organization’s leadership and believe in the mission.

Rebecca Bryan – Rebecca M. Bryan, CFRE, President, R. Bryan Associates, LLC, instructs a full class on Making the Ask: The Art and Science of Asking for Money Face to Face

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Eventually, with a direct ask, charity will follow.

Prior to asking for a meeting, fundraisers must be prepared by being good listeners. Message and tone of voice is crucial. “A solicitor must be proud, positive, happy and sincere,” Bryan said. Handle all objections with courtesy—but focus on your main goals and objectives. Always follow up by thanking the donor with a handwritten note signed by you or from your organization.

Creating Brand Ambassadors: Stop Speaking ‘Nonprofit’ and Get Your Organization’s Story Straight

By Jessica Ciparelli, CT Early Childhood Alliance

Hannah Brazee Gregory, the founder and chief creative officer of Shoestring Creative Group, asked two members of a nonprofit organization—staff and a board member—what their organization does. Neither answered the question the same way.

If your explanation of what your organization does “sounds like your mission statement,” then you are

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“Speaking ‘nonprofit,’” said Gregory. “[We think] we do great work, so how can people not like us? That’s the nonprofit mantra, but we have to talk to people so they understand us.”

Gregory’s session aimed to help further the missions of nonprofits through marketing communications. She explained that branding is made up of two segments—1) What people assume about your organization, based on your logo or your name, and 2) Whatever promise you are communicating to the world. “Brand equity” is how well you’re living up to that promise and perceived at doing that job.

“People used to think that your logo was your brand,” Gregory said. “It’s an extension of your brand. Your logo should represent your organization well,” but it is not the entire picture.

Gregory discussed the importance of an “elevator speech,” a short introductory speech that is simple enough for the average person to comprehend. “We say too much when someone asks about our organizations—Would you do that on a first date? No, you’d scare them away. You want to hold back a little. Find one thing you can say to get people to want to know more—Don’t just blurt out everything. You want to answer the ‘what’ and the ‘so what,’” Gregory said.

For organizations that include a wide variety of programs and offerings, Gregory said there is no way to cover everything in branding. Often, an organization can use one uniform brand with several subcategories.

Gregory noted that it is important to sit down with the organization’s staff and board members to see if each has a similar statement, or if they are simply reciting the mission statement. Armed with a number of tools to conduct simple communications audits, participants left ready to get their stories straight.

Strategic Financial Management: The Strategy in Presentation

By Michael P. Sandner, Esq., Hartford Stage Company

Presentation. Presentation. Presentation. The way a nonprofit presents its financial statements, both internally and externally, is key (1) in projecting future needs and (2) in making strategic decisions for the organization. Both the board and senior management must be able to look to their financials, understand the organization’s fiscal health, and communicate that health to the appropriate constituents in an appropriate format as needed. Without that knowledge and asset in hand, the organization might not grow to its full potential.

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A majority of funders typically expect an organization’s financial statements to be on accrual basis of accounting, within the General Accepted Accounting Policies (GAAP) and Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB), in order to get a complete picture of the organization’s fiscal health. The cash basis of accounting, the other measure of financial performance, records revenue only when received and expenses only when paid, as accrual basis of accounting records revenue when commitment has been made/received and expenses when incurred. Typically, organizations that have very little uncollected income and unpaid bills at year-end may use the cash basis of accounting as the preferred method. If your organization chooses cash basis of accounting, you can maintain your records on that basis; however, you must make accrual adjustments either throughout the year or at year-end (13th period or month accounting allows for this accrual adjustment).

The way a nonprofit presents its financial statements is also key to outside constituents evaluating the success of the nonprofit. How the financials are presented can change how a reader views the organization – either in a more positive or negative light. Each statement within a nonprofit’s audited financials can tell a reader about the organization’s past, current, and future activities and obligations and how likely the organization will succeed in the future. There are four key places to look in the nonprofit’s audited financials: (1) the statement of financial position, (2) the statement of activities, (3) the statement of cash flow, and (4) the footnotes. A reader can get 70% of the information they need from looking at the footnotes. The statement of financial position presents the organization’s assets, liabilities, and net assets (equity) as of a specific date. The statement of activities presents all the organization’s financial transactions for a specific period, resulting in increases/decreases in the organization’s net assets. The statement of cash flows presents the organization’s cash receipts and payments for a specific period, categorized by operating, investing, and financing activities.

Financial statements should be as detailed as possible to the reader. A reader should look across restrictions and whether certain assets are current or non-current to get that better picture of the organization’s vitality. The ratio distribution among these details is critical. Three key restrictions in any detailed financial statement are: unrestricted, temporarily restricted on time or purpose, and permanently restricted support. The unrestricted column in any statement of activities reflects the basic premise on whether the organization raised and earned enough money to cover all operating expenses needed for the year. Temporarily restricted support can only be released once a condition has been met either on time (support earned for a future period) or purpose (for a specific program). Purpose restrictions always trump time restrictions. Permanently restricted support reflects revenue that cannot be invaded because of a donor’s intentions/wishes. The interest generated from that restriction can be used to fund the specific purpose of the intended gift.

The audit footnotes disclose vital financial and non-financial information about the organization, such as contingencies/future commitments or obligations, depreciation methods, the strength of the fair value of investments and endowments, net assets breakdown,
any conditional grants that cannot be booked but must be disclosed, and whether unaudited collections can be disclosed.

The financial statements of an organization can paint a bigger picture about its strength and vitality, so it’s important that an organization’s financial staff, senior management, and board members give proper consideration/respect to this important issue.

**Corporate Collaborations: A Roadmap for Engaging Corporate Support**  
*By Melissa Mangini, Public Allies*

Michael Feller and Greg King of Strategic Philanthropy Advisors asked those in the room if their organizations already had strategic plans, and out of those, how many had corporate partners in those plans? Feller and King explained that corporate contributions account for approximately 4% of private donations annually; direct and foundation cash donations make up half of that number, while non-cash giving, such as donations of manpower or facilities, make up another 50%.

Feller and King encouraged nonprofits to look beyond the cash donation, since many corporations have plenty of other resources available. In-kind donations, for example, can include the free use of space and facilities, used equipment from downsized departments, or professional services. “People Power” can come from bringing corporate officers onto the boards of nonprofit organizations; recruiting corporate volunteers for team-building projects; or enlisting “executives on loan,” in which a corporation might be willing to allow a senior employee to serve at a nonprofit in a problem-solving capacity for a month or two. Endorsements can go both ways, as well – a nonprofit can charge a corporation for sponsorship or advertising at an event, while a company might better sell a product if the proceeds benefit a cause.

Forming a partnership with a big-business neighbor might not be as difficult as one might imagine. Corporations are often motivated to seek associations with nonprofits for their own benefit. A corporation might find it lucrative to be perceived as socially responsible – which can ensure a solid and positive reputation with clients and stakeholders, or gain the company visibility and credibility by participating in a far-reaching community event. The more established a nonprofit is, the more attractive they are as partners to a corporation.

Your mission is important to a corporation – so start talking about it! Tell your stories and tug at heartstrings to begin a corporate collaboration.

**3 Steps to Enhance Your (Emerging) Leadership Impact**  
*By Christy Kovel, Alzheimer’s Association Connecticut Chapter*

The demand for leaders is growing and the nonprofit sector needs to prepare for the next generation of leadership while fulfilling the promise of its mission. “It’s time to get on our toes with leadership development,” said presenter Meghan Lowney in her opening statement. Lowney’s passion for leadership is evident in her design and facilitation of the Leadership Development Roundtable Program, a practical, hands-on leadership development series for Connecticut’s rising nonprofit leaders eager to build their skills and their network.

Panelists Carrie Kramer, Alissa
DeJonge, Jamie Donoghue, Jennifer Carroll, and Takeia McAlister shared insights into their own areas of strength and development in their personal leadership journey. One panelist noted the difference between managing in an organization and being a good leader – Often, leaders are born from transitions within an organization. Additionally, several panelists observed that acknowledging personal areas of development was beneficial to establishing goals that promote personal and professional growth.

Following the panel discussion, participants were asked to complete an individual work plan focusing on four key areas: Vision of Change, Action for Change, Resources/Support Needed, and Results and Accountability. Panel members were engaged with participants to provide support and answer questions. Small discussion groups around the work plans encouraged dialogue and made for a valuable learning experience.

Throughout the presentations and discussion, it was evident that nonprofit organizations need to make investments in the talents of existing staff in order to sustain and grow their organizations and achieve maximum long-term social impact.

Together, we will prevail.

CT Nonprofits’ Annual Conference strives not only to inform attendees, but also to serve as a reminder of why we work in this sector. This year’s conference celebrated the power of nonprofits, which lies in our vision for our communities and the relentless pursuit of our missions. Your Association remains fixed on helping nonprofits help Connecticut. Please, use us as a means to harness your power.

Thank you to those who supported and participated in our conference. More importantly, thank you for all that you do for our communities.

Jessica Lyon, Vice President, Co-Communications, Inc., receives one of the 150 toys collected as part of NBC Connecticut’s Joy of Sharing Toy Drive to benefit the United Way and Toys For Tots.

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