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#### The Copeland Fund for Nonprofit Management

*To strengthen the management and policymaking capacity of nonprofit human service organizations to serve better the needs of their communities.*

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*To support applied research on strategic issues that are likely to have profound effects on nonprofit management and governance, especially among human service and community development organizations.*

APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS  
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#### The Wishart Fund for Nonprofit Leadership

*To encourage pioneering nonprofit leadership by promoting public learning and discussion about issues critical to ethical and effective management, as well as by celebrating exemplary practices.*

LEADERSHIP FORUMS  
FRIEDA SHAPIRA MEDAL  
ALFRED W. WISHART, JR. AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

## Alfred W. Wishart, Jr. Award for EXCELLENCE in NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

*An annual award presented by The Forbes Funds to recognize the accomplishments of an extraordinary organization that has achieved management*

*excellence. Recipients of this award demonstrate exemplary performance in management practices, including: information and analysis; human resource management; service delivery; outcome management; consumer focus; collaboration; public accountability; public advocacy; and public leadership.*

## Human Services Center Corporation

MISSION: *The Human Services Center Corporation (HSCC) improves the quality of life for children, adults, and families in the Mon Valley area. It fulfills this mission in four ways: (1) Serving as a collaborative leader by promoting and supporting a network of providers within and outside the walls of its multi-purpose center. (2) Serving as a bridge between human service organizations and those who develop policies and funding that impact the quality of life in the Mon Valley area. (3) Monitoring community needs and initiating innovative strategies to fill service gaps. (4) Providing essential services to both community members and human service organizations.*

THE FOLLOWING SETS FORTH ORGANIZATION DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AS OF 2004:

YEAR FOUNDED: 1982  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Mr. Dave Coplan  
YEARS IN OCCUPATION: 15 (total years with HSCC)  
NUMBER OF FULL-TIME STAFF: 7  
NUMBER OF ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS: 30  
OPERATIONAL BUDGET: \$840,000  
NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED PER YEAR: 10,000 (approximately)

## About the 2004 Award Recipient...

### Human Services Center Corporation



*When the Human Services Center Corporation (HSCC) identified the need for osteoporosis testing in the Mon Valley area, it applied for and received a grant to purchase an osteoporosis testing device. Through a collaborative effort, the 80-member agencies of the Mon Valley Providers Council (MVPC), a core program of the HSCC, share the transportable device to conduct free screenings in 37 municipalities — reaching thousands of at risk individuals each year. Those who attend the screenings are also given the option to receive a free personal health screening. This approach of combining services takes full advantage of the resources available through the MVPC and allows individuals to address their multiple health service needs in one location and in one visit.*

*Data collected from these screenings is then sent back to the HSCC for reporting purposes. If the information reveals a potential area for improvement, Dave Coplan, Executive Director of the HSCC, and his staff communicate this information back to member agencies so that they can modify their screening process and have an even greater impact on the community.*

#### CLEAR MISSION, CLEARER RESULTS

The osteoporosis screening service is one among countless others that the HSCC coordinates through its umbrella of programs. Created in 1982 in response to conditions caused by the collapse of the local steel industry, HSCC's mission is to *"improve the quality of life for children, adults, and families in the Mon Valley area."*

To achieve this mission, HSCC maintains collaborative partnerships with multiple agencies throughout the area to fill service gaps and address clients' needs. Overall, HSCC coordinates numerous programs, including the MVPC, McKeesport Collaborative, Youth LIFE and KOOL Summer Camp programs. The first two

programs are best described as multi-agency collaboratives, which HSCC coordinates on a daily basis. The MVPC is HSCC's largest and longest running program, with 80 member agencies delivering services through the program. The McKeesport Collaborative, although less formal, also consists of multiple agencies that help women and children at-risk of substance abuse. The Youth LIFE and KOOL programs are not part of either collaborative; still, these programs also deliver services through an extensive network of partnerships.

HSCC secures funding for its programs and ongoing operations through several sources, including an endowment raised during a recent capital campaign and rent collected from tenant agencies. Although the center is open to all agencies to share space and deliver services, the tenant or rent paying agencies are housed within the center on a permanent basis and pay rent for leasing space at the facility — accounting for nearly 45% of HSCC's annual revenues. Indeed, it was in its original role as a landlord that HSCC first recognized the larger role it could play as a convener and program designer.

Ultimately, HSCC's ability to fund and operate meaningful and successful programs is the result of its adherence to sound managerial practices that foster collaboration, effective service delivery, and attraction and retention of top talent. Above all, HSCC's success can be attributed to its commitment to improving client service and never settling for mediocrity.

#### COME TOGETHER, RIGHT NOW

HSCC employs what is known as a "one-stop" model for service delivery. In this model, member agencies that specialize in services such as employment and training, health, housing or youth services, collaborate to share resources and provide an integrated and holistic approach to service delivery. As Randy Thomas, former Executive Director of HSCC explains, *"Any service available in Allegheny County is available in the HSCC."*

Making the model work, nevertheless, is no simple task. Never mind the difficulties involved in organizing the MVPC, such as securing space for tenant member agencies, conducting council meetings, or maintaining the operations of the HSCC facility. The real challenge for the HSCC involves convincing the 80 member agencies of the MVPC to come together and adopt a common vision for service delivery.

To provide some perspective on the challenges HSCC faces in making its one-stop model work, one need only look at states' efforts to provide employment and training services in accordance with the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA). WIA requires multiple departments within each state, such as Labor and Industry, Education, and Welfare among others, to co-locate in order to provide integrated service delivery to clients. For many states, this has required overcoming numerous barriers to implementation, including differences in culture between agencies, turf barriers, and differences in the way agencies receive funding.<sup>1</sup> As Richard Nathan and Mark Ragan from the Rockefeller Institute of Government point out, "*Service integration has been a long-standing aim of program officials, but that the real politics of human services — characterized by bureaucracies with their own cultures and politics — have made this difficult.*"<sup>2</sup>

These barriers to implementation are not unique to the public sector. Indeed, Mr. Coplan and his staff have encountered these barriers in one form or another and have had to find creative ways to overcome them. As Mr. Coplan explains, getting 80 member agencies to come to an agreement on something, such as how best to conduct the osteoporosis screenings, requires finding "the common denominator" among member agencies. Focusing on what member agencies share in common, instead of their differences in views and culture, helps to secure their support and keep them at the table, even when a consensus on a particular issue cannot be reached. More importantly, HSCC empowers member agencies to take a leadership role on an initiative by getting them to focus on what needs to get done and who is responsible for doing it.

To be sure, regular social events such as picnics and retreats also help to create a shared sense of purpose among member agencies. HSCC also

communicates through email and other channels with member agencies to help them understand how collaboration will impact their daily work and how it will benefit clients.

To improve the quality of collaboration, HSCC collects feedback from tenant and MVPC member agencies on a regular basis to determine what it can do better. During the last three years, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, demonstrating that HSCC's approach for implementing the "one-stop" model is working.

#### CLIENTS RULE

More than 750 clients, including everyone from infants to the elderly, visit the HSCC each day to receive services. From the first moment clients enter the HSCC, intake staff work with them to understand their specific needs and assist them in selecting the services they want to receive. Once an initial service plan is created for a client, tenant agencies may communicate with each other to make sure the client is receiving the proper mix of services. To make this possible, tenant agencies participate in cross-training and tenant council meetings to learn more about the services that other member agencies provide.

Since clients' needs change over time, HSCC conducts a Center Visitor Survey once per year to identify potential service gaps and make sure clients are being offered the proper mix of tenant and community outreach services. In some instances, the HSCC cannot fill the gaps through any of its existing programs. When this occurs, HSCC reaches out to agencies in the community that provide similar services in an effort to recruit them into the center to provide community outreach services. This collaborative approach helps to fill the service gaps as quickly as possible by relying on resources already available in the community.

When a service is not available or is at risk of being eliminated, HSCC also lobbies directly on behalf of its member agencies and the community. As an example, clients from the Mon Valley who were at risk of losing essential services took a trip

<sup>1</sup>Pindus, Nancy, et. all. *Coordination and Integration of Welfare and Workforce Development Systems: Factors that Promote Coordination*. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/coord00/ch1.htm>: March, 2000.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Government Accountability Office: *Human Services Integration: Results of a GAO Cosponsored Conference on Modernizing Information Systems*. GAO-02-121. January, 2002.

to Harrisburg to speak with state officials and inform them about the impact such cuts would have on the community.

Making clients aware of new services or changes to existing programs is done through regular communications such as the MVPC Communicator Newsletter. Through this newsletter, all member agencies can submit for publication information about the services they provide. By having a clear communication strategy in place, HSCC helps to make sure its existing and potential clients are aware of the services available through the center.

For all services, HSCC places a clear emphasis on measuring outcomes. The most basic type of outcome HSCC measures is client demand for a program or specific service. As an example, demand for the KOOL Program has exceeded capacity during recent years. By further example, an additional outcome for the Youth LIFE After School Program is to have *“75% of all youth who participate in tutorial services earn better grades in the grading period following completion of the program than in the grading period preceding enrollment in the program.”* For all HSCC services, expected outcomes are measured against actual results to make sure the programs are meeting performance expectations.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, helping clients to choose their own services, receive the services they need, and achieve outcomes that are measurable is a collaborative process. As Mr. Coplan points out, *“There is not a single program we operate without extensive partnerships... without our partners, there is no way we could possibly assist so many people in need.”*

#### BEYOND LOYALTY

For a nonprofit organization to have an impact in the community, it needs talent. According to researcher Paul Light: *“If nonprofits are to survive and flourish in the current environment of tight budgets and increased competition, they must have a stable corps of talented leaders.”*<sup>4</sup> HSCC has been able to accomplish this by developing staff from within and preparing them to become future leaders of the organization. Part of HSCC’s strategy is to bring new energy into the organization by recruiting, training and developing paid and volunteer student interns from the numerous colleges and universities in the Pittsburgh region. As an example, Mr. Coplan started with the HSCC as a student intern before rising to become Executive Director; he is joined by numerous other staff and board members who have followed a similar career path within the organization.

HSCC’s low employee turnover can also be attributed to the emphasis it places on compensation and training for existing staff. For compensation, HSCC benchmarks salary to the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management/United Way salary study and pays above the 75th percentile of similar size agencies (by budget) for all positions. Additional benefits, such as healthcare, short term and long term disability and a generous pension plan also keep staff from exiting the organization. Staff members are also encouraged to participate in training, such as the community leadership training offered by Leadership Pittsburgh. According to Jo DeBolt, Chair of the HSCC Board, *“This is a place where you are encouraged to learn and grow.”*

For HSCC, the benefit of keeping turnover low and developing “a stable corps of talented leaders” is that the organizational knowledge needed to maintain and improve its existing programs remains intact. As Ms. DeBolt, says, high turnover within a nonprofit organization *“causes it to forget why it ever existed.”* The MVPC and other HSCC programs were developed over a twenty year period, and having staff present who understand the history of these programs is the best way to ensure their success in the future.

#### MOVING FORWARD

For any organization to succeed in achieving its mission continuously, that organization must embrace the reality that change is constant. For HSCC, finding new ways to serve clients better is always a high priority — even after receiving the Wishart Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management. As Mr. Coplan explains, *“While some might have been complacent after being recognized with such an outstanding honor, the Board of the Center was invigorated. In the past year alone, we have updated our mission and strategies, realigned our committee structure to our existing needs, and conducted a strategic business plan/feasibility study.”*

Ultimately, HSCC’s commitment to moving the organization forward, combined with its commitment to collaboration, improved service delivery, and attracting and retaining top talent, has allowed it to enjoy continued success during its 23 year history. As Mr. Coplan explains, *“if we can’t do something excellent for people, we’re not going to do it.”* The changes HSCC has made to its programs over the years demonstrate its belief that settling for mediocrity is never an option, and that every day is an opportunity to serve its clients better. 🐼

<sup>3</sup> Member agencies are individually responsible for tracking consumer outcomes for the services they provide through the MVPC or McKeesport Collaborative.

<sup>4</sup> *Look Here! Attracting and Developing the Next Generation of Nonprofit Leaders.* The Forbes Funds, 2004. For the full version of this report, visit: [www.forbesfunds.org](http://www.forbesfunds.org)