



Marta Brockmeyer, Ph.D. Project Pointers

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POISED FOR PARTNERSHIP



January is typically a time to launch initiatives that were put on hold during the holidays. As a result, I am awash in client assignments and partnership discussions. But I am so grateful for the opportunity to learn and to meet new people who expand my view of what is possible for our human services clients. It really is all about them, a point to remember when we are up to our ears in deadlines.

This month is also a perfect time to repeat my commitment to all of you:

I will deliver ethical, customized partnership services that help sustain your mission.

I will refer only trusted senior consultants whose skills, experiences and work styles fit your organizational needs.

And, as a reminder of the broad array of professionals I refer, please take a look at the Partners page of my website: martabrockmeyer.com. As always, let me know if you have questions or would like to learn more about their services.

TURNING POINT



Listening: The Essential Partnership Skill

Most of us think we listen well. And, those of us with graduate degrees in counseling or psychology may feel especially qualified to deliver this key skill. But after supporting almost 50 partnerships projects, my observations have led me to question our collective ability to truly hear each other. It helps to occasionally review the basics and remind ourselves of what our communications goals should be. Please [click here](#) to read more...

Pointing to the Future Rhonda Moore, J.D.

After spending 18 rewarding and challenging years as a nonprofit executive director and 14 years in private law practice, I was ready for a change and it was time to focus more on personal and family matters. I started to reflect on what the third chapter in my professional life might look like and quickly realized my current interests remained strongly focused on the nonprofit world. I continue to be impressed and inspired by the dedication and ingenuity of nonprofit organizations, as well as their positive impact on the lives of their clients. Nonprofit staff, especially executive directors, have so much on their plates as they work with limited

resources to provide high quality service to clients, adhere to budgets, support and develop staff, raise funds, follow regulations, and account to funders.

Having decided I wanted to continue my involvement with nonprofit organizations in some way, the opportunity to work with Marta came into the picture. I found I was enthusiastic about the prospect of helping nonprofits explore strategic partnerships. Over the years, I learned the value of a consultant's objective, outside perspective and how working with one could actually save time and expense. And, while leaders excel at so many things, they usually do not bring expertise to every situation. Exploring partnerships can fall to the bottom of the to-do list with so numerous immediate, pressing demands facing nonprofits. That is the case even when partnerships might provide welcome solutions to many of the difficult issues an organization juggles, including financial issues, and most importantly, strengthening service to clients. I'm excited about helping the human services community explore ways to preserve missions and enhance sustainability.

Working with Marta is extraordinarily attractive. She has participated in numerous partnership discussions over the years, and I can't think of a better mentor in this area. Her expertise, ethics and judgment are always so sound. I continue to be amazed at the creative solutions she develops for her clients and the confidence and appreciation she engenders in them. I look forward to our work together!

Cordially,



POINTING TO A GOOD READ



[Click here](#) for winter relief...

A Client's Perspective: Pointing to Real World Lessons **Pam Green, President & CEO, Easterseals Serving Greater Cincinnati**

In July of 2012, Easterseals and Jewish Vocational Services announced they were combining their operations. Just seven months earlier, I had been named president and CEO of Easterseals, and the boards of the respective organizations had agreed that I would be the CEO of the new organization, with the JVS CEO, Peter Bloch, staying on board as the Executive Vice President of Integration. In our seventh year, I can look back and see key points that made our combination a success.

An early conversation with a former board member yielded some of the best advice I received. I called to share the news of the combination and said with great enthusiasm that we would have the best of both worlds: Easterseals was great at innovation and JVS was great at process! He paused and asked if I really believed that. He said, "Pam, there won't be a culture of innovation and a culture of process - there will be one culture. Your job as CEO is to decide what that culture will be and to work fiercely to implement and defend it."

Over the next four months, our senior team - three of us from Easterseals and three of us from JVS - spent months defining the culture we wanted to create together. The values and beliefs we articulated were built on input from our entire staff and remain one of my proudest professional successes. Our commitment to new values and beliefs that we co-created were what unified us over the coming years when we struggled with the inherent challenges of creating our "new" organization.

Another initiative that helped bring our teams together was the use of DiSC assessments with our managers. We shared DiSC assessments as a way of depersonalizing differences in work styles. We discussed the leadership culture that existed in each organization and where it was complementary and where it wasn't. We acknowledged that change would naturally create conflict and that that was okay. To this day, we update our DiSC management profile as a way of analyzing how our organization adapts to change.

I also benefited greatly from having two amazing predecessors to work with throughout the process. Lisa FitzGibbon, whose announced retirement from Easterseals triggered the combination discussions, and Peter. The two of them were the best kind of mentors. They were more vested in my success and the success of the organization than they were in their respective legacies. They weren't overly solicitous with advice and didn't second-guess my decisions - even when I suspected my choices weren't the same as they would have made.

I also had one other person in my corner, and that was Marta. I think we remain one of her only engagements with not one, not two, but THREE CEOs to deal with. Somehow with all of those personalities in the room, Marta was able to keep us and our board members focused on the big picture: how do we keep this moving in a way that best meets the needs of the individuals we serve? Her calmness, her unmatched organizational skills, and her support of me personally throughout the process were invaluable.

TOUCH POINT: CLIENT SPOTLIGHT



Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank

Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank (SCDB), founded in 2015 in CEO Megan Fischer's basement, works through partner social service organizations to provide free diapers to families in need. Diapers aren't covered by government assistance, which often leaves caregivers having to choose between food or diapers, or reusing disposable diapers.

Since beginning diaper distribution, they have distributed over 3 million diapers to babies in Greater Cincinnati. Sweet Cheeks is one of the largest diaper banks in the country, currently distributing over 175,000 diapers a month to 3,200 children from their new facility in Lower Price Hill. Over 30 local agencies are on a wait list, ready to partner with Sweet Cheeks once their staff and inventory capacity grows. A dedicated team of staff, board members, and over 1,400 volunteers a year (who give over 4,000 hours of work!) fulfill the organization's mission. In December of 2018, the organization created Tidal Babe Period Bank, and began distributing period supply kits to help keep girls and women at school and work.

This February 22nd, SCDB will host its annual fundraising event at their new warehouse. Sweet Cheeks is celebrating Mardi Gras with an open bar, local food vendors, raffles, silent auction, dancing and more. With thousands of diapers and period supplies needing to be purchased each month, this event is a catalyst for Sweet Cheeks' growing impact all year long. Help change the bottom line for families in need today by donating, volunteering, and getting your ticket to Mardi Gras at sweetcheeksdiapebank.org.

End Point

January brings opportunities for new habits, improved processes or performance, and renewed commitments to living your best life. Here's hoping 2020 brings all this and more!



Best wishes,

Marta



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