



The Boston Foundation Hosts Roundtable on Disability Issues:

DFN Invited to Provide National Perspective

With the goal of starting a dialog that would lead to a greater understanding of issues and strengthening the relationship between the philanthropic and disability communities by opening new lines of communication, The Boston Foundation--a new member of DFN--hosted a roundtable discussion on disability issues in conjunction with the Boston Globe Foundation and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. Over 75 people participated in the four-hour session, including private and public funders and organizations that provide services to and advocate for people with disabilities.

The discussion began with a presentation entitled Private Funding and the Disability Community by a panel of re

lated Grant Makers and The Boston Globe Foundation. Panelists reviewed funding trends which suggest that there is a highly competitive environment for organizations that are interested in expanding current programs or developing new ones. In addition, they identified three funding challenges facing disability service providers, grassroots organizations and disability advocates: 1) public sup-

port offers little room for innovation and organizational capacity development; 2) private sector grants are often too small to cover equipment purchases, facilities improvements and capacity building and, 3) the donor base of people with disabilities tends to be small.

Panelists outlined some of the ongoing challenges for foundations as they consider how best to serve the disability community. Some foundations are too small to make significant grants; others have such broad agendas that disability issues have to compete with myriad other community needs. Panelists encouraged grantseekers to use proposals

to educate funders about the needs and strengths of the disability community.

The roundtable discussions fostered a more in-depth exchange of ideas which focused on two key questions:

1) what are the most pressing issues and challenges affecting the disability community today, and 2) how can private funders more effectively respond to and support the disability community? The roundtable discussion highlighted some of the key areas in which people with disabilities are prevented from living full and active lives.

Educating the Community About Disability Issues. The wider community is often unaware of the specific challenges faced by the disability community, and this lack of awareness can lead to marginalizing and stigmatizing people with disabilities. Media images are often inadequate, inaccurate and/or derogatory. As a result, many people with disabilities choose not to identify themselves with the disability community. To counteract this, it is important to educate the media and the general public, not only about the disability community in general, but also on diversity within the community.

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The Boston Foundation
CATALYST FOR COMMUNITY

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The Disability Funders Network

The Disability Funders Network (DFN) was established in 1994 as a grantmakers' Affinity Group with the mission of facilitating communication and collaboration between the disability community and organized philanthropy. DFN also promotes the hiring of people with disabilities and their full inclusion in the programs of philanthropic organizations.

DFN Board of Directors

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Staff

Jeanne Argoff, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Sandra Cawley

Consultant/Newsletter

Nancy Tilson Sinback

Accountant

Please direct all correspondence to:

Disability Funders Network

2529 Kirklyn St.

Falls Church, VA 22043

(703) 560-0099 (703) 560-1151 FAX

E-mail: njargoff@ad.com

Cheryl K. Green

Newsletter Editor

DFN Board Member Honored by the Michigan Women's Foundation

An Interview with Kate Pew Wolters

By Sandra Cawley

On April 24th, Kate Pew Wolters received the Women of Achievement and Courage award from the Michigan Women's Foundation, which promotes the economic self-sufficiency and personal well-being of women in the state.

Women of Achievement and Courage honorees are selected for their lifetime business and community achievements. The choice of Wolters as one of this year's awardees highlights the richness and diversity of her career. She is a person with a disability, an advocate for the disability community, has her own family foundation, and has other business and community interests as well. She is currently chair and president of the Kate and Richard Wolters Foundation and chair of the Board of Trustees at her alma mater, Aquinas College. She has served as executive director of the Steelcase Foundation and as a trustee on the board of the Grand Rapids Arts Museum. In the disability and advocacy arena, Wolters was executive director of the Grand Rapids Center for Independent Living (CIL), and she was appointed by President Clinton to serve as first vice-chair of the National Council on Disability (NCD), an independent federal agency whose pur-

Letter From The Chair

by Deborah B. Lewis
Chair, Disability Funders Network

On a rainy fall day in 1998, a group of DFN Board members came together in Washington, DC to discuss how to begin the process of nurturing DFN into a self-sustaining affinity group. The Dole Foundation, where DFN was housed since its inception, was closing its doors, and consequently, DFN had no office and no staff. Knowing that

DFN Welcomes New Board Member

Mark Brinhost, executive director of Rinconada Ventures Foundation and a member of DFN, and Doug Kershd, president and CEO of the Urban Enterprise Fund (UEF), are both advocates and practitioners of Venture Philanthropy. In a conversation with DFN executive director Jeanne Argoff, they provide expert insight on what this new form of philanthropy is and its applicability to the disability community.

Jeanne: Why did UEF adopt a venture philanthropy approach?

Doug: The Urban Enterprise Fund has a mission to create employ-

Kaiser Permanente Settles Lawsuit, Agrees to 'Sweeping Reforms' to Improve Access for Disabled Patients

In a move that could “dramatically change the way hospitals and clinics” treat people with disabilities, Kaiser Permanente yesterday announced plans to revamp its California facilities to make them more accessible, as part of an agreement to settle a class action lawsuit filed on behalf of three patients who use wheelchairs, the Los Angeles Times reports.

Filed in July by Disability Rights Advocates, an Oakland-based not-for-profit law center, the suit said patients faced “pervasive barriers” at Kaiser facilities (Gloria, Los Angeles Times, 4/13). According to the New York Times, the complaint listed numerous problems at Kaiser facilities, including “too small examination rooms, ot

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The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), a national membership organization promoting the political and economic empowerment of children and adults with disabilities in the U.S., issued a press release expressing concerns about the Bush Administration's proposed \$1.6 trillion tax cut and its likely impact on funding for disability community priorities. "We are concerned that President Bush's proposed tax cut, if enacted, would severely limit the ability of President Bush and future Presidents to address the priorities of the more than 56 million children and adults with disabilities in the U.S.," said AAPD President Andrew J. Imparato. Imparato continued, "we need stronger federal enforcement of ADA and other civil rights laws... We need greater investments in home and community-based long term services and supports, particularly as our population ages. We need to expand access to affordable housing, transportation, technology, education and health care. All of these things require federal financial support and leadership. Passing an oversized tax cut will not only lessen the possibility of progress on these important issues, but it also poses the real threat that federal support for Americans with disabilities will shrink in the coming years."

Other advocacy groups have also expressed concerns over several funding decisions in the Bush administration's fiscal 2002 budget.

Annual Conference

Philadelphia Marriott, Philadelphia

Continuing the tradition of the past few years, DFN will have a high profile at the Council on Foundations 2001 annual conference. DFN was instrumental in designing three sessions and is co-sponsoring two others. In addition, the Board of Directors will hold a strategic planning retreat on the Saturday before the conference begins and will report on the results at the DFN business meeting on Monday, April 30. And of course, everyone is invited to our reception on Tuesday, May 1.

Conference Highlights

Saturday, April 28, 2001
Strategic Planning Retreat: DFN Board

Monday, April 30, 2001
DFN Business Meeting

Not Just for Show: Diversity Practices in Philanthropy, Joint Affinity Group Session

Foundation leaders who have tried to diversify their boards and staff will explore what really happens when diverse board and staff members make grantmaking decisions. Audience members will be invited to participate in a discussion about best practices based on recent findings from the first extensive research project on board and staff diversity encompassing disability, ethnicity, gender, race and sexual orientation.

Tuesday, May 1, 2001

Stereotypes & Sound bytes: What Foundations Can Do to Encourage Accountability in Mass Media Portrayals of Diverse Groups

There is growing awareness among grantmakers of the importance of working with our major institutions to help them reflect the increasing diversity of society. This session will look at the power

the media has to influence attitudes and values and its accountability to the society it both serves and shapes. It will also engage the audience in a discussion of how effective grantmaking that calls for accountability of the media to the public can be a powerful tool in helping society achieve genuine inclusiveness.

DFN Reception-Does the Media Get the Message?

DFN's annual reception will take the pulse of the media's coverage of the disability community and its issues. Experts on the relationship between media and advocacy will highlight the possibilities and pitfalls of working with the media, and attendees can brow

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Diversity and Unity. While an appreciation of diversity can promote understanding, too narrow a focus on a single disability can obscure the common realities experienced by all people with disabilities. It is also important to promote unity within the disability community to benefit from the power of collective action and combined resource. This will strengthen the movement and, therefore, improve the lives of all people with disabilities.

Accessibility. Some of the most fundamental human activities and services are compromised by a lack of accessibility, which bars people with disabilities from full participation in their communities. However, providing universal accessibility takes extensive and thoughtful planning and resources and calls for a re-conceptualization of the ways in which resources are used.

Housing. Lack of housing accessibility and affordability continue to be crucial short-term and long-term issues for the disability community. Frequently, individuals who are quite capable of living independently are denied the opportunity because facilities are not properly equipped and home modification costs are prohibitive.

Transportation. Lack of accessible transportation leads to social and economic isolation. Without full access to public transportation and other transportation services, many people with disabilities are unable to meet their basic needs. Tasks like grocery shopping, medical appointments, getting to work, visiting friends and enjoying recreational activities are difficult. Better public transportation systems are required to give people with disabilities a more reliable link to essential community resources.

Communications. The ability to communicate is also an accessibility issue. Organizations without interpreter services and TTY lines are often completely inaccessible to some people with disabilities.

Employment. Many people with disabilities are not employed because they have not had the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities. Potential employers may discriminate based on assumptions about disability or because of a reluctance to modify the workplace.

Recreation. The lack of support for funding recreational activities often means that agencies providing recreational opportunities to the wider community are unable to offer these same opportunities to the disability community.

Organizational Capacity. Disability nonprofits need strong infrastructures that can support the operating costs to sustain their work, and their organizational capacity is enhanced if representatives of the disability community are in board or staff leadership positions.

There is a great deal that funders can do to promote solutions to these issues. Some suggestions were: 1) funders can raise awareness of these issues by requiring grant applicants to report on the accessibility of their facilities and programs and to disclose the number of people on their staffs who have a disability; 2) grantmakers can attract attention to successful programs for people with dis-

abilities by publicizing grants they make in this area; 3) funders can continue this kind of dialog with the disability community; 4) they can facilitate communication between their staffs and grantseekers by utilizing interpreters, TTY lines and email—and by hiring staff members with disabilities; and 5) they can establish grant guidelines sensitive to the disability community—recognizing that accommodations and accessibility often create higher costs for nonprofit organizations serving the disability community and that general operating support and multi-year grants can be especially helpful.

Some of the most fundamental human activities and services are compromised by a lack of accessibility.

The discussion ended with the recognition that while progress has been made over the last decade, it is still important to continue educating funders and strengthening organizations serving the disability community. Establishing strong communication links between funders and service providers should continue—leading to an ongoing process

of information sharing, mutual education and continued dialog.

—Adapted from The Boston Foundation's report, "Community Matters Roundtable on Disability Issues, Fall 2000."

For copies of the full report, contact Satoko Kishi Hesp 617-723-7415 or skh@tbf.org

NEW MEMBERS!

Morris Friedell

Livingston, MT

The Boston Foundation

Boston, MA

Community Technology Foundation of California

San Francisco, CA

Sheila E. Daley Foundation

New York, NY

Friends of Leonard Cheshire, Inc.

New York, NY

The Fanny and Svante Knistrom Foundation

Woodland Hills, CA

Pacific Bell/SBC Global network

San Francisco, CA

2001 Paul G. Hearne/American Association of People with Disabilities Leadership Awards

The Paul G. Hearne/AAPD Leadership Awards were established in 1999 by the Milbank Foundation for Rehabilitation to identify emerging leaders in the disability community. Until his death in 1998, Paul G. Hearne was a leading disability advocate who, like other disability community leaders, wanted to make sure that the next generation of leaders would come forward to continue the modern disability movement that his generation began.

This year, approximately ten people with disabilities will be recognized as emerging leaders in their fields and will each receive a \$10,000 award to help them continue their leadership activities.

Grantmakers for Effective Organizations will hold their next biannual conference, March 6-8, 2002, at the JW Marriott Hotel, Washington, DC. The 2002 conference will explore nonprofit organizational effectiveness from both sides of the coin -- the role of funders in promoting organizational effectiveness among nonprofits and funder effectiveness. As conference planning

The Jewish Funders Network (JFN), an affinity group affiliated with the Council on Foundations, seeks an executive director:

JFN is an organization made up of 800 individual philanthropists and foundation professionals committed to the core Jewish principles of tzedakah (charity) and tikkun olam (repairing the world). The organization helps its members to be more effective and strategic with their philanthropy, sponsoring an annual conference, regional meetings, and a variety of other activities to

On February 27, 2002, the winners will be invited to an awards ceremony in the nation's capital, where they will also meet with national disability leaders and have an opportunity to form mentoring relationships.

To be considered for the Paul G. Hearne/AAPD Leadership Award, candidates must complete an application and submit it with a statement of 700 words or less that addresses all of the selection criteria. U.S. residents with any type of disability are eligible. Applications may be submitted on paper or in an alternate format (email, audio cassette or video tape). For more information contact Jessa Steinbeck, AAPD, at 800-840-8844 or 202-457-0046 (V/TTY), e-mail AAPD@aol.com or Tracey Murray, Leadership Awards Coordinator, at 770-232-9001 (voice only), email: pghawards@mindspring.com. Applications can also be downloaded from the AAPD website, www.aapd-dc.org. Applications must be postmarked by July 26, 2001.

progresses, regular updates will be posted to GEO's Web site www.geofunders.org.

further its mission.

Information about applicant qualifications, organizational history and context can be found at www.geofunders.org.

The Community Organizing Toolbox

Released by the Neighborhood Funders Group (NFG), this publication details the achievements of community organizing groups nationwide in creating jobs, combating crime and reforming schools. Spurred by philanthropic interest in the growing field, NFG spent two years developing The Toolbox. It is the first-ever comprehensive review of the community-organizing field for grantmakers and will help funders considering investing in community organizing to make informed decisions about their grantmaking.

Community organizing strategies are making a difference in neighborhoods that are often forgotten or ignored, and, according to the report, leaders are beginning to emerge who can help find

solutions to problems within their own communities. These efforts are successful primarily because neighborhood residents were the decision makers and leaders of community-based action.

The two dozen or more regional and national organizing networks that nurture and support over 6,000 local community organizing groups all look to grassroots people—not to government, business, academia, or media—to set their own priorities.

The Neighborhood Funders Group is a national membership association of grantmakers working to increase support for community-based efforts that organize and improve the economic and social fabric of low-income urban neighborhoods and rural communities. The Toolbox is available online at www.nfg.org or by calling (202) 833-4690.

Census Bureau Releases Disability Report

The Census Bureau has just released a new report linking the presence of severe disability to increased likelihood of receiving welfare benefits, having low levels of income and being more likely to live in poverty. Also, individuals with a severe disability are less likely to be covered by health insurance than those with no disability.