

## 2011 Program Refinements in Response to Evaluation Study

In August 2010, the Human Interaction Research Institute (through its Valley Nonprofit Resources Program) completed an evaluation of Flintridge Center's Community Support/Capacity Building Program. In response to the evaluation's 11 recommendations, we are making the following refinements to improve our services.

### ***1. Solve caller frustration with the voicemail system.***

Staff's policy now is to check and respond to all voicemail messages before the end of each business day.

### ***2. Revise the Philanthropy Resource Library schedule to extend evening or weekend hours.***

Flintridge has experimented with library hours over the years, based on feedback received in annual surveys. Formerly, the Library had evening hours on Tuesdays but with minimal usage. For the past five years, the Library has been open on the third Saturday of the month, which seems to be a better solution. In the fall of 2010, due to low usage on Mondays, we changed the schedule, closing the Library on Monday but opening an hour earlier (at 10 a.m.) on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. We will continue to seek feedback from constituents about their preferred days and hours and make adjustments to the Library schedule as needed.

### ***3. Consider holding future workshops on traditional topics like board leadership development and fundraising - topics on which participants seemed to say they "couldn't get enough." Also mentioned were specific topics such as the Cultural Data Project and how to interact with it, how to create an annual budget, and finding funding for faith organization activities. In addition, offer takeaways, e.g., a database of local foundations or materials with fundraising tips.***

We will place renewed emphasis on providing workshops that meet the professional development needs of our constituents. Rather than conducting an extensive annual survey (as we have done in the past), we will send out short surveys on a quarterly basis requesting input on workshop topics. We will also seek feedback from the Pasadena Executive Roundtable on local leadership capacity needs. In addition, we are exploring alternative ways to offer workshops, e.g., webinars, and we will house reference files with the handouts from all our workshops in the Philanthropy Resource Library.

Although we don't maintain a database of local foundations, the Resource Links page of our website features a regularly updated list of foundations that support nonprofits serving children, youth and families in the San Gabriel Valley. In addition, both local and national funders can be found using Foundation Directory Online, one of several grantseeking tools in our Philanthropy Resource Library.

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- 4. Consider longer Curbside Consulting sessions, provide opportunities for on-site assistance if financially feasible and include content experts in the consultant roster. Participants also wanted to schedule multiple appointments at one time and to have a consultant review their grant applications.*

Constituents are welcome to request proposal reviews at any time. **New in 2011, Curbside Consulting will offer:**

- **50 minute sessions**—The extra five minutes will help constituents yet allow the consultant enough time to write up notes and recoup energy for subsequent appointments.
- **Additional subject experts**—An expert in nonprofit accounting will be added to the consultant roster. We will consider adding other subject experts as funding allows.
- **Beyond the Curb**—Constituents requiring extended assistance (more than two sessions) will be eligible for on-site support after completing an assessment and a workplan. Once approved for our Beyond the Curb service, a constituent may make multiple appointments. For those not needing extended services, we require that appointments be made through our website to give equal access to groups new to curbside services.

- 5. Explore new approaches: a. Offer tiered levels of services tailored to meet the specific needs of organizations at differing stages in their development—new nonprofits, organizations with the basic infrastructure in place and more experienced organizations.*

Flintridge has typically worked with start-up organizations on a one-to-one basis upon request, using the expertise of staff and consultants. Going forward, Flintridge will offer services that meet the differing experience levels of our constituents:

- **Start-ups:** two basic courses and guidance from Flintridge staff.
- **Beginners:** five basic courses in board development and fundraising.
- **Intermediate:** offerings that address traditional capacity building needs: fundraising, program planning/evaluation, finance, etc. for those with three or more years of experience.
- **S. Mark Taper Foundation Investing in Leadership Program:** designed for experienced nonprofit practitioners looking to enhance their knowledge and skills and improve service delivery.

*b. Provide nonprofit leaders with one-on-one personal coaching on topics such as writing personal mission statements, time management, managing upwards when boards or CEOs exhibit dysfunctional behaviors, service-based leadership of staff, and setting healthy boundaries and expectations with staff.*

In addition to the coaching provided through Curbside Consulting, Flintridge will offer a new leadership initiative with coaching as a core component in fall 2011. **ML (Millennium**

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**Leadership)**—is for individuals of color, ages 22-36, who are interested in building their leadership potential.

- 6. Consider integrating routine in-house data-gathering (e.g., enhanced surveys following workshops and Curbside Consulting) with yearly external evaluation activities focused on a particular service component. (Evaluator notes that some Curbside Consulting recipients had incomplete recollections of the process and outcomes of an intervention that may have happened months earlier.)*

We will begin evaluation of Flintridge's 2010 services in early 2011 when our services and their impacts are fresher in constituents' minds.

- 7. Consider developing or adapting a simple instrument to measure a nonprofit's readiness for change.*

Curbside Consulting will now use a brief assessment tool to help organizations determine the capacity building services that will best meet their needs. We will also strive for improved clarity in our workshop descriptions so that constituents can better identify appropriate learning opportunities.

- 8. Create trainings that are specifically designed for nonprofit board members (or board members and executive directors).*

Among the new offerings planned are quarterly **Board Building Breakfasts**—early morning sessions for current and potential board members that will include a best practices training component. We will also continue to offer opportunities for board and staff to learn together through intensive trainings such as our **Extreme Makeover-Board Edition workshop**.

- 9. Hold a brainstorming session where Flintridge staff and Curbside consultants can identify ways to improve the program.*

Flintridge staff met with the Curbside consultants to discuss the evaluation, services planned for 2011, and how to improve the consulting program. Out of those discussions came the suggestion to expand the session by 5 minutes, to offer expertise in other areas and to assess organizations prior to initial appointments.

- 10. Explore funder and intermediary organization partnerships, using this evaluation study as a basis on which to start the conversation.*

Flintridge's approach has always been to work in collaboration with others. Building on the evaluation's findings and the Weingart Foundation's comprehensive study of the capacity-building needs and services in Los Angeles County, we will look for new opportunities to invite and participate in convenings and to partner with other local management service organizations (MSOs) to improve services in our region. For example, Flintridge co-convened a meeting of MSOs serving the San Gabriel Valley. This led to the development of a chart

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showing the services offered by each. (The chart is available on the Resource Links page of our website.)

### ***11. Finally, consider expanding Flintridge's proactive leadership role in helping to shape the region's nonprofit sector.***

We regularly assess our work in the community to determine how our services can best respond to community needs and strengthen the nonprofit sector. Ever mindful of the need to respect each nonprofit organization's mission, we provide resources, information and support while encouraging groups and individuals to work collaboratively so as not to duplicate services.