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NEWS

Eight nonprofits embark on business boot camp

Recurring revenue streams could reduce donation dependence

BY JENNIFER GORDON | STAFF WRITER

Eight local nonprofit groups are on their way to financial self-sufficiency by developing businesses to generate unrestricted income.

The groups are participating in the North Texas Community Wealth Collaborative, a 10-month program led by the Center for Nonprofit Management and Community Wealth Ventures Inc. The three-year, \$1.5



Cynthia B. Nunn
Center for Nonprofit Management.

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million program is funded by The Meadows Foundation, Amon G. Carter Foundation, Harold Simmons Foundation and several anonymous donors.

It follows an industry trend of nonprofit organizations trying to add for-profit components to reduce their reliance on, though not replace, donors. The groups

began their training in early October.

"We would hope more nonprofits would use this as a way of being more in control of their own financial destiny, especially if they're doing things that are already mission-related and they can just find ways to capitalize on it," said Cynthia B. Nunn, president of the Center for

These eight Dallas-area nonprofit groups are starting an intensive 10-month program to expand or create revenue streams to help fund their operations.

- The Senior Source, to create and launch a geriatric care manager service;
- The Autism Treatment Center, to create a diagnostic and therapy rehabilitation agency;
- Big Thought to start consulting services for communities trying to develop partnerships to improve cultural integration between public and private entities;
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth Inc., to expand translation and interpretation services;
- ChildCareGroup, to expand its Child Care Resource and Referral Service for corporate clients;
- Dallas Children's Advocacy Center, to expand its Crimes Against Children conference and develop other products and services;
- Metroport Meals on Wheels Inc., to improve operations of its existing Sadie's Dry Goods New and Used thrift shop;
- SafeHaven of Tarrant County to improve and expand operations of its Berry Good Buys Thrift Store.

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Nonprofit Management. "If you can control more of the top line, then you can spend your time doing other things rather than writing grants or requesting money."

To be selected for the program, nonprofits had to demonstrate leadership commitment throughout the organization to the project. They also had to pass an initial analysis that the planned business had the potential to succeed.

More than 180 groups were represented at an information session held this summer, and 25 groups applied for the program.

An outside eye

The Dallas Children's Advocacy Center is one of the nonprofits participating in the first program. Lynn Davis, president and CEO of the group, said it hopes to increase the percentage of its total revenue that comes from its annual conference to 30%, up from its current 15%.

Until two years ago, the 19-year-old group's Crimes Against Children Conference didn't have corporate sponsors. Now the conference allows corporate sponsors, and attendance has increased to more than 2,500.

"We're just really looking for some outside eyes to take a look at it," Davis said. "A consulting group like this would run us like \$100,000, and certainly it's not something we could afford on our own."

The eight participating organizations put up \$5,000 each to participate. The idea behind the \$5,000 fee was to encourage the nonprofits to put some financial skin in the game.

The organizers expect all eight groups to have viable business plans by the end of the program.

"We really believe this is a great opportunity for nonprofits in North Texas," Nunn said.