

## Examples of Excellence Presented at 2014 Best Practices Workshop

### Leake & Watts

[www.leakeandwatts.org](http://www.leakeandwatts.org)

Founded as an orphanage in 1831, Leake & Watts continues to provide support today to thousands of children, adults and families each day so they can achieve success tomorrow through a wide variety of early childhood, child welfare, developmental disabilities, special education, and juvenile justice programs.

**Year Founded: 1831**                      **Budget: \$75,324,825**  
**Full-time Staff: 860**                      **Part-time Staff: 239**                      **Volunteers: 441**  
**Executive Director: Alan Mucatel**                      **Board President: G. Crossan Seybolt, Jr.**

#### Overall Management Focus on Results

- Strong use of strategic plan and data to drive results and ensure goals are met
  - Hired Chief Strategy Officer to lead efforts in achieving strategic plan goals
- Implemented a Mission Effectiveness Plan that ensures consistent mission-driven action
- Created Performance Effectiveness Indicators (PEIs) in each program area to measure and understand impact across the organization
  - Developed 39 individual PEIs, outcomes measurements, beyond those required by funders; outcomes measurement drives organizational success
- Develop programs based on community need and mission alignment
- Identifies emerging trends in community/industry through a Risk Management Committee
- Considers staff and persons supported input into strategic plan as well as annual assessment to inform goals
- Created interdepartmental matrix to fine-tune and improve internal referral process for needed services
- Turns program challenges into opportunities to learn and improve programming overall
- Launched many evidence-based models to improve outcomes for children and families
- Proactively identifies industry trends such as movement to Managed Care and engages board and colleagues in preparation
- Creating person-centered, change-oriented, trauma - informed approach across multiple divisions of service (PROMISE)

#### Governance Structure that Moves the Organization Forward

- Utilizes ad-hoc committees to address specific needs that arise
- Clearly defines job descriptions, fundraising responsibilities, and committee membership expectations for board members
- 100% Board giving
- Invite a guest speaker from a featured program to every board meeting
- Board assesses Executive Director's performance each year
- Board engages in annual self-assessment; Governance Committee reviews results and addresses performance gaps accordingly
- Aligns recruitment efforts with governance needs and strategic priorities
- Assigns board members to two distinct committees – one quantitative, one qualitative

- Proactively recruiting new board members through formal and informal means, and cultivating current and future board leaders in anticipation of 25% turnover from long time members in the next few years
- Developed a formal contingency plan that ensures the organization is able to temporarily fill critical positions with pre-identified staff and is fully prepared to continue operations and assure excellence service
- Created Associate Executive Director position to ensure a succession plan for the Executive Director; filled the position with a candidate able to step in for the Executive Director at a moment's notice

### **Strong, Transparent and Accountable Financial Management**

- Created ad hoc Debt Finance Committee to restructure long-term debt
- Budgets are in line with the strategic plan
- Program Directors meet with CFO and Executive Director as part of budget process
- Closely monitors census and programs running a deficit to ensure timely corrective action
- Engaged a consultant to help “non-finance” board members understand financial statements and meet fiduciary responsibility
- Instituted a centralized purchasing processes as a cost savings measure
- Quality Assurance Department improved system of financial oversight

### **Inclusive, Diverse and Responsive Organizational Practices**

- Language Committee audits and develops terminology to describe constituents and work (commitment to cultural sensitivity)
  - Staff is trained on new language expectations
- Staff profile reflects community served
- Thoughtful approach to working with partners and creating relationships with local elected officials and other community leaders who represent target audiences
- Attends neighborhood organization meetings to assess and prioritize community needs
- Agency-wide Undoing Racism Workgroup creating a mandate and statement regarding institutional racism that ties back to organization's core values
- Supports bilingual hiring by providing a salary addition for new hires that speak a language clients require

### **Enlightened Use of Human Resources**

- Uses annual employee survey results to inform new employee initiatives and policy changes
- Created an Employee Referral System with a bonus for staff that refer new employees who stay for at least a year
- Emphasis on staff development and training
  - Mission-driven service training for all staff; included as part of new employee onboarding
  - Conducted agency-wide assessment of training needs; new trainings were introduced; trainings tailored to specific jobs/programs were offered
  - Provides Management Training for managers and supervisors agency-wide
  - Senior Management team participates in a leadership diagnostic to identify strengths and weaknesses
- Competency-based (tied to core values) performance evaluations with 100% participation
- Offers tuition reimbursement and salary increases for employees who receive higher education degrees
- Recognizes employees annually with awards based on organization's core values
- Implemented Universal Team Meetings: opportunity for entire staff to celebrate accomplishments and receive updates from senior management
- Coaching model includes bi-weekly 1-to-1 supervision for all employees across the agency with training for supervisors
- Introduced competency-based hiring process that relies on behavior-based interviewing

- New hires evaluated after 6 months; annual performance reviews thereafter; performance reviews are based on program and organizational goals and include development of personal goals
- Performance evaluations revised to reflect core values

### **Appropriate and Reliable Information Technology Systems**

- Places emphasis and investment in technology (part of strategic plan)
- Management Information Systems Team dedicated to updating hardware and software across 22 sites
- Developed in-house client information system
- Launched an in-house Help Desk to assist staff with IT issues
- Technology Planning Committee ensures that staff have access to technology and are appropriately trained
- Technology team works closely with management and the strategic plan priorities to ensure effective service delivery
- Implemented Alert Now System to send mass updates to staff

### **Regular and Effective Communications and Use of Communications Technology**

- Annual communications plan created by Institutional Advancement Committee and approved by the Board
  - Plan directly tied to programmatic and development efforts
  - Plan ensures consistent messaging and branding in multiple communications channels
- Expertise in crisis communications; focus on transparency
- Assess and prioritize community needs through two-way communications
  - Parent Committees provide feedback
- Revamped internal website (intranet) to be a resource for staff, including relevant forms and a calendar of events
- Keep staff informed via agency-wide Quarterly Employee Newsletter

### **Effective, Ethical Fundraising and Resource Development**

- All staff involved in fundraising efforts
  - Employee Giving Campaign; offers bi-weekly payroll deduction
  - Staff-initiated fundraising activities
- Lowered cost of dollar raised from special events by 50%
- Created Volunteer Manager position to grow volunteer corps and engage corporate partners to provide program support and bolster fundraising

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### Row New York

[www.rownewyork.org](http://www.rownewyork.org)

Based in Queens and Manhattan, Row New York empowers youth from under-resourced communities to build strength, gain confidence, and pursue excellence through the competitive sport of rowing, paired with academic support.

**Year Founded: 2002**

**Budget: \$1,828,000**

**Full-time Staff: 24**

**Part-time Staff: 13**

**Volunteers: 80**

**Founder & Executive Director: Amanda Kraus**

**Board Chair: David Huntington**

#### Overall Management Focus on Results

- Effective use of consultants to complete the team
  - Worked with Arbor Brothers Foundation to create a 3-year financial model for expansion
  - Worked with TCC Group to hone program goals and metrics including fitness, academic, and social-emotional growth.
- Tie staff performance evaluations to refined program metrics
- Conduct regular internal review and assessment of both big picture and day-to-day organizational details
  - Track data to show how “on mission” the organization is
- Scale programs in a careful, planned way
- Frequently evaluates where the organization could be better; commitment to continuous learning
- Use “teach back” sessions as a way of reinforcing shared outcomes across departments

#### Governance Structure that Moves the Organization Forward

- 100% Board give/get participation
- Board has written job descriptions with detailed expectations of time, expertise, attendance at events and Board meetings, participation with constituency and fundraising
- Executive Director meets annually with individual Board members to review goals, fundraising responsibilities, involvement, and fundraising prospects
  - Individual Board members set annual goals that are tracked
- Board Chair and Executive Director meet monthly to discuss programs and progress on goals
- Young Executives Board of 70 past and current rowers
- Succession planning: created list of Executive Director’s key functions with specific assignments of which staff can provide back up for them
- Weekly management team meetings ensure transfer of historical, institutional knowledge
- Senior staff rotate attending board meetings to give them leadership exposure
- Create projects that allow senior staff and board to work together without the involvement of the Executive Director
- Structure board meeting minutes as action templates to encourage accountability

#### Strong, Transparent and Accountable Financial Management

- 7 months of liquid reserves

- Focus on earned income revenue streams
- Board Finance Committee periodically trains current and new board members with no finance background to encourage fiduciary responsibility

### **Inclusive, Diverse and Responsive Organizational Practices**

- Hold regular diversity trainings, including focus on disability and LGBTQIA (sensitivity training)
- Bi-annual caregiver/parent meetings to discuss concerns and new programs
  - Interpreters available at these meetings
- Multilingual staff (seven languages)
- New staff receive cultural competency training focused on celebrating and supporting differences
- Program graduates hired whenever possible
- Para-Rowing Committee advises the organization on how to meet the needs of rowers with disabilities and informs workshop offerings
- Reserve 80% of spots for low-income public school youth; 20% for youth from any socio-economic bracket – model achieves economic diversity among participants
- Monthly newsletter to parents
- Parent liaison enhances communication between parents and staff

### **Enlightened Use of Human Resources**

- On-boarding process includes 5 training modules tailored to particular positions
  - Revisit elements of staff orientation regularly throughout the year
- Review job descriptions each year
- Strategic use of volunteers to augment staff
  - Coaching Corps Members: volunteers brought on to reduce student to staff ratio
  - Provide volunteers with one-on-one orientation from staff
- Establish staff training/professional development plan
  - Professional development includes coaching roundtables, speaker series, and weekly program meetings
  - Budget for external professional development
  - Provide professionalism training for recent graduate hires
- All staff receive bi-annual reviews, including self-assessment and feedback from supervisor regarding staff norms and program and organizational goals related to position
- Twice a year staff provides anonymous feedback on their supervisors
- Established staff norms, values and guidelines for internal and external communications

### **Appropriate and Reliable Information Technology Systems**

- Good use of Salesforce for data collection and reporting
  - Salesforce allows organization to capture data from disparate systems, run customized reports on critical organizational metrics, track participant progress, identify trends and forecast future program requirements
- Constant Contact used to track communications with constituency
- Google Drive used for file sharing
- Dual wi-fi networks for staff and guests
- Technology is used for rowing and physical fitness instruction

### **Regular and Effective Communications and Use of Communications Technology**

- Actively engages range of audiences, including alumni and past Board members
- Targeted, multimedia approach to communicate with constituency, including newsletter, social media, and blogs
- Develop a Communications Plan for each event
- Embed brand identity in all fundraising efforts

- Solicit feedback from constituency through annual survey
- Meet every Monday to determine and assign social media opportunities and outreach for the week
- Track social media metrics weekly
- Program information available in Spanish on the website

### **Effective, Ethical Fundraising and Resource Development**

- 100% Board give/get
- Board leverages resources to increase funding and develop partnerships
- 80% of spots reserved for low-income youth; 20% for youth from any socio-economic bracket – model helps meet earned income goals
- Technology used to track donor retention and growth
- Young Executives Board; members commit to helping with fundraising, outreach and obtaining in-kind support
- Develop an outreach plan at the beginning of the year for existing donors; map out deliberate, multiple touch points for each
- Personalize outreach and cultivation plans throughout the year for new donors
- Wise use of limited resources – creative partnering; pull together free and low cost resources to grow

## Examples of Excellence Presented at 2014 Best Practices Workshop

### Graham Windham

[www.graham-windham.org](http://www.graham-windham.org)

Since its founding in 1806, Graham Windham has been a vital force in providing innovative child welfare, educational, vocational, youth development and other social service programs to help New York City's children and families achieve life-changing outcomes.

**Year Founded: 1806**                      **Budget: \$56,897,863**  
**Full-time Staff: 445**                      **Part-time Staff: 145**                      **Volunteers: 350**  
**President & CEO: Jess Dannhauser**                      **Board Chairman: Georgia Wall**

#### Overall Management Focus on Results

- Developed extensive and integrated systems to set goals that are aligned with mission, assess progress towards those goals, and make course corrections based on the data
- Used strategic planning process to focus the organization's mission and program array and to identify strategies for improving program outcomes
  - Terminated/transferred particular programs through this process to ensure strategic alignment
  - Moved toward a common set of agency-wide goals for a core target population
- Strong investment in Solution-Based Casework (SBC) and training for staff (cross-departmental)
  - Trained all child welfare staff in the model
  - Created a certification process for case planners and supervisors
- Program Performance and Planning Team / Board Program Performance Committee meet 2x each year for 8-9 hours to review performance, develop plans for improvement and set targets for the following year
- Launched coaching initiative to help program managers use performance data to inform program solutions
- All levels of management review performance data, discuss ways to improve performance, and make necessary adjustments
  - Moved from a siloed operation to an integrated organization through management and evaluation systems
  - Involved entire organization, from Board to frontline staff, to make this shift possible
- Created Direct Practice Roundtable to allow senior managers to hear directly from staff on obstacles/challenges to meeting mission and vision

#### Governance Structure that Moves the Organization Forward

- Board Chair collects reports from all CEO direct reports as part of annual 360 performance review; results in a report measuring performance against specific goals established at the start of the year
- Board manages tension between financial incentives and outcomes incentives for children served
- Development Committee split into workgroups focused on foundation support, corporate support, volunteers and branding
- Board oversaw year-long executive transition with longtime leader serving as CEO and successor serving as President

### **Strong, Transparent and Accountable Financial Management**

- Involve direct practice leadership in creating and monitoring budget, leading to accountability throughout the organization
- Two rounds of face-to-face discussions ensuring budget requests are fully aligned with latest program priorities and strategic plan
- Run monthly snapshot reports to supplement quarterly reports

### **Inclusive, Diverse and Responsive Organizational Practices**

- Obtain feedback on emerging community needs from three Advisory Councils for youth, birth parents, and foster parents
- Held conversations with all directors in the organization to address diversity at senior levels and to formulate practices for internal advancement
- Recruit in local communities and population of program participants to ensure that staff's ethnic diversity matches that of the service population

### **Enlightened Use of Human Resources**

- Incentivize staff with meaningful merit-based bonuses
- Provide in-house training on various topics; training modules available live and online
- Focus on leadership development at all levels and identifying development opportunities for staff so that they can transition into key management roles should the need/opportunity arise
  - Launched a Leadership Academy to provide intensive leadership training to supervisors and directors
- Pre-screening process facilitates efficiency and timeliness of hiring
- Job openings posted internally first
- Internal career fairs
- Use staff satisfaction survey results to make adjustments to benefits offered
- Recognize foster parents as part of core team
- Align job descriptions and performance reviews with program outcomes and case management strategy
- Recognize staff achievements in internal newsletter; annual recognition event to honor length of service and outstanding contributions
- Provide free counseling and legal support through an Employee Assistance Program
- Accommodate staff members pursuing degrees; offer scholarships

### **Appropriate and Reliable Information Technology Systems**

- Linked systems to improve automated functions
  - A single database facilitates data collection, tracking, and reporting across all programs
  - Microsoft Outlook add-in allows appointment reminders and progress notes to be entered through the calendar interface and are logged in the database automatically
- Chief Information Officer meets with division Vice Presidents, HR, and Program Performance Planning Team to determine needs
- Maintain a rolling IT strategic plan
- Conduct an annual security audit
- Developed an IT policy manual on security procedures
- Transitioned to Office 365 to guarantee access to email during/after a disaster
- Launched an IT Help Desk
- IT Team provides training to staff

### **Regular and Effective Communications and Use of Communications Technology**

- Conduct routine satisfaction surveys for staff and foster parents
- Focused attention on communicating client stories through multiple channels



- Consistent brand management across media
- Branding workgroup within Board Development Committee
- President & CEO tweets for the organization on a regular basis
- Use staff newsletter and intranet announcements for internal communications
- Privacy policy, including social media policy, is posted on website
- Maintain a calendar of events to coordinate news and events to be covered and featured

### **Effective, Ethical Fundraising and Resource Development**

- Diversified development plan addresses all potential audiences
- Monthly meeting among the development team, President & CEO, members of Program Performance and Planning Team to ensure strategic goals are met
- Four workgroups developed within the Development Committee to work with staff on foundation support, corporate support, volunteers, and branding
- Leadership Council (major donor society) and Corporate Council (membership program for corporations)