Hanging Tough

Nonprofit Leaders Adapt to New Realities Borne of a ‘Perfect Economic Storm’
**THE CALIFORNIA WELLNESS FOUNDATION** is a private independent foundation, created in 1992, whose mission is to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education and disease prevention. The Foundation’s goals are:

- to address the particular health needs of traditionally underserved populations, including low-income individuals, people of color, youth and residents of rural areas;
- to support and strengthen nonprofit organizations that seek to improve the health of underserved populations;
- to recognize and encourage leaders who are working to increase health and wellness within their communities; and
- to inform policymakers and opinion leaders about important wellness and health care issues.
Imagine being the executive director of a community-based nonprofit with a $6.5 million annual budget that operates a health clinic, a food bank, and a jobs program. Before the economy soured, your organization served 400,000 clients annually. At the end of 2008, the number spiked to 475,000, yet your organization experienced reduced donations, grants and government funding, barely reaching $5 million.

Similar stories like this are echoing across the country. This perfect economic storm is threatening the nonprofit sector in ways not seen since the Great Depression. The recession has overstayed its visit, driven largely by the implosion of key financial behemoths that bet their profits on exotic mortgages and poor credit risks — and creating more clients for nonprofits while homes, jobs, and health insurance are being lost.

Foundations haven’t been exempt from bad news. A steep decline in our portfolios has diminished, or in some cases, decimated many of the philanthropic sector’s grant programs. Add to that, severe government cutbacks as formerly robust tax bases take dramatic dives, causing some municipalities to teeter closer to insolvency, unable to support community programs.

Now is the time for foundations to temporarily consider shifting their strategies to provide the nonprofits with funding to keep the lights on and the doors open. Our experience during the last decade has taught us that core operating support can make all the difference to struggling organizations coping with dwindling budgets and increasing demands during this tough economic environment.

With most corporate and small business profits tanking, rising unemployment has fueled increases in the uninsured and homeless, accompanied by spawning even more penalties, such as rising food and gas prices, which have caused greater pain to the poor and struggling middle class. This economic tsunami has multiplied the traditionally heavy demands shouldered by nonprofits providing services to increasing numbers of people seeking shelter, food, clothing, and health care. There appears to be no immediate light at the end of this tunnel.

How then can we as foundations respond to nonprofit organizations without adding to their woes? We’ve seen creative approaches among our peers, including convening grantees, providing technical assistance, promoting collaboration, and providing loans.

But to struggling organizations, a one-year general support grant of $150,000 makes all of the above pale in comparison. Even better, a grant — unlike a loan from...
Elementary and middle school students find a quiet spot at the Para Los Niños library in downtown Los Angeles. Because of the economic recession, the agency’s leaders have had to restructure some programs and close others to stay viable.
Riding Out the Storm

In the Wake of the Recession, Eight TCWF Grantee Leaders Share Their Stories of Survival and Their Strategies for Emerging Stronger Than Ever

By Rick Nahmias

In the sunlit library of Para Los Niños, a downtown Los Angeles nonprofit designed to help impoverished children and high-risk youth succeed, President and CEO Gisselle Acevedo tells the story of how one of her teachers had put together a multipart lesson on bees only to have an ant crawl across a student’s desk as she stood there dressed in an elaborate bee costume. The students immediately forgot about their teacher and gathered around the desk entranced by the tiny, uninvited visitor. In a matter of seconds, out went the bee costume and in came a lesson about thoraxes and petioles. It is just one example of how Acevedo’s teachers and staff have learned to adapt to sudden changes and uncertainty, both inside and outside its classrooms.

The anecdote also works as an unlikely metaphor for how some of California’s 121,000 nonprofit organizations are having to abandon strategic plans, budgets and long-term goals in light of the economic crisis. The passage of the budget revisions in July compounded the situation for Californians when programs, services and funds – the lifeblood of many of these agencies – were sharply trimmed.

“Our core operating support grants increased to 90 percent during the first six month of this year,” said Gary L. Yates, president and CEO of The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF). “This rise is indicative of the struggles nonprofits are facing, with increased demand for services and falling revenues.

“Our experience has taught us that unrestricted funding is the most effective and strategic way to support the essential efforts of nonprofits working to improve the health of underserved Californians.”

For the eight health nonprofit leaders and experts interviewed for this story, this has been a time like no other.

“California, as it often is, was ahead of the curve on this economic downturn,” said David Greco, Western Region vice president of the Nonprofit Finance Fund (NFF), which was founded in the early 1980s to provide lending and financial services to nonprofits. “We already had
last year’s budget crisis, coupled with foreclosures and a drop in tax revenues. Combine all this with rising demand – and you have the creation of the perfect storm,” said Greco, framing the current situation in sobering terms. NFF serves both nonprofits and funders through an integrated package of financial and advisory services that includes loans, workshops and business analyses.
(See sidebar.)

Effect on Health and Human Services

The devastation wrought by the severe economic downturn has been particularly hard on California’s health and human services organizations. Here are a few examples of its effect on TCWF grantees with core support grants:

¬ St. Barnabas Senior Services, founded in 1908, is Los Angeles County’s oldest senior services agency. In 2008, it saw its largest private case management contract, valued at $240,000, simply go away along with the complete deletion of government funding for its Alzheimer’s Day Care Resource Center.

¬ Huckleberry Youth Programs of San Francisco, which runs the nation’s oldest runaway shelter, finished last year with the largest deficit in agency history – $350,000 – because of lowered individual and foundation giving and midyear state funding cuts.

¬ MOMS Orange County, which offers pre- and postnatal health care coordination, education and access to community services, has been forced to lay off staff and abandon one of its popular pregnancy and early parenting health programs. As a result, the wait list for other services has skyrocketed to 190 expectant mothers – nearly 10 times that of the highest point.

¬ The Shasta Consortium of Community Clinics (SCCHC), a network of five federally qualified health centers with 16 sites in three rural Northern California counties, served 70,000 patients with more than 250,000 visits in 2008 alone. So far this year, it has taken a hit of $3.7 million in state funding cuts.

¬ Homeboy Industries, which for 23 years has strived to redirect the lives of Los Angeles youth involved in gang culture through violence prevention programs including everything from tattoo removal to silk-screening, is owed more than $300,000 by the state on a two-year grant with no word when the funds will be delivered.

Acevedo of Para Los Niños brings it back to the most vulnerable affected. “These are not just poor children … these are some of the poorest children in America,” she said. Having come from her own childhood of poverty in L.A.’s Pico-Union neighborhood, she personally understands the difficulties the agency’s children face. For Acevedo, a decision she has been forced to make is especially tough – closing proven programs that have become models so she can sustain those that are less successful but serve more children and youth at a lower-per-child cost.

The Shasta Consortium’s Executive Director Doreen Bradshaw explains that rural health care facilities provide three essential layers of health care: they are often an area’s sole medical care facility; they offer urgent care centers to tourists; and they act as disaster preparedness centers.

WEATHERING THE STORM

David Greco of the Nonprofit Finance Fund provides some tips for agencies to survive the recession:

1. For nonprofit organizations to be responsive to their clients’ needs and have long-term sustainability, leaders need timely, reliable and accurate financial data.

2. Create a “worst-case scenario” contingency budget ahead of time.

3. Focus on how the financial and capital underpinnings of your organization impact its ability to achieve its mission.

4. Be clear about which of your programs or services are core to mission and which ones generate surplus or deficit.

5. Know the fully loaded cost of delivering services and be able to communicate to funders and supporters transparently without apology.

6. Don’t promise more than you can deliver to clients or funders.

7. Encourage funders to move away from current funding trends and toward more flexible, less restrictive funding/giving that allows nonprofits to be adaptive in today’s rapidly changing environment.

8. Understand that the current economy is an opportunity for leaders to transform how they do business and emerge from it with stronger and more viable organizations.

For more information on NFF, including its free resources, workshops, loans and consulting services, please visit www.nonprofitfinancefund.org.

Compiled by Rick Nahmias
Moreover, “they often are an area’s largest employer,” she said. Add it all up and “you can see we’re in an unquestionably dire situation.”

Facing the Challenges

Seeing the financial climate go from bad to worse, many of these nonprofit leaders have strengthened their resolve to do just that – lead.

MOMS Orange County CEO Pamela Pimentel’s background prepared her for the worst.

“I’m a nurse. The signs and symptoms of sickness were coming our way over a year ago,” said Pimentel, who encouraged her board to respond proactively when she saw what was on the horizon. While the approach gave the organization a roadmap to follow as the situation worsened, it did not stave off the need for the board and senior staff to authorize program and staff cuts.

My Friend’s Place, Hollywood’s largest teen runaway support and drop-in center, wanted to avoid making incremental cuts, so it went directly to a 50 percent budget reduction. It whittled its staff of 25 to nine and moved from being open seven days a week to five.

“We’re having to try some new models … because we see over 100 young people a day,” said Heather Carmichael, a longtime staffer who recently transitioned to executive director. “There are definitely unknowns in this shift, but it is a necessity to bring the agency back to a financial equilibrium.”

Compounding a bad economy, St. Barnabas Senior Services had a monthly deficit of $60,000 even before the recent state funding cuts.

“When I came in, there were very few grant proposals in the queue,” said Rigo Saborio, who took the reins as executive director last December.

“With the looming state cuts, and continuing economic pressure on our donors and clients, it was clear we had to make some quick changes,” he said. Saborio contacted every board member and set up one-on-one meetings with upper management – and as a team they implemented a bottom-up budget action plan that has resulted in improved operational efficiency and fiscal soundness.

Survival Strategies

Yes, the situation is dire for many, but each agency consulted for this story matched the power of the downturn with an openness to think outside the box. To be more competitive, save funds and generate income, many of them have retooled the way they operate.

“We chose to reduce operating expenses overall – in every area,” said MOMS Orange County’s Pimentel. In June 2008, the agency purchased and began the complete renovation of a once-derelict building in a low-income neighborhood. That September, it moved its headquarters there to be closer to its clients.

The agency has reduced operating costs by 15 percent and now has a rental space within its building that generates about $6,000 a month.

Also in the vein of using real estate to the organization’s benefit, St. Barnabas’ Saborio said that his agency is in the process of restructuring the 10.7 percent interest rate loan on its main building, the savings of which will give the agency access to unrestricted cash.

Huckleberry Youth Programs Executive Director Bruce Fisher said that the agency sold an underutilized shelter in Marin County and put the $750,000 proceeds into the bank, giving it reserves and the ability to expand.

Acevedo said that at Para Los Niños the sacrifices have been shared across all levels: upper management has taken pay cuts of 6 percent; the organization has stopped picking up the co-pays for all employees’ health insurance; and 401k contributions from the organization have ceased.

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Residents Protect Their Environment and Health

Greenaction Educates Communities Most Affected by Environmental Health Hazards

In both rural and urban areas across California, residents of low-income and predominantly minority communities are often exposed to high levels of air pollution, toxins and other types of hazardous waste simply because of where they live. Their communities are often located in areas where pollution-intensive industries and waste sites operate or are near freeways and ports with heavy diesel truck traffic.

“One strategy for improving the health of these communities is to give residents the tools to empower themselves to promote communitywide environmental health and education,” said Earl Lui, TCWF program director. “Organizations that undertake this work educate local residents on pertinent issues such as the health effects of particular toxins, the sources of environmental health hazards in the community, and ways to prevent or reduce exposure.”

By David B. Littlefield

Greenaction helped organize residents of Kettleman City, a small farmworker town in the Central Valley, to voice opposition to the expansion of a local toxic waste dump at a “listening session” with elected officials and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency leaders.
Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice (Greenaction) received a three-year, $225,000 grant from TCWF in June 2008 to provide its environmental health education programs and leadership training in impacted communities ranging from Bayview-Hunters Point and Richmond in the Bay Area to small towns in the Central Valley, including Kettleman City.

Greenaction was founded in 1997 by a diverse group of community environmental justice leaders living on the front lines of impacted communities. They recognized the need for a grassroots-level organization to work in underserved communities to complement national campaigns and other work by mainstream environmental groups.

In Kettleman City, a small farmworker town, Greenaction is helping families fight the proposed expansion of a toxic waste dump for harmful chemicals such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which were widely used as coolants and lubricants in electrical equipment before being banned because of their damaging environmental health effects.

“It’s lots of long, patient work around the kitchen table,” said Bradley Angel, Greenaction executive director. “We help adults and youth build confidence to speak out on behalf of their community – to be factual while speaking from the heart.”

Ultimately, Greenaction’s goal is to build community members’ capacity to raise awareness among their neighbors; engage local media to report stories about environmental health threats; and advocate for policy changes with local, state and even national policymakers and regulators, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Another area of focus is to help create sustainable local organizations so that training is also provided on fundraising, membership development and board development.

In addition to working with communities on an individual basis, Greenaction builds links and partnerships among affected communities. For example, some of the new PCB waste destined for the dump in Kettleman City is from Hunters Point, and is being relocated as a result of Greenaction’s work with that community to clean up pollution there.

Recognizing the injustice of moving these chemicals from one low-income community to another, mothers from Hunters Point have traveled to Kettleman City to attend meetings and rallies to help reinforce the shared interest of families in both communities to raise their children in an environment without harmful pollution.

“"It’s lots of long, patient work around the kitchen table. We help adults and youth build confidence to speak out on behalf of their community – to be factual while speaking from the heart."
By Cathy Curtis

It may seem incredible that three clinics with a total of three paid staff members could handle 5,899 patient visits in one year. But at MEND (Meet Each Need With Dignity), a multiservice agency in Pacoima, Calif., that serves the poorest of the poor, health care practitioners contributed 8,619 hours of volunteer time in 2008.

“When we hire staff, part of their job description is that they’re working with volunteers,” said Marianne Haver Hill, MEND president and CEO. “Staff are there to make it easy for the [volunteer] practitioners to do their job.”

MEND was founded in the early 1970s by professionals working without pay. Today the agency provides the only free, comprehensive medical, dental and vision care in the northeast San Fernando Valley, where 44 percent of residents have no medical insurance of any kind. Housed in a 40,000-square-foot facility that opened in 2007, MEND received a three-year, $200,000 core operating support grant from TCWF in December 2007.

Offering a broad range of services for children and adults – including family medicine, healthy aging, diabetes and hypertension education and treatment, gynecology, acupuncture, general dentistry and vision care – the clinics can serve individuals with multiple needs under one roof. Because patients have neither Medicare nor Medi-Cal, restrictions and paperwork are minimal.

“Our health care providers can just focus on health care,” Haver Hill said. “If our doctors want to spend 30 minutes with a patient and do a lot of education, they can do that. We’ve had retiree volunteers who told us, ‘This kind of medicine is exactly what I started out doing years ago.’ ”

Occasionally, when a clinic lacks a full volunteer staff, or specialized treatment is needed, patients are sent to another provider. But MEND’s volunteers – who also work in the warehouse, write grants, do data entry and perform myriad other vital tasks – are a loyal group. Throughout the years, recognition opportunities ensure that hard work is publicly acknowledged and the grassroots, client-focused approach appeals to people who want to make a difference.

Nevertheless, recruitment of volunteer providers is a constant effort.

“We’ll go out to the San Fernando Valley Optometric Society or the San Fernando Valley Dental Association and try to get a minute or two at a meeting, then stay and network,” said Maggie Torres, director of programs and services.

Yet MEND has not been as hard hit by the current economic recession as other safety net providers. Because the agency is completely reliant on private funding, no programs were affected by the recent state budget cuts. In fact, it has seen an influx of skilled volunteers who can’t find paid positions but are still willing to practice pro bono.

In 2008, MEND had more than 2,800 volunteers.

“If MEND had a full-time paid staff, that would be the equivalent of 60 employees,” said Frank A. Lalle, TCWF program director. “It takes a lot of volunteer stewardship to work with so many people with different needs and skill levels and keep them engaged over time.”

MEND’s corps of volunteers provides thousands of hours of services as medical, dental and vision care practitioners, warehouse workers, grantwriters and many other vital tasks for the northeast San Fernando Valley agency. Forty-four percent of residents there have no medical insurance of any kind.
Volunteer Opportunities at MEND

- Home Visiting Volunteers
- Drivers
- Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians
- Dentists and Dental Assistants
- Teachers for English as a Second Language (ESL) Program
- Registered Nurses
- Food/Clothing Distribution Assistants
- After School Tutors for Children
- Carpenters/Electricians/Plumbers/Painters
- Clerical Support/Data Entry/Bulk Mail Assistance
- Fundraisers/Proposal Writers
- Public Relations Specialists/Writers/Graphic Artists
- Computer Specialists
- Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition
- Vehicle and Building Maintenance
- Bilingual Food Intake Interviewers

For more information about volunteering at MEND, contact Volunteer Services Director Lupe Acosta at 818-896-0246 ext. 7327 or lupe@mendpoverty.org.
“How Can a Pharmacist Help Me?”
Pharmacy Access Partnership Eases the Contraceptive Communication Gap for Teens

By Cathy Curtis
To young people who are used to shopping for makeup or munchies at the local drugstore, the pharmacy can be a mysterious, even off-putting place.

Focus groups with teenage girls from diverse ethnic backgrounds in California revealed the extent of the problem to Pharmacy Access Partnership (PAP), a center of Oakland-based Pacific Institute for Women’s Health (PIWH). Only 15 percent of the teens knew they could obtain emergency contraception (EC) at a pharmacy without a prescription from a clinic or doctor.

Teens clearly need more information about responsible decision-making and effective contraception. In 2006, the teen birthrate began to rise after a 14-year period of continuous decline.

For PAP, the information gleaned from the focus group was apparent. Pharmacies are a useful access point to meet teen reproductive health needs. With their convenient locations and long hours, they are often more accessible to teens than community clinics and doctors’ offices.

To help pharmacists get the word out about EC and other reproductive health issues – and tailor their approach to teens’ needs – PAP debuted the Youth-Friendly Pharmacy Initiative (YFPI), the first program of its kind in California, and in fact, the United States. It is funded in part by a three-year, $300,000 core operating support grant from TCWF in June 2007.

“There is good reason to believe that sexually active teens would benefit from wider availability of emergency contraception, given that the majority of teens have sex by the time they graduate high school,” said Julio Marcial, TCWF program director.

This year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration broadened over-the-counter access of Plan B and its generic version to consumers 17 and older. In California and nine other states, girls 16 and younger and women of any age may get Plan B and the generic directly from specially trained pharmacists without first obtaining a prescription from a doctor or clinic. Plan B is a hormonal contraceptive that prevents pregnancy up to five days after unprotected sex.

Last spring the initiative sponsored hour-long pharmacist trainings in the Bay Area – they’ll be held in the Central Valley, San Diego and San Francisco this fall and be made available online – that covered subjects including minors’ rights and confidentiality; the Family Pact insurance program, which minors can obtain on their own at health clinics; and using social media like Facebook and MySpace to communicate with youth.

The focus groups also showed that privacy is a big issue for teens, who often feel embarrassed to ask for EC within earshot of other customers. That’s why PAP developed the two-part Client Confidentiality Card. The teenage girl tears off the portion containing the question “Got Plan B?” and hands it to the pharmacist. The other half of the card has facts about EC.

These popular cards have been translated into Spanish and Chinese. During the 2008-09 grant year, more than 6,000 were distributed to youth-serving organizations, enabling teens to spread the word to their friends to raise awareness about EC.

“Why PAP developed the two-part Client Confidentiality Card. The teenage girl tears off the portion containing the question “Got Plan B?” and hands it to the pharmacist. The other half of the card has facts about EC.

“These popular cards have been translated into Spanish and Chinese. During the 2008-09 grant year, more than 6,000 were distributed to youth-serving organizations, enabling teens to spread the word to their friends to raise awareness about EC.

“We’ve seen the C-Card become an important educational tool in terms of bridging the gap between youth access and pharmacy provision of contraceptive services,” said Belle Taylor-McGhee, PIWH president and CEO. “It opened up a new conversation and served as an opportunity to expand our reach.”
The Foundation prioritizes eight health issues for funding and responds to timely issues or special projects outside the funding priorities. We encourage requests for core operating support, but requests for project funding are also welcome. Core operating support can be used to help underwrite the regular, ongoing health care, health promotion and disease prevention activities of your organization. Such funds can be used for ongoing organizational costs such as salaries for key administrative staff or operating expenses. Core support funds can also be used for strengthening organizational capacity through activities such as engaging in strategic planning, facilitating board development or developing information systems. Each prioritized health issue is described below.

- **Diversity in the Health Professions**
  Grants that address the issue of diversity in the health professions are commonly given to organizations that provide pipeline programs, scholarships, outreach and retention programs, internships and fellowships, and loan repayment programs for ethnic minorities that are underrepresented in the health professions. Careers in medicine, nursing, public health and other allied health professions are included. Organizations that support leadership development for people of color in the health professions are also eligible for funding. In addition, the Foundation funds organizations that provide information about the California health care workforce to policymakers and opinion leaders.

- **Environmental Health**
  Grants that address the issue of environmental health are commonly given to organizations that provide environmental health education and awareness activities; community organizing to promote environmental health; screening and testing for exposure to environmental toxins; leadership development; and collaborations such as partnerships between public health departments and community-based health programs to improve environmental health. The Foundation also funds efforts to inform policymakers and opinion leaders about improving environmental health issues.

- **Healthy Aging**
  Grants that address the issue of healthy aging are commonly given to organizations that provide clinical preventive services, falls prevention programs, food and nutrition programs and in-home support. Also funded are organizations that support relationships between youth and older adults through activities such as intergenerational volunteering and mentoring. In addition, the Foundation funds agencies that inform policymakers and opinion leaders about healthy aging, as well as organizations that provide leadership development programs for seniors.

- **Mental Health**
  Grants that address the issue of mental health are commonly given to organizations that provide services for transition-age youth (ages 16-23) — with a focus on those in, or exiting from, foster care and on runaway/homeless youth. In addition, the Foundation funds organizations that provide leadership development programs for mental health professionals, as well as organizations that inform policymakers and opinion leaders about the health/mental health issues of transition-age youth.

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**What’s New?**

**2009 Champions of Health Professions Diversity Award**

On June 15, Guillermo J. Camacho, D.D.S., West Covina; Shirley Flores-Muñoz, Ph.D., Watsonville; and Tomás A. Magaña, M.D., Oakland (left to right, in photo below), were honored as the TCWF 2009 Champions of Health Professions Diversity. The honorees each received a cash award of $25,000. The awards were presented at a dinner held in conjunction with a two-day conference sponsored by TCWF that featured plenary speakers and breakout sessions for Foundation grantees and others working in this field. Visit the Leadership Recognition portal of www.CalWellness.org to learn more about the honorees and this important health policy issue.

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**TCWF Co-Sponsors Communications Conference**

Through its media and civic partnership program, TCWF co-sponsored “Here and Now: With an Eye to the Future,” held in Los Angeles on May 27. The day of workshops for Asian and Pacific Islander-focused nonprofit groups was tailored to assist in development of the organizational communications, marketing and media skills as tools to increase capacity and sustainability. The conference was attended by nearly 200. Plans are underway for a similar event in San Francisco on November 3.
• **Teenage Pregnancy Prevention**
Grants that address the issue of teenage pregnancy prevention are commonly given to organizations that provide outreach activities for reproductive health care, access to contraceptive services, and comprehensive programs for pregnant teens. An emphasis is placed on funding peer-provider clinics and other reproductive health organizations that work with high-risk, sexually active, underserved teen populations. The Foundation also funds organizations that provide leadership development activities for reproductive health care workers and organizations that inform policymakers and opinion leaders about the issue of teen pregnancy.

• **Violence Prevention**
Grants that address the issue of violence prevention are commonly given to organizations that provide services for youth (ages 12–24) including mentoring programs, gang intervention programs, re-entry programs, community-based violence prevention programs and after-school programs. An emphasis is placed on funding organizations that work with at-risk youth, including gang-affiliated and previously incarcerated youth. Grants are also made to organizations that provide leadership development activities to those working in the field of violence prevention, as well as organizations that inform policymakers and opinion leaders about the public health aspects of violence against youth.

• **Women’s Health**
Grants that address the issue of women’s health are commonly given to organizations that provide reproductive health care, prenatal care, community-based comprehensive health care services, HIV/AIDS programs for women of color, case management, and supportive housing for homeless women. Priority is given to organizations that create welcoming environments for women in underserved communities. The Foundation also funds organizations that provide leadership development activities for women and those that inform policymakers and opinion leaders about the issue of women’s health.

• **Work and Health**
Grants that address the issue of work and health are commonly given to nonprofit organizations that provide health care services to farmworkers, in-home health workers, garment workers, day laborers and other low-income workers. Worker centers that provide culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services, such as health education and access to health care for low-wage workers, are also prioritized for funding. In addition, the Foundation funds organizations that provide leadership development programs for low-wage workers, as well as organizations that inform policymakers and opinion leaders about the issue of work and health.

• **Special Projects**
Each year, the Foundation sets aside a pool of dollars to respond in a timely fashion to opportunities that fit our mission but are outside the eight health issues prioritized for funding. The Foundation places an emphasis on grants to support and strengthen safety net providers of health care, help low-income consumers understand and navigate the health care system, and to inform policymakers and opinion leaders about health care issues affecting the underserved. The Foundation also provides funding to address the health care needs of the California/Mexico border population, the urban homeless, and culturally appropriate programs for underserved ethnic populations.

• **Application Process**
To present The California Wellness Foundation with a grant request, an organization should first write a one- to two-page letter of interest. Please note that submissions beyond two pages will not be accepted. The letter should describe the organization’s mission, activities and operating budget; the region and population(s) served; the total funds requested from the Foundation; and how the funds will be used. If you are requesting project funding, please include the project’s goals, leadership and duration. Your letter will be processed most accurately if you clearly indicate the TCWF funding priority for which you want your request considered (for example, healthy aging). No application form is needed, and formal proposals are not accepted at this preliminary stage.

Foundation staff will review letters of interest on an ongoing basis and notify prospective applicants of the results normally within three months. Those encouraged to submit a proposal will receive further guidance at that time.

• **Eligibility Criteria**
With rare exception, the Foundation funds nonprofit organizations that are exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and that are not private foundations as defined in IRC Section 509(a) or are public charities as defined in IRC Section 170(b)(A)(vi). The Foundation also funds government agencies. The Foundation does not fund Section 509(a)(3) Type III non-functionally integrated supporting organizations.

Grants are not generally awarded for annual fund drives, building campaigns, major equipment or biomedical research. Activities that exclusively benefit the members of sectarian or religious organizations are not considered. The Foundation does not provide international funding or fund organizations located outside the United States.
What's New?

New Reflections Available Online

The focus of the latest in our Reflections series, “Grantmaking That Lasts: Key Findings of The California Wellness Foundation’s Responsive Grantmaking Program,” is a Harder+Company evaluation of TCWF grants made over five years. Its findings show that core operating support can have positive impacts on the organizational health of nonprofits. To access Reflections, visit the Publications section of www.CalWellness.org.

Report Reveals Many Californians Experience Medical Debt

A new UCLA Center for Health Policy Research report, The State of Health Insurance in California (SHIC), shows there is a “glaring inadequacy” in the current system of health insurance, which forces hundreds of thousands into debt even when covered by insurance policies. Funded in part by a grant from TCWF, SHIC is based on a new analysis of data from the California Health Interview Survey, the nation’s largest state health survey. The report can be found at www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu.

Awarded March and June 2009

TCWF’s Board of Directors approved the following grants in support of the Foundation’s mission of improving the health of the people of California and to further its four goals: addressing the health needs of underserved communities; supporting and strengthening nonprofit organizations; recognizing and encouraging leaders; and informing policymakers and opinion leaders about important wellness and health care issues. For current application guidelines, please see the preceding How To Apply pages.

Alliance For Justice
Washington, DC
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support for the California office to continue to provide training and technical assistance on state and federal nonprofit advocacy laws and regulations applicable to California health nonprofits.

Aspiranet
South San Francisco, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support for the Experience Corps Bay Area volunteer-based, intergenerational tutoring and mentoring program to continue to improve the health of seniors in Alameda and San Francisco Counties.

Area Agency On Aging - Serving Napa And Solano
Vallejo, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support for Stop Falls Napa Valley to sustain a comprehensive falls prevention program for low-income seniors.

Be A Mentor, Inc.
Hayward, CA
$100,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain mentoring services, as a teenage pregnancy prevention strategy, to high-risk youth at Castlemont High School in East Oakland.

Bethany Services
Bakersfield, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain the Bakersfield Homeless Center Medical and Dental Program to improve the well-being, health and functional ability of the homeless population of Bakersfield.

Awarded March and June 2009

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Grantmaking That Lasts: Key Findings From The Evaluation of TCWF’s Responsive Grantmaking Program
Core operating support can be effectively evaluated, and it can have a positive impact on an organization’s health.
A Better La  
Los Angeles, CA  
$65,000 over one year  
To support the Summer Night Lights Program, as a gang violence prevention strategy, in Nickerson Gardens, Jordan Downs and Imperial Courts, three public housing developments in Watts.

Building Opportunities For Self-Sufficiency  
Berkeley, CA  
$150,000 over three years  
For core operating support to continue to provide health education and case management to homeless women in Alameda County.

Calexico New River Committee, Inc.  
Calexico, CA  
$100,000 over three years  
For core operating support to continue to inform policymakers, opinion leaders and community residents about health issues related to pollution in the New River.

California Consortium For Urban Indian Health, Inc.  
San Francisco, CA  
$180,000 over three years  
For core operating support to continue to strengthen the development of the consortium and to continue to promote health and access to care for Native Americans living in cities throughout California.

California Council Of Churches  
Sacramento, CA  
$150,000 over three years  
For core operating support to continue to both inform policymakers and to mobilize community members of faith to be effective advocates for meaningful and universal health care coverage for all Californians.

California Council On Gerontology And Geriatrics  
Los Angeles, CA  
$150,000 over three years  
To inform policymakers and opinion leaders about the need to develop a more diverse student body to represent the health needs of the diverse aging population in the state.

California Health Advocates  
Sacramento, CA  
$225,000 over three years  
For core operating support to continue to both provide technical assistance to Medicare intermediaries throughout California and to inform policymakers about Medicare issues critical to California’s seniors.

California Institute Of Integral Studies  
San Francisco, CA  
$210,000 over three years  
To train students from underrepresented ethnic and racial communities for careers in community-based mental health.

California Pan-Ethnic Health Network  
Oakland, CA  
$150,000 over three years  
For core operating support to sustain public policy advocacy efforts to inform policymakers and decision-makers about the health care needs of communities of color in California.

California Public Interest Research Education Fund, Inc.  
Sacramento, CA  
$165,000 over three years  
For core operating support for a health care program to continue to research, inform policymakers and engage the public on issues related to health care access and delivery in California.

Camacho, Guillermo  
West Covina, CA  
$25,000 over one year  
For the 2009 Champions of Health Professions Diversity Award, to recognize and acknowledge individuals who have made substantial contributions to increasing the diversity of California’s health professions.

Catholic Charities Of Santa Clara County  
San Jose, CA  
$150,000 over three years  
For core operating support to sustain the Older Adult Services Division’s nutrition and health promotion programs for low-income seniors in Santa Clara County.

Center For Community Health And Well-Being, Inc.  
Sacramento, CA  
$150,000 over three years  
For core operating support to continue to provide prenatal and well-woman care to underserved women in Sacramento.

Centro Cha, Inc.  
Long Beach, CA  
$150,000 over three years  
For core operating support to sustain employment training and intensive case management services, as a violence prevention strategy, to at-risk, formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated youth in Long Beach.

Children’s Hospital & Research Center At Oakland  
Oakland, CA  
$210,000 over three years  
For core operating support for the FACES for the Future program to continue to provide comprehensive health professions pipeline programming for underrepresented minority high school students in Alameda County.

Childrens Hospital Of Los Angeles/Childrens Hospital Of Los Angeles, Division Of Adolescent Medicine  
Los Angeles, CA  
$400,000 over two years  
For core operating support for the Division of Adolescent Medicine to continue to provide health services at its Teenage and Young Adult Health Center.

Chinese Progressive Association  
San Francisco, CA  
$200,000 over three years  
For core operating support to continue to provide occupational safety and health education and leadership training to immigrant Chinese restaurant workers.

Clinicas Del Camino Real, Inc.  
Ventura, CA  
$200,000 over three years  
For core operating support to sustain the provision of dental and medical services through mobile clinics to farmworkers and their families in Ventura County.
COFeM
Los Angeles, CA
$165,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue the Community Networks program to advocate for the health care needs of Latino immigrant communities in California.

Community Clinic Consortium Of Contra Costa
Richmond, CA
$280,000 over three years
For core operating support to strengthen public policy capacity and sustain the provision of medical and dental services for residents of Contra Costa and Solano Counties.

Community Health Systems, Inc./Fallbrook Family Health Center
Moreno Valley, CA
$180,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide health services to low-income women in rural San Diego County.

Community Partners
Los Angeles, CA
$65,000 over one year
For project support to augment a current grant to develop, implement and evaluate TCWF statewide conferences on the issue of transition-age youth in 2008 and 2009.

County Of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency
Santa Cruz, CA
$135,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain the Teen Health Outreach Program serving high-risk youth and pregnant teens in the city of Watsonville.

Dental Health Foundation
Oakland, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to inform policymakers and decision-makers about the oral health care needs of underserved residents of California.

Desertarc
Palm Desert, CA
$120,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide medical care to medically fragile adults with developmental disabilities participating in its programs.

Episcopal Community Service Of San Francisco
San Francisco, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide health services to formerly homeless residents of supportive housing sites.

Exhale An After-Abortion Counseling Talkline
Oakland, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide women in California with nonjudgmental postabortion support.

Families USA Foundation, Inc.
Washington, DC
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to inform federal and state policymakers, opinion leaders and health advocacy organizations about the impact of federal health policies on health and access to care for low-income Californians.

Flores Muñoz, Shirley
Aptos, CA
$25,000 over one year
For the 2009 Champions of Health Professions Diversity Award, to recognize and acknowledge individuals who have made substantial contributions to increasing the diversity of California’s health professions.

Free Clinic Of Simi Valley
Simi Valley, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide health, dental, legal and counseling services for uninsured and low-income residents of Simi Valley.

Garment Worker Center
Los Angeles, CA
$175,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide occupational health and safety education to garment workers.
Healthy Teen Network
Baltimore, MD
$135,000 over three years
For core operating support to strengthen membership services in California and to continue to inform policymakers about comprehensive programs for pregnant teens in California.

Homeboy Industries
Los Angeles, CA
$200,000 over two years
For core operating support to sustain employment training and tattoo removal services, as a violence prevention strategy, to former gang-affiliated and previously incarcerated youth in Los Angeles County.

Inquilinos Unidos
Los Angeles, CA
$175,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide environmental health education to low-income tenants in Los Angeles.

Institute For Community Peace, Inc.
Washington, DC
$225,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain the provision of technical assistance for California-based violence prevention organizations and to inform policymakers about promising violence prevention programs.

Jefferson Union High School District/Daly City Youth Health Center
Daly City, CA
$225,000 over three years
For core operating support for the Daly City Youth Health Center to sustain reproductive health services targeting teens in Daly City and surrounding communities.

Just Transition Alliance
Chula Vista, CA
$200,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain coalition-building efforts to protect Californians from the harmful health effects of toxic chemicals.

King, Brian
Fresno, CA
$25,000 over one year
For the 2009 California Peace Prize Award, which acknowledges the past violence prevention activities of this individual working to address the root causes of violence in his community.

Latino Community Foundation
San Francisco, CA
$225,000 over three years
For project support of teenage pregnancy prevention programs in San Francisco Bay Area counties through a regranting, technical assistance and convening program.

Laurel House, Inc.
Tustin, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain a supportive housing program, including counseling services, in Orange County for youth who are, or at high risk for becoming, homeless or runaways.

Liberty Hill Foundation
Santa Monica, CA
$225,000 over two years
For core operating support to sustain the Environmental Justice Fund, which provides grants and technical assistance to grassroots environmental justice organizations in Los Angeles County.

Lim, Phalen
Santa Ana, CA
$25,000 over one year
For the 2009 California Peace Prize Award, which acknowledges the past violence prevention activities of this individual working to address the root causes of violence in her community.

Los Angeles Youth Network/LA Youth
Los Angeles, CA
$225,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain a supportive housing program, including counseling services, in Los Angeles County for homeless and runaway youth.

Magaña, Tomas
Oakland, CA
$25,000 over one year
For the 2009 Champions of Health Professions Diversity Award, to recognize and acknowledge individuals who have made substantial contributions to increasing the diversity of California’s health professions.

Maternal Outreach Management System
Santa Ana, CA
$180,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide perinatal case management to underserved women in Orange County.

Mayview Community Health Center
Palo Alto, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide health care services for uninsured and low-income residents of Santa Clara County.
Meals On Wheels Of Salinas, Inc.
Salinas, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain a home-delivered meals program for low-income, homebound seniors throughout the Salinas Valley.

Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project
Oxnard, CA
$200,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain preventive health education for immigrant Oaxacan farmworkers in Ventura County.

National Immigration Law Center
Los Angeles, CA
$165,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to inform policymakers, advocates and opinion leaders about policies affecting immigrants’ access to health care services in California and to strengthen internal infrastructure.

Northeast Community Clinic
Alhambra, CA
$200,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide culturally appropriate health care to low-income populations in Los Angeles.

Oak Valley District Hospital/Family Support Network
Oakdale, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support for the Family Support Network, a family resource center in rural eastern Stanislaus County, to continue to provide health promotion and case management services to underserved populations.

Open Door Community Health Centers
Arcata, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain teen reproductive health services for at-risk, underserved youth in Del Norte and Humboldt Counties.

Operation Safe House, Inc.
Riverside, CA
$300,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain a supportive housing program, including counseling services, in Riverside County for homeless and runaway youth.

Orange County Rescue Mission Health Care Services
Tustin, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide primary health care services to underserved women in Orange County.

Pacific Institute For Community Organizations/Pico California
Oakland, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support for the PICO California project to continue working with its affiliates to increase access to health care at the local, state and federal levels.

Pacific News Service
San Francisco, CA
$175,000 over three years
For project support for the Environmental Health Newsbeat to expand the capacity of California’s ethnic media to cover environmental health issues.

People and Congregations Together For Stockton, Inc.
Stockton, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to mobilize the community to address issues related to health and health access in low-income communities in San Joaquin County.

People Resources, Inc.
Woodland, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain an elderly nutrition program for low-income and rural seniors in Yolo County.

Program For Torture Victims
Los Angeles, CA
$100,000 over three years
For core operating support to provide medical treatment and other services to immigrants suffering from physical and psychological injuries as a result of torture.


What’s New?

Health Information Network Launched
The Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum, a TCWF grantee, has launched the Health Information Network to provide health information, data, research and other resources relevant to Asian-Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. It also contains tools for communicating with advocates, policymakers, community leaders and health organizations. For more information, visit www.apiahf.org.

California Peace Prize Honorees Profiled
Two past TCWF California Peace Prize honorees – Cora Tomalinas and Rev. Anthony Ortiz (left to right, in photo below) – were among 24 individuals profiled in a new book, Hope Matters: The Untold Story of How Faith Works in America, by John A. Calhoun. The book details Calhoun’s two-year, cross-country quest to discover how faith motivates America’s “hardest-working public servants.” The individuals selected have pursued a range of innovative and ambitious plans to help their communities.

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Public Health Foundation Enterprises, Inc./Access Health And Nutrition Services
City of Industry, CA
$180,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain the ACCESS Teen Pregnancy Prevention program in Orange County.

Public Health Foundation Enterprises, Inc./Violence Prevention Coalition Of Orange County
City of Industry, CA
$120,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain the Violence Prevention Coalition of Orange County.

Public Health Institute/Center For Civic Partnerships
Oakland, CA
$230,000 over one year
For project support to develop, implement and evaluate TCWF’s statewide conference on organizational learning and evaluation in 2010, for health and human service nonprofits in California.

Public Health Institute/Center For Collaborative Planning
Oakland, CA
$110,000 over one year
For the Center for Collaborative Planning to develop, implement and evaluate TCWF’s annual California health advocates retreat.

Public Health Institute/Center For Collaborative Planning
Oakland, CA
$50,000 over one year
For project support to augment a current grant to develop, implement and evaluate TCWF’s annual conference on increasing diversity in the health professions.

Redlands Community Hospital/
Redlands Family Clinic
Redlands, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide primary care to underserved women of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

Regents Of The University Of California, Los Angeles/Southern California Education And Research Center
Los Angeles, CA
$200,000 over three years
For core operating support for the Southern California Education and Research Center to continue to provide occupational safety and health education to low-wage workers in Southern California.

Regents Of The University Of California, Los Angeles/Sustainable Technology Policy Program
Los Angeles, CA
$175,000 over three years
For core operating support for the Sustainable Technology Policy Program to continue to provide technical assistance and information to policymakers, opinion leaders and others about the health impacts of chemicals and emerging technologies.

Sacramento Community Clinic Consortium, Inc.
Sacramento, CA
$230,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain ongoing network activities and to implement the Sacramento Healthcare Access Program in Sacramento County.

Sacramento Native American Health Center, Inc.
Sacramento, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide primary medical and dental services for residents of Sacramento.

Salvation Army A California Corporation
Los Angeles, CA
$200,000 over three years
For core operating support for the Oxnard/Port Hueneme Corps Medical and Dental Clinic to continue to provide health care services for underserved residents of Ventura County.

San Diego Black Health Associates
San Diego, CA
$100,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue health promotion and education efforts for African-American communities in San Diego County.

Shasta Senior Nutrition Program
Redding, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue a nutrition program for elderly, low-income and rural seniors throughout Shasta County.

Shelter From The Storm, Inc.
Palm Desert, CA
$175,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide health services for women who are survivors of domestic violence in the Coachella Valley.

Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition
San Jose, CA
$175,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain the provision of information to policymakers, opinion leaders and the public about the health risks of nanotechnology and other emerging technologies.

Simmons, Olis
Oakland, CA
$25,000 over one year
For the 2009 California Peace Prize Award, which acknowledges the past violence prevention activities of this individual working to address the root causes of violence in her community.

Six Rivers Planned Parenthood
Eureka, CA
$180,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide reproductive health services to underserved women in rural Northern California.
Social & Environmental Entrepreneurs See, Inc./Central Valley Air Quality Coalition
Los Angeles, CA
$175,000 over three years
For core operating support for the project, the Central Valley Air Quality Coalition, to inform policymakers, opinion leaders and community residents about health issues related to air quality in the Central Valley.

Social Model Recovery Systems, Inc.
Covina, CA
$225,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain the United Coalition East Prevention Project to prevent violence against youth in the Central City East area of downtown Los Angeles.

Soledad Community Health Care District Foundation
Soledad, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide health care services for underserved, low-income residents of rural Soledad.

Sonoma County Community College District/Santa Rosa Junior College, Healthcare Workforce Development Project
Santa Rosa, CA
$225,000 over three years
For core operating support for the Santa Rosa Junior College’s Healthcare Workforce Development Project to continue to provide information about health careers and academic and social support to low-income and Latino students in Sonoma County.

South County Senior Services, Inc.
Laguna Woods, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide nutritious meals to seniors in their homes and at congregate sites throughout South Orange County.

Southside Coalition Of Community Health Centers
Los Angeles, CA
$200,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to build infrastructure and capacity to strengthen the primary care safety net in South Los Angeles.

St. Vincent Senior Citizen Nutrition Program, Inc.
Los Angeles, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to continue to provide meals to low-income, homebound seniors in Skid Row/downtown Los Angeles, Westlake and other parts of Los Angeles County.

Tahoe Youth And Family Services
South Lake Tahoe, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support to sustain a drop-in center and emergency shelter program, including counseling services, in the South Lake Tahoe region for homeless and runaway youth.

The Teen Project, Inc.
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA
$150,000 over three years
For project support to provide safe housing, counseling and other supportive services in Orange County for emancipated foster youth.

Tides Center/Latino Coalition For A Healthy California
San Francisco, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support for the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California to continue to develop the capacity of its regional advocacy networks and to inform policymakers and opinion leaders about the health issues of Latino communities.

Tides Center/Youth Justice Institute
San Francisco, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support for the Youth Justice Institute to sustain violence prevention programming to incarcerated youth in Alameda and San Francisco Counties.

Toussaint Youth Villages, Inc.
San Diego, CA
$150,000 over three years
For core operating support for Toussaint Academy to sustain a supportive housing program for homeless youth, including counseling services, in San Diego County.

What’s New?

Women’s Empowerment Graduate Profiled
A graduate of a program for homeless women operated by Women’s Empowerment, a TCWF grantee, was profiled on NBC News in June. “Kathryn,” who was enrolled in the agency’s domestic violence counseling, parenting, fitness and nutrition classes, shared how the agency guided her in restoring her life and finding a job after experiencing many years of domestic violence and homelessness.

The segment aired in New York City and was picked up by affiliates nationwide. Kathryn’s story is at www.womens-empowerment.org/post.cfm/kathrynsstory.

October Declared California Promotores Month

Vision y Compromiso, a TCWF grantee and the statewide coordinating network for promotores and community health workers, has been recognized in a proclamation by the California Legislature declaring October California Promotores Month. The Legislature formally endorsed the pioneering work of promotores and duly recognized the leadership provided by Vision y Compromiso, which was founded in 2000 with a mission to support promotores in California in their effort to ensure healthy and dignified living for immigrant Latinos.▼
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a financial institution, government or grantmaker, for instance — doesn’t have to be repaid. And that’s one less burden for nonprofits to carry.

It’s all the more poignant when considering that nearly two-thirds of grantmakers report they will reduce their funding in 2009, according to a recent Council on Foundations’ survey. It’s likely that in 2010 this funding will decline even further. Therefore, the type of funding provided to nonprofits increases in importance.

Our foundation has operated its Responsive Grantmaking Program since 2001, accepting unsolicited letters of interest and dedicating at least half of our grantmaking dollars each year to core operating support. In 2007, core support accounted for 63 percent of our grants and, in 2008, 73 percent. Indicative of the increasing strain on health and human service organizations, this number jumped to 90 percent in the first half of 2009.

One of the strengths of private independent foundations is their diversity in grantmaking approaches. There is power in our sector exercising its independence to implement myriad types of grant programs, including strategic initiatives and long-term funding.

But there’s also power in flexibility. It’s bold to strategically increase core support while temporarily putting on hold some or all grant programs that are too difficult for nonprofits to implement now as they focus on surviving. It tells the nonprofit sector that we not only feel your pain, we want to lessen it. This power has already been flexed by the Los Angeles-based Weingart Foundation and the Gulf Coast Foundation in Florida with their recent announcements to increase core support grants in 2009.

I respect the duty of each foundation’s board of trustees to develop strategies and activities they deem appropriate to achieve their charitable missions. I also believe that we owe it to nonprofits to not conduct business as usual during these times. After all, they are on the front lines helping people survive what history will chronicle as the toughest economic period since the 1930s.

The core operating support strategy can serve as a temporary bridge to help organizations cross these troubled waters while they help the poor, working poor and newly out-of-work middle class who have now joined the ranks of the underserved. We can prevent nonprofits from drowning now so they will still be around when our economy improves and our grantmaking portfolios rebound.

This article originally appeared in the June 2009 “Perspectives” column of Independent Sector’s Memo to Members.
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In the current climate, furloughs have become commonplace—not just in state government offices but also in many nonprofits. Moreover, almost every agency interviewed has instituted staff layoffs.

Responding Through Technology

Strategies for adapting to the changes in the economic landscape have also included using web 2.0 technology to reach a wider range of potential funders and to relieve some financial burdens.

Merging “lemonade-stand” ingenuity with a net-savvy promotional sense, Homeboy Industries launched a micro-fundraising campaign over the summer that strives to target 1 million participants to each donate $10 on its online “Virtual Car Wash,” where contributors watch an animation video of a car going from filthy to sparkling clean after making their donation. Additionally, Homeboy is in talks with Whole Foods and Ralphs markets to carry some of its food products, which would boost the already $2 million it earns annually from product sales.

At the Shasta Consortium, the network has been perfecting cost-effective videoconferencing as a tool to reduce travel costs for its outlying, remote member clinics.

“Rural providers need support. They can’t feel isolated during these challenging times,” said Bradshaw. “Many of our members do not have the resources to attend meetings or trainings which often support them in their jobs.”

Silver Linings

Though none of these organizations would ever want to return to the intense fiscal challenges they are working through now, some are finding unexpected benefits in being forced to rethink what it takes to run a successful nonprofit.

MOMS of Orange County’s Pimentel has no problem pointing out an irony.

“We are stronger now—financially—than ever,” she said. “More clients are sticking with the program now because they value the services more and want to have support and certainty in their lives at a time of great uncertainty.”

Acevedo has found strength by recommitting to her agency’s mission: serving impoverished children and high-risk youth. She has been forced to restructure both its after-school program and its Youth Center’s peer-directed teen pregnancy prevention program, which draws from 22 middle and high schools in Central and Downtown L.A., a district with the state’s third highest teen birthrate.

“I’m optimistic because of the kids,” she said. “Success stories are our silver linings and we see them literally every single day.”

At St. Barnabas, average daily attendance at its S. Mark Taper Foundation Adult Day Care Health Center has soared, generating increased revenue. Saborio believes that his agency’s collaborative relationships and venerable reputation may help it through some of the turmoil.

Meanwhile, the Shasta Consortium has found strength in numbers. Bradshaw has witnessed more collaboration and peer networking among community clinics and consortia since the start of the economic recession. One example is a peer support group of chief financial officers, which conducts videoconferencing among members of the Shasta Consortium, the North Coast Clinics Network and the Alliance for Rural Community Health to discuss the latest fiscal policies affecting community health centers.

“By maximizing a resource that already exists, we are increasing collaboration and supporting our members through a fiscally challenging time,” Bradshaw said.

Through its online “Virtual Car Wash,” Homeboy Industries hopes to target 1 million participants to each contribute $10 to support the agency’s programs and services for at-risk and former gang-involved youth.
Words of Wisdom

Providing some advice for her peers, Pimentel, who came from the for-profit health care sector, is leery of “mission drift.” “Mission should drive everything. Stick with your core,” she said.

Huckleberry Youth Programs’ Bruce Fisher understands why many nonprofits don’t enter into partnerships and collaborations – but, he said, they have helped “keep our agency going in this new financial landscape.”

For Acevedo, summing it up was even simpler – “Two words: open heart. When you ask for help, it is amazing who responds.”

Uncertain Future

Few people at any level in the nonprofit sector would be bold enough to predict how or when they will come through this storm – and what havoc it will wreak on nonprofits in future years. But they all agree that even if the economy rights itself this year, the after-effects will linger well into 2010, maybe even 2011.

Uncertain times? Yes. Down for the count? Don’t bet on it. Pimentel of MOMS Orange County points out that while the agency streamlined its programs and cut its budget by 15 percent this year, it has been able to serve the same number of clients who access its core services.

Carmichael of My Friend’s Place strikes a similar tone. She says it is quite clear that its budget, staff and program cuts in no way constitute a long-term plan.

“We have distilled ourselves to a core team that is incredibly passionate and has hopes to begin to grow back in the next 12-24 months,” she said.

Nothing seems to be off the table at Homeboy Industries, which takes partial credit for the 50 percent drop in gang-related homicides in the Los Angeles area since 1992. Its leaders are troubled by the thought of a future without the services it offers.

After some major budgetary triaging, St. Barnabas’ Saborio says he’s optimistic that the strategies the agency implemented earlier this year have progressively reduced its deficit nearly to the point of breaking even each month. As a result, the agency has hired a full-time development director rather than use the services of a part-time consultant.

“We are seeing signs that our efforts have turned things around in a positive direction,” said Saborio, who makes daily coffee stops at its facility’s Cyber Café in part to talk directly with St. Barnabas’ clients. He uses this time to pass along news from an executive level and to dispel any of the fears and rumors that occasionally pop up during stressful economic times.
Back in the otherwise-silent Para Los Niños library, the whoosh of rush-hour traffic builds outside. Acevedo grows emotional as she describes having recently found some of the agency’s children under bridges, left by parents stuck with a difficult choice: to risk losing their jobs to take time off to watch them or to leave them to fend for themselves for 90 minutes because of the trimmed-down summer school schedule.

“We are not better than any of these children. We are these children,” she said, with a quiver in her voice but a resolve on her face.

Magdalena Beltrán-del Olmo has joined the North Los Angeles County Task Force (NLACT) of the California Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders. NLACT is part of a statewide taskforce network that will support and assist the committee in addressing early identification and intervention, health insurance coverage, training/employment, and housing of individuals with autism and related disorders in California.

TCWF recognizes Adriana Godoy Leiss, communications officer, for five years of service.

Kudos

In June, the Inland Empire Violence Prevention Coalition honored TCWF President and CEO Gary L. Yates for his support of Inland Empire agencies and for TCWF’s approach to grantmaking.

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Featured grantees online @

- Homeboy Industries - www.homeboy-industries.org
- Huckleberry Youth Programs - www.huckleberryyouth.org
- My Friend’s Place - www.myfriendsplace.org
- Nonprofit Finance Fund - www.nonprofitfinancefund.org
- Para Los Niños - www.paralosninos.org
- MOMS Orange County - www.momsorangecounty.org
- Shasta Consortium of Community Clinics - www.shastaconsortium.org
- St. Barnabas Senior Services - www.sbssla.org

We are seeing signs that our efforts have turned things around in a positive direction.
Early in his career as a supervising attorney for the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County, it became evident to Frank Lalle that health was critical to quality of life. During his 15-year tenure with the Society, he represented low-income families, older adults and children with disabilities in individual and class-action lawsuits in the areas of health care and public benefits.

Now as a program director for TCWF, addressing the health needs of the underserved continues to be a pivotal theme in his career.

“There are so many barriers to optimal health and wellness in the legal and health systems,” said Lalle. “Working to lower those barriers on an individual level and on a foundation level has been really rewarding.”

Lalle, who joined TCWF in April 2008, is assigned to special projects grantmaking, which responds to opportunities that fit the Foundation’s mission but are outside its eight health issues prioritized for funding.

“I am really focused on organizations that are part of the health care safety net: community health clinics and free clinics,” Lalle said.

He also oversees grants to organizations that target underserved ethnic populations to help them understand and navigate the health care system; grants to family resource centers that deliver health care services, including those in remote and isolated rural areas; and grants to organizations that help address the health needs of California/Mexico border populations. His responsibilities include reviewing letters of interest and grant proposals, and making funding recommendations.

In 1994, while still at the Legal Aid Society, his interest in philanthropy was sparked. Lalle worked with a local community foundation to protect the rights of clients who were close to losing their health benefits as a result of federal welfare reform.

“I was interested in how philanthropy addressed that urgent situation and how it pulled together a group of nonprofits to focus on a common goal,” said Lalle. “It seemed to me that being in philanthropy, I would be able to continue the work I was doing on a larger scale.”

Following his career as a lawyer, he worked at the Peninsula Community Foundation in San Mateo, where he was a senior program officer responsible for grantmaking on the issues of supporting families and health and wellness. Before joining TCWF, he was a grantmaking director at Silicon Valley Community Foundation in Mountain View, managing health care and human services discretionary grantmaking through the foundation’s community endowment and services to corporate donor-advised funds.

Lalle currently serves on the community health investment committee of the Peninsula Healthcare District and is a trustee of the Bernard A. Newcomb Foundation. A member of the State Bar of California, he earned his bachelor’s degree in sociology from Beloit College in Wisconsin and his law degree from Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago.

An avid chef and gardener, Lalle lives in San Francisco with his wife Susan and their daughter.
To restore our community, our kids need opportunity and hope. The community leaders and resources must be as visible and as accessible as the gangs are.

**Brian King**
Fresno

Youth can identify with people who have lived in the same neighborhood, gone through similar struggles and made it. I am a very strong believer in leading by example.

**Phalen Lim**
Santa Ana

Be expansive in your notion of prevention. It’s not simply preventing a physical disease; it’s preventing the loss of hope.

**Olis Simmons**
Oakland

The California Wellness Foundation is proud to recognize the 2009 California Peace Prize honorees: Brian King of Fresno, Phalen Lim of Santa Ana and Olis Simmons of Oakland.

They have the drive, commitment and vision to fearlessly take on challenges — daring to tame them into solutions that improve people’s lives. Many leaders do not expect the spotlight on themselves: they are motivated to help because they care.

With this award, the Foundation seeks to honor these leaders and shine a light on their efforts to prevent violence against youth and promote peace in their communities.

The 2009 California Peace Prize honorees exemplify excellence in leadership. Each has offered practical, proven strategies that support healthy communities and prevent violence. In recognition of these efforts, The California Wellness Foundation provides each leader with a $25,000 grant.

Visit us online at CalWellness.org in our Leadership Recognition portal to learn more about their compelling stories. We also feature past Foundation honorees who are leading the way to diversify the health care workforce, strengthen the nonprofit sector and implement policies to improve Californians’ health.