

The NMAG Journal

*A newsletter for the members of the
New Mexico Association of Grantmakers*

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www.nmag.org

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**NMAG Grantmakers
Conference**

COUNCIL ON FOUNDATIONS SEMINAR:

**Good Governance for CEOs and
Trustees**

December 10-11, 2009

Council Conference Headquarters
Arlington, VA

Are you looking to thrive as a foundation leader in the area of governance? Then you won't want to miss the Council on Foundations' Good Governance seminar December 10-11.

Designed specifically for CEOs and trustees, this seminar will teach you:

Strategies to improve board relations. Methods to manage relationship dynamics between board and staff.

Tips for reframing board work. Techniques to increase board member engagement. Best practices in transitioning passive oversight into active leadership.

Register early and take advantage of our early-bird discount of \$100 off the registration fee. Unable to attend in-person - then join the live presentation virtually.

Executive Director's Report

Ron White 10/5/09

I once heard the story of a couple who after some years decided to build a retirement getaway on a piece of secluded property they'd acquired. Upon the advice of several friends they asked a long time forest ranger of the area to accompany them and give them some concrete and practical advice about where they should build and when they might start. As the story goes, during much of the two hours it took to drive and then hike up to the property, the excited couple peppered the ranger with questions regarding what, how and when to build, possible costs and projections of future worth, and many other questions, all of which she either dismissed, cited as outside her expertise or ignored, until they had completely circumambulated the property. At that point she stopped. She then spoke quietly of the direction of the winds in different seasons, the flow of the streams, and places of snow pack, she spoke of birds and flowers she'd noted, grazing places of deer and bear, and even of mushrooms and the varieties of tree fungi. She talked about the sunlight exposure and the likely weather conditions in different seasons. She related, based on the rock formations, how the land had changed over millennia. And after all this, she turned to the couple and asked rhetorically into their reflective silence, "Do you want my advice on what to do? Come here and live with this environment; watch it, listen to it, learn where nature is going; and then join it."

I've been executive director of NMAG for about four and half months. I've hardly begun to live and breath the unique environment that is New Mexico or, through my one on one conversations, to know the unique members that make up NMAG. But I have started. And this is what I've seen, and NMAG has done, so far:

I see New Mexico is in crisis. Every month since my arrival a new report on schools, teacher preparation, student dropout rates (both initial and revised); child poverty levels, state rankings in family supports, domestic violence, substance abuse, tax inequity, and on and on, has come to my attention. Little of the official news is good. But I've also met members who are seriously pursuing strategic alliances to remedy this. They have introduced me to NGO's within the state who are passionate and relentless in their pursuit of a better, more sustainable future for New Mexico. Some have held extensive discussions with me about strategies that work and others have invited me into meetings focused on acting together to address New Mexico's needs. What is NMAG doing as an organization? In July, NMAG held a board retreat and among many things asked itself how NMAG might grow, better connect, and serve its members. As a result, it approved submission of a Kellogg grant application to upgrade our communications capacity to better connect with and assist our members, and to assess our ability to help members collaborate, specifically on the life and death issues plaguing New

If you have any questions, please contact us at leaders@cof.org or 703-879-0768.

Change Philanthropy: Candid Stories of Foundations Maximizing Results Through Social Justice

Written in an engaging, easy-to-read style, **Change Philanthropy** offers an insider's view of what works and what doesn't when developing grantmaking strategies in support of social change. It showcases foundations of all types and sizes including Liberty Hill Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott, Global Fund for Women, Schott, Ford, , OSI, Needmor, Jacobs and Discount. The book also includes a wealth of illustrative examples and contains practical suggestions and tips that can be applied immediately to support any social justice agenda. It offers step by step advice for developing a successful grantmaking strategy.

For more information, visit www.josseybass.com, publisher.

The Foundation Center announces new initiative:

Foundations for Education Excellence. It will help education funders maximize their giving impact in alignment with the more than \$100 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds designated to improve educational opportunity nationwide.

The cornerstone of this initiative is a new online resource center, developed with a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education (DOE),

Mexico's vulnerable children and the very future of our families.

I've heard New Mexico's grantmakers are eager to collaborate and begin to really make a difference. In that same retreat, NMAG's board encouraged staff to revitalize NMAG's affinity groups. As a result, Associate Director Susan Cantor and I have spoken to regional association colleagues and have designed a plan to better staff affinity groups, provide them with more opportunity to move beyond networking and information sharing, to assist them in generating new knowledge and help them act together in a variety of ways. We also have developed plans to ensure that the whole membership benefits from what is learned and experienced by each affinity group. On September 17th, we made our first call for members to take leadership at our well attended (we hosted 28 members, with some new to NMAG events), and highly rated forum on Immigrant Rights and National Immigration Reform, led by board member Frank Sanchez. Frank called together an excellent and passionate group of panelists from Somos un Pueblo Unidos, El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos, and ACLU-NM Regional Center for Border Rights. We will speak in more detail about our plans for affinity groups, which will be available for membership critique and improvement, at our November conference and beyond.

I've learned national foundations outside of New Mexico, though at times rumored to be confused or daunted by perceived in-fighting and lack of cooperation, nevertheless are eager to help positive contributors in this state make a difference. Nowhere is this more concretely evident than with the November 4th afternoon collaboration NMAG has with UBS Bank and the Pew Charitable Trust, which precedes our conference. In a unique opportunity for members eager to gain an international perspective on financial investment instruments to maximize endowments and foundation efficiency, socially responsible investing and the use of PRI's for community development, a special pre-conference program is being offered at the Inn at Loretto, from 11:00am-3:30pm. These presentations by UBS staff will be followed by a presentation by staff from the Pew Charitable Trusts on grantmaker opportunities for collaboration with Pew.

Our member conference, November 4-6th, designed by NMAG members Linda Anderson, Christa Coggins, Gay Dillingham, Rick Leonhardt, Rita McCusker, Lisa O'Brien, Steve Simon, and ably staffed and pulled together by Susan Cantor, Associate Director, represents a significant pivot point for NMAG in its mission "...to increase the effectiveness of organized philanthropy". As everyone should know by now, we will be welcomed by Lt. Governor Diane Denish, addressed by Robin Brulé of the new Office of Philanthropic Outreach, informed of new possibilities for leveraging our impact with state stimulus funds by (former) Governor Toney Anaya, presented new ways of doing more with less by experienced presenters, challenged to work for a new future by the visionary economist Jeremy Rifkin, and closed by White House Director for the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Engagement, Ms. Sonal Shah. Ms. Shah will offer examples of public-private collaborations, which created a multiplier effect in leveraging community improvements. And those are just the highlights. We've already received inquiries from outside the state to attend our conference. If you're not already registered, right now might be a good time to do so.

As your new, and experienced, NMAG staff is living with and listening to where this state and NMAG membership is heading, our excitement and

that gives you the latest information and tools to assess areas of need, learn about best practices, and forge strategic alliances to support ARRA's education reform goals.

For access to maps and data go to: http://foundationcenter.org/newyork_newsletter/comm/edexcel_200909.html

We count on you to keep us informed of any news regarding your organization.

Letters to the Editor are welcome and encouraged.
Send to rwhite@nmag.org

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belief that these are times of radical possibilities for change, both within NMAG and in New Mexico, keep growing. After so short a time here, I'm not naive enough to think, "I've got it!" And I promise to keep meeting, listening, and adapting as time goes on. But, I do know that whatever is growing here to better the fate of vulnerable children and their families, I'm ready to join.

**NMAG Conference for Grantmakers
November 4 - 6, 2009
Deadline to register: October 21**

Philanthropy in New Mexico: Navigating a Shifting Landscape

Register now for the 2009 conference, November 4 - 6. Registration is open through October 21, 2009. You can use the brochure you received in the mail or register online at www.nmag.org. Online payment is available.

REMINDER: NMAG's reduced room rate at La Fonda is available until October 14. You must reserve your room by then to get the special conference rate. Staying longer? The special rate is good for three days before and three days after the conference.

A light breakfast will be provided from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. both Thursday and Friday.

Join us at 8:30 a.m on Thursday for opening remarks by Lt. Governor Diane Denish.

And we hope you'll stay through to our ending luncheon speaker, Ms. Sonal Shah, White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Engagement, who joins us in a first appearance before a regional grantmakers association.

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