

**U-M Nonprofit and Public Management Center eNewsletter**

*Practical Insights for Future Leaders*

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**Assessing the Financial Health of Nonprofit Organizations**

**Wednesday, December 3, 4:30-6 p.m. E1530, Ross School of Business**

Guest Speaker: Dione Alexander, Vice President, Midwest Region, [Nonprofit Finance Fund](#).

Whether you're involved with nonprofits as a board member, volunteer, staff or donor, understanding their financial health is crucial to helping the organization meet its mission. The Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF) is a national leader in financing nonprofits, strengthening their financial health and improving their capacity to serve their communities. With NFF's help, nonprofits across the country build and renovate facilities, fund growth needs, and expand and sustain operations over time.

Please join Dione Alexander in a discussion of how to discern financial strength and weakness in a nonprofit organization. Ms. Alexander has oversight of lending and consulting services, foundation and corporate relations, business development, and community outreach for a region that includes much of the Midwest. Refreshments will be provided.

**Fundraising Building Blocks for Board Members and Volunteers**

**Tuesday, January 13, 4:30-6 p.m., Room 1230, Ford School of Public Policy**

The thought of asking people for money awakens fear in even the boldest of board members.

Volunteers willingly give their time but don't always feel comfortable with activities focused on giving.

Misinformation and occasional bad behavior by fundraisers has tainted what should be a noble activity: securing resources to realize an organization's mission. This session will explore how the fundraising world is changing, how board members can contribute to effective fundraising, and best practices for philanthropy in the nonprofit sector. Please join Shelley Strickland, an experienced development officer who has provided training on fundraising for nonprofit organizations, for an interactive and informative discussion.

## **AROUND CAMPUS AND TOWN**

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### **Library Leadership Seminar: Elaine Didier**

**Friday, December 5, 1:30- 3 p.m., 311 West Hall**

All are invited to hear Elaine Didier, Director of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum. Assistant Professor Tiffany Veinot will interview Didier (think Actor's Studio-style) to elicit views on library leadership. Sponsored by the School of Information.

### **Erb Colloquium: "Business Models in the Context of Deep Poverty—Social Entrepreneurship and Corporate Strategies."**

**Monday, December 8, Noon-1:30 p.m., Dana 2024**

Professor Christian Seelos teaches Strategy and Sustainability at IESE Business School in Barcelona. Sponsored by the Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise.

## **IN THE NEWS**

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### **Rethinking Nonprofit Jobs**

*An excerpt from The Chronicle of Philanthropy*

Charity executives and nonprofit experts say it is critical that organizations take advantage of the hiring opportunities, when possible, and foster talent within their organizations. For one thing, younger leaders may have fresh perspectives to offer. Some say the turbulent economy could provide a chance for young people to shine.

"People's ears are more open now," says Rosetta Thurman, 25, a consultant to nonprofit organizations and an adjunct professor at Trinity University, in Washington. "Young leaders can assert their leadership now and say, 'This is what I know, this is what I've learned, and I'd like to try this.'"

Greater autonomy can also be rewarding for many young workers. Allison Jones, who works in marketing and development at St. James School, a private institution in New York, says she isn't bothered that the charity's executive director has less time to devote to her now that she is more focused on raising money in a tight economy. "Sometimes the best way to learn is when everything is less than perfect," says Ms. Jones, 22.

Nonprofit leaders say that charities need to think creatively about how they can still provide learning opportunities to young people, even as they may be facing difficult decisions about laying off young workers.

Carolyn Miles, chief operating officer at Save the Children, in Westport, Conn., says that her charity is trying to avoid "gridlock" in upper- and middle-level management positions by helping staff members make lateral moves within the organization.

"The positions might not be promotion opportunities but they are opportunities for people to build a whole new skill set," she says.

The economic downturn may cause many charities to consider cutting professional-development opportunities, but nonprofit experts say that would be a mistake.

"It will be harder and harder for younger individuals to find money from their organizations to do things like go to professional-development conferences," says Stephen A. Bauer, director of the initiative for nonprofit-sector careers at American Humanics, in Kansas City, Mo., which prepares college students for employment at charities. "That's too bad because that's one of the things we hear young people want most."

Charities can often find low-cost ways to keep young people engaged in the organization and its mission, experts say.

Daphne Logan, senior vice president of human resources and administration at Feeding America, the nationwide network of food banks with headquarters in Chicago, says her organization encourages employees to submit questions, including anonymous ones, to the charity's leader. Every employee also gets a chance to meet in a small group with the chief executive four times a year.

Most of all, though, nonprofit experts say charity officials should look outward for advice and shouldn't get too caught up with putting out fires. Tough questions about how the economy could affect staff positions and salaries shouldn't be dealt with in solitude.

"Executives are going to feel much more pressure simply to keep their organizations alive," says Ms. Kunreuther, of the Building Movement Project. "But the best solutions will come if we're open and creative and we think about how to get jobs done in different ways."

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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### **ABOUT THE NONPROFIT & PUBLIC MANAGEMENT CENTER**

The Nonprofit & Public Management Center is a collaboration among the University of Michigan's School of Social Work, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, and Stephen M. Ross School of Business. For more information about NPM, visit <http://www.nonprofit.umich.edu>. If you have an announcement you would like to include in the next issue of this eNewsletter, please send information to the Center at [nonprofit@umich.edu](mailto:nonprofit@umich.edu)