

Leading Organizational Transformation through Improving Core Capacity-- A Case Study: Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County, PA (MCHC):

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“The nonprofit sector is experiencing a unique moment of transition stemming from demands that we manage our organizations in profoundly different ways than we have in the past.” (Cornelius and Wolfred *Next Generation Organizations: Nine Key Traits*)

The nonprofit and social sector is a rapidly changing environment requiring organizations to adapt to increased community needs and limited revenues by identifying ways to provide services and core operations more effectively and efficiently and by developing a Business Continuity and Leadership Development Plan to identify, retain and develop emerging leaders and high-potential/pivotal talent to face these needs today and tomorrow.

Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County (MCHC) through the implementation of key human resources practices and operational enhancements has resulted in improved short term organizational effectiveness that contributes to their ability to respond to ongoing internal and external changes. This improved ability to be nimble and responsive to continuous change in our sector will promote greater long term organizational sustainability.

Increased Organizational and Social Impact:

For the past three years, through dedicated capacity building and general operating support, MCHC has engaged in a unique, results-driven improvement initiative to build its core capacity through innovations in management methods and business processes that have included:

- Development of the organization’s Core Values that serve as a foundation for all decisions, shape the organization’s culture, and position MCHC to keep pace with the accelerated pace of change.
- Enhanced decision making through the identification and monitoring of metrics that enable us to better measure both employee and program performance and improve our ability to allocate limited resources effectively and efficiently.
- Improved Transactional functions by enhancing internal systems and introducing workplace design processes that result in more successful business operations.
- Leadership Development/Talent Management to support the retention and growth of our intellectual capital, including the next generation of leaders, through the development of performance competencies and the implementation of self assessment and training programs designed to support the achievement of these competencies and foster an environment of continuous learning.

Components:

(1). Development of Core Values:

Connors and Smith assert in *Change the Culture: Change the Game*, “Creating an organizational culture where people embrace their accountability toward one another and toward the organization should occupy center stage in any effort to create successful organizational change....” MCHC understood that it was essential to creating this type of culture that it identify a clear list of values that would guide all decisions and influence interactions with every stakeholder of the organization. Particular attention was paid to underscoring the importance of cultural competence and inclusion. In a process that involved first senior staff, then middle managers, and ultimately all employees, MCHC’s *Core Values* were developed. To ensure the consistent application of the *Core Values*, they served as a basis for the creation of MCHC’s *Employee Manual* and were translated into measurable behaviors that could be incorporated into the performance appraisal system.



- **I will focus on maintaining MCHC as a “client centered” organization—putting the needs of our participants first.**
- **I will display a respect for, and an appreciation of differences among individuals, fostering a climate of inclusion in interactions with others.**
- **I will treat my co-workers with respect and work cooperatively to share information, face challenges, and maintain a positive team environment.**
- **I will make a commitment to continuous improvement—looking to always enhance participant services and organizational standards through passion, creativity and innovation.**
- **I will always maintain respect and compassion for the diverse participant communities that we serve.**

(2). Enhanced Metrics:

- Developed metrics for all programs in order to focus on core outcomes and competencies and provide an objective strategy to decide which to grow, suspend or stay the same;
- Identified job specific competencies and performance measures to align MCHC’s talent with the organization’s strategy, goals, and *Core Values*. These competencies and performance metrics, along with goal identification and tracking, were incorporated into a performance management system; moving from a single universal form paper based system (rarely completed on time or

accurately) to ReviewSnap—a web-based, position-specific review system. This system reinforces the importance of accountability, as well as communicates and measures employees' achievement of competencies, goals and adherence to MCHC *Core Values*;

- Development of a new organizational department for Program Planning and Evaluation that provides ongoing metrics to enhance decision making and reporting of program results;

(3). Improved Technical Functions:

Operational Improvements/Capacity enhancements: MCHC launched a three year effort that resulted in:

- A successful receipt of certification from the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations through the Standards for Excellence program in 2009. This intensive review and revision of organizational processes positioned MCHC to successfully reference many of these in the revised Form 990;
- Restructuring physical outlays of several program sites and co-location of programs to improve work flow and processes;
- Cross training staff in key organizational areas such as payroll, accounting functions and program report preparation for governmental funders to ensure business continuity functions;
- Changed payroll company vendor to allow electronic timecard completion, leave requests and benefits accrual tracking for 35 employees;
- Changed 401K vendor and administrator to provide staff with access to financial advice and 24/7 on-line account access;
- Working with a marketing and communications firm, Spitfire Strategies in Washington DC to develop a marketing and communications plan to better communicate our mission and community needs to specific potential donor groups---with the goal of increasing program operating revenues.

(4). Leadership Development/Talent Management:

Begun in 2009 with private foundation support through the Nonprofit Finance Fund, and continued in 2011 with funding through the William Penn Foundation, MCHC implemented a talent management program designed to retain, engage, and strengthen the organization's intellectual capital and support its continuity and succession planning efforts:

- Recognizing the value that the *Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)* has for enhancing organizational communication and individual self knowledge, high-potential staff completed the *MBTI* and created Development Plans to support their learning to "flex their Type." A series of team building sessions were conducted to strengthen the application of the insight provided by the *MBTI*;
- MCHC has embraced Tom Adams' assertion that "talent refers to all staff...everyone has the capacity to contribute and lead" and Marla Cornelius and Tom Wolfred's belief that "next generation" organizations share the traits of "Shared Leadership" and "Continuous Learning." To fully leverage and grow the abilities of all staff, and support their achievement of targeted competencies, a subscription to *BLR's Employee Training Center* was established. This web based system provides a convenient and cost effective way to provide training at all of the organization's six locations; and through the system's ability to integrate relevant MCHC policies into the training content, it is a vehicle for reinforcing

MCHC's Core Values. The many courses employees can complete include: *Effective Communication, Diversity in the Workplace, Time Management, Team Building, Defensive Driving, Conflict Resolution and Consensus, Ethics, and Stress Management.* In addition, the system incorporates an extensive range of leadership training, from *How to Conduct Effective Performance Appraisals to Encouraging Employee Input.*

- In the preface to their seminal work, *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner assert that "...leadership creates a climate in which people turn challenging opportunities into remarkable successes." Using their "Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership" as a departure point, MCHC defined the competencies essential for current and emerging leaders in the organization. Managers were then provided 360° feedback regarding their leadership behaviors via Kouzes and Posner's *Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI)*. This assessment, along with the *MBTI*, provided a framework for the formulation of individualized Development Plans. Created in consultation with Dr. Judith Katz, an Organizational Psychologist and Coach, these Plans were designed to identify and address "competency gaps" and blind spots and support the self-knowledge essential to enhancing leadership ability. As part of their Development Plans several key staff have participated in the emerging and seasoned leaders programs at Bryn Mawr College's Nonprofit Executive Leadership Institute (NELI), others have embarked on special assignments, and all are meeting regularly with their managers to monitor their progress in achieving their developmental goals. This initiative has provided an essential data point in the creation of MCHC's *Succession Plan* for key positions in the organization.

Summary:

Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County has provided services to the community for nearly 17 years. A strong partnership of government and private funders has allowed us to develop programs, staff and evaluation functions that have shown measurable success. Experiencing the often stormy seas of financial uncertainty and organizational changes has required us to learn new skills to better navigate these waters. We are fortunate to have funders who have been willing to invest in the needed infrastructure to help us build a better boat, develop better mariners and see a horizon filled with hope.

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Organizational Background

Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County, PA is a private nonprofit organization that since 1995, has provided culturally competent, bilingual, home visiting prenatal education and social support to improve birth outcomes for low income women (Healthy Start); enrollment into health coverage and food stamps for uninsured adults and children (Family Benefits Program); and instruction of pre-kindergarten education skills to mainly Spanish speaking children in southern Chester County (Kennett Square Family Center).

Ms. Pamela Bryer, MPH, CFRE

Ms. Pamela Bryer is the Executive Director of Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County, West Chester, PA. She has over 30 years of public health management experience in hospitals, MCOs, and community based non profit organizations. She has led the strategic direction and operations of this women's and children's prenatal home visiting and early education organization for 18 years and has grown the staff to 35 through a public/private funding partnership of over 2.5 million dollars. Ms. Bryer has led the organization through the successful certification process of the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organization "Standards for Excellence" and the receipt of a Glaxo SmithKline IMPACT award three times since the award's inception (the only organization to ever do so), recognizing outstanding nonprofits that increase access to care for vulnerable families. Pamela received the March of Dimes Woman of Achievement award for Health and was a founding trustee and is a board member of the Chester County Fund for Women and Girls.

Ms. Bryer has a BA, cum laude from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Texas, School of Public Health in Houston. She holds a credential as a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) and has a certificate from Bryn Mawr College from the Nonprofit Executive Leadership Institute and a certificate in Leading Organizational Change from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Ms. Barbara Fitzgerald-Turner, MA, SPHR, GPHR

Ms. Fitzgerald-Turner has over 25 years of experience as a HR Executive and Consultant. Her HR career has been devoted to assisting both non-profit and for profit organizations compete in an environment where they must constantly strive to maximize the return on their HR investments. She earned an MA in Human Resource Development from George Washington University and has received certification to utilize a variety of personality assessment tools to aid career coaching, succession planning and leadership development programs including the MBTI, FIRO-B and CPI 260. Ms. Fitzgerald-Turner has also earned certification as a Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) and a Global Professional in Human Resources (GPHR) from the Human Resource Certification Institute.

Ms. Fitzgerald Turner has given numerous presentations to business and community leader groups and has designed and facilitated leadership development programs, which have been credited with dramatically enhancing the effectiveness of managers. She has published articles in *HR Magazine*, *Workforce*, and *HR Advisor Journal* and written about her experience as an expatriate in France and Germany for expatvillage.com and relojournal.com.