



CONNECTIONS

COMMUNITY OUTREACH THINK TANK NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2015

THE RETURN OF THE LOCAL

Even ideas have their seasons, rising and declining only to reemerge in some altered and renewed form. And it looks as if the concept of the local is once more on the rise, with

Though many of our problems are big, they do not necessarily have big solutions. Many of the needed changes will have to be made in individual lives, in families and households and in local communities.

Wendell Berry

important implications for small nonprofits. This latest incarnation of the idea that the local community, the smallest political and economic unit in America, is the only viable place from which real change can emerge has been gaining momentum. In articles, in numerous books, in online forums and websites, and most importantly in practice in communities around the nation, new ideas are

circulating about neighborhood-scale initiatives to address struggling regional economies, inadequate housing, underfunded education, the corporate dominance of agriculture, and even local identity and pride of place as reflected in architecture and the arts.

Three related ideas are at the heart of the movement: the belief that almost every problem facing communities, even if the issue is national in scope, has elements that are uniquely local, and the conviction that most problems can best be addressed by each community—because a community has the best understanding of its particular

GLOUCESTER COUNTY STATS

Local government bodies

In the United States

19,492 municipal governments

16,519 town or township governments

In New Jersey

1,383 local governments

21 counties

625 school systems

In Gloucester County

10 Boroughs

13 Townships

1 City (Woodbury)

circumstances.

The third idea grows from the other two: there is in many communities a reservoir of particular knowledge and practical experience that, if effectively mobilized, can answer local needs better than programs imposed on a community and thus lacking

any interest in or grasp of local conditions.

Which brings us back to neighborhood nonprofits. Who knows more about a particular problem or an array of local problems than a small nonprofit? They exist to serve their neighbors. Necessarily, they have a more direct knowledge—on an almost block-to-block level--of what those neighbors and their communities are struggling to overcome than even some municipal governments, because they are frequently the first people to whom those in trouble turn. They know their local economy, because many of their donations come from local business people and the local representatives of regional or national chains. And because they deal with neighborhood problems and needs every day, and must make every dollar count, they have a unique grasp of what is needed to create change and how to most efficiently carry it out.

It isn't that larger nonprofits can't have local roots. After all, their employees in any location are

mostly locals. But they may be hampered by having to carry out regional or national policies that have not been shaped by local realities. And of course the same holds true for most governmental bodies: they have county, statewide or national policies that don't much take into account the exact conditions in any one locale.

This newest incarnation of a movement toward localized power and local solutions to social problems, while it is of interest in its own right, is also uniquely useful to small nonprofits. As grant givers continue to focus ever more closely on targeted results and efficiency, small nonprofits exemplify both. It's a point worth stressing in grant applications and in communications to our neighbors and to donors, both local and online. Small nonprofits may not get the attention or support of the large nonprofits, but they are leaner, more resilient, more knowledgeable about neighborhood conditions, and thus more effective on many

local issues than their bigger brethren.

The movement toward local empowerment can't make much progress without the cooperation of local nonprofits, and change on a local or regional level can't be effective without the input of the small nonprofits who labor quietly every day to answer the needs of their neighbors and towns.

Richard Nicholls
*People for People Foundation
of GC*

THANK YOU

I want to thank all of the non-profits and charities that attended our first Community Outreach Think Tank (COTT) meeting held at EIRC on Thursday July 16th. Hopefully you were able to leave with useful information and develop new relationships that could prove to be valuable to your organization. Our goal is to be able to provide information, resources, training and networking for the small non-profit community in South Jersey. From the feedback we received from the attendees so far, we feel we were able to accomplish many of our goals with the first meeting.

The topics and speakers at the first meeting included Vince Maione, Atlantic City Electric Regional President discussing the changes coming to Atlantic City Electric as well as the recovery efforts from the past wind storm. Also presenting were Patricia Green from Experience Works discussing her program of placing staff into non-profits paid for by the

government, Helen Antonucci from Senior Corp and Michele Epifani from the Volunteer Center of South Jersey discussing how to get volunteers to work with non-profits and Jeannie LaBuz from Center for People in Transition discussing her services and upcoming classes and life skills workshops. Rich Nicholls from People for People ended the program by providing resources and links for grants and other funding sources.

The topics offered at the first meeting were a result of the answers we received from our COTT survey sent out to many of you a few months ago. We are working on the topics for our next meeting as well as for future newsletters, BLOG and other communication efforts. If you have not yet completed our survey, you can do so by going to http://pfpfoundation.org/?gf_page=preview&id=19 which will allow us to better understand what you want to include in future efforts.

This is the second of a continuing series of monthly newsletters that we will be publishing going forward. If you would like to review our first newsletter you can access it at our the *People for People* web site at www.pfpfoundation.org or the *Heart of Gloucester County* web site at www.heartofgloucestercounty.org

Again, thanks to all of you that attended our first meeting. For those of you that did not attend but would like to receive future invitations and be put on our master email list to receive ALL future communications and information, just email me at pmlkstk@aol.com and I will make sure you are included.

Paul Blackstock
Chairman of the Board
*People for People Foundation
of GC*

Doing Grant Research

The process of researching grant possibilities and writing applications can seem difficult, complex, and costly. While there are a number of free or low-cost online and printed resources that can make the actual drafting of an application less unnerving and aggravating, it would seem at first glance that the process of researching grant-giving foundations requires an expensive subscription to one of the online grant directory sites. But there are, in fact, low-cost alternatives and even free shortcuts to help you identify likely grants. We'll discuss several, but first we should take a closer look at those online directories.

It's likely that at some point you are going to need to consult one to identify grant possibilities and grant-givers. While annual subscription fees for some of these sites can be hefty, several of the directories—aware of the tight budgetary constraints under which most nonprofits labor—do offer short-term access at a reduced rate.

All of these services have some features in common:

They offer tutorials to help you navigate the site successfully and carry out the most thorough and precise search.

They offer webinars on various aspects of grant work, from drafting a successful grant proposal to building a long-term grant-seeking strategy.

They offer links to additional resources and products.

Some highlight upcoming grants or foundation news.

But at the heart of each of these sites is their primary attraction, a searchable directory of grant giving foundations, listing detailed information about what each funds and how much they give. Some sites let you search lengthy lists of grants awarded by a foundation or by grant subject areas. They also provide links and other necessary contact information. And some sites also provide lists of grants previously awarded by a foundation, which is useful in confirming that a particular grant-giver does support small nonprofits, or does regularly support organizations working in your field.

All of these sites provide the specifics about a foundation that you will require, all of them update their material frequently, and all of them have comparable search engines. They differ primarily in the number of listings in their database.

Grant Station

(<https://www.grantstation.com/>) offers information on thousands of grant makers. They charge \$699 for a year's subscription, or \$219 for three months. They occasionally discount annual membership fees.

Grant Watch

(<http://grantwatch.com/>) lists 14,000 "current and archival grants, funding opportunities, awards and contracts." Their fees range from \$15 per week to \$199 per year.

Foundation Directory Online

(<https://fconline.foundationcenter.org/>), a project of the national Foundation Center, has a database of 140,000 grant makers. They have a variety of membership plans. It's possible to purchase a membership by the month, for \$49.99, to their most basic service. A year's subscription costs \$399.

Additional service levels, offering more complex data and—for their Professional level membership—additional grant maker listings (the “Essential” membership gives you access to 100,000 grant makers, the “Professional” level to 140,000) climb in price. An annual Professional membership costs \$1499.99.

Foundation Search

[\(http://www.foundationsearch.com/\)](http://www.foundationsearch.com/) is comparable, in the size of its listings (120,000 grant-giving foundations) and in the scope of its features, to Foundation Directory Online. They differ from the other services listed here by requiring you to call or e-mail to determine their fees.

Funds for NGOS

[\(http://www.fundsforngos.org/\)](http://www.fundsforngos.org/) costs \$399 annually for a subscription to their database. They are unique in having a focus on grants for the Third World. I mention them here only because they too, like their competitors, have some free information on the process of securing grants.

Of course, several possibilities immediately suggest themselves. You could get a weekly or a monthly subscription to one of

the databases, or consider an annual subscription to one of the less expensive services. A short-term subscription to one or two sites will allow you to look around, gauge the number of useful grant givers listed, take a tutorial, and do research on one or two subject areas. Unless you are planning on devoting a considerable portion of your time to grant research, and unless grants compose the major element of your sustainability plan, a short-term subscription should be all you need. I have known experienced grant writers who have distinct preferences for one of these sites over the others; by sampling more than one you can discover the service that works most efficiently for you.

We had spoken before about workarounds. The first I’d like to suggest is quite direct. The second may sound somewhat frivolous.

Go to the website for the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers [\(https://www.cnjg.org/\)](https://www.cnjg.org/). The Council provides a variety of services to New Jersey foundations making grants. Most of the materials they offer are for

their members only. However, their member directory is accessible on their website, and it’s worth spending some time working through it. Where better to start searching for grants than with foundations active in your own state?

Many of the CNJ members have websites. Some of them have open applications for grants. Others may say that they give grants only to pre-selected organizations. Don’t let that stop you: do a little more research. Research their activities at whatever grant directory you are using. If a grant history is available for the foundation, and if that history seems to suggest that they have supported organizations working in your field, it’s worth writing to them to introduce yourself and inquire about the possibility of an opportunity for you to discuss your work with them. Even if such contacts don’t lead to support in the present, they may prove to be useful for the future.

Now for the seemingly frivolous: go to the closest mall and write down the names of all of the chain stores there. The

point to the exercise is that almost every regional and national retail chain has a corporate social responsibility policy. A CSR policy means that they are committed to taking some steps to benefit the well-being of the neighborhoods in which they work. That support may include offering sponsorship for an event by a nonprofit or in-kind support. Other retailers actually have grant-giving foundations to which you should consider applying.

The websites for many retailers clearly explain their philanthropic goals. Almost all of the retailers who give grants restrict their giving to neighborhoods in which they have a presence, which puts you in the running. But don't give up if the company website does not mention a grant-giving program. Even some of the retailers who do not seem to have any established manner of support for nonprofits may have a modest program in place. It's worth checking whatever grants directory that you use to ascertain whether the corporation in question gives grants. Companies use a variety of ways to filter out those approaching them for grants and

to reduce the number of queries they receive. One method is to say very little on their website about such support, in the expectation that some seekers will give up and move on. Another method is to note that they are active philanthropically but to omit any contact information. You'll need access to a grants directory to acquire specifics in those cases.

After the mall, take a closer look at your neighborhoods. Most banks have some sort of community support plan in place. Many have grant-giving foundations. Others offer more limited support. You should research them as you would any other potential donor. Go to their website to see what they say. And then go to the local bank and talk to the manager. Some banks give their local managers considerable discretion in awarding small grants to local nonprofits.

Don't stop there. There are a great many corporations with offices in New Jersey, including some either in or close to your neighborhood. Many may have very limited CSR policies. But even they may, for a variety of

reasons, be open to supporting a neighborhood nonprofit, if they are asked.

Identifying potential grant-givers depends on research, but more importantly it depends on curiosity and on being alert to possibilities. It depends too on asking questions. And of course it depends on having some distinct benefit to offer a grant source, whether it's local publicity or an opportunity to demonstrate their support for the neighborhoods in which they do business. You're doing necessary work. The point of research is to identify the corporations and foundations likeliest to understand and support what you do. Remember: they need you too. Foundations have committed themselves to fostering positive change. And many corporations understand that boosting the efforts of local nonprofits offers the kind of publicity and local impact that money really can't buy.

Richard Nicholls
*People for People Foundation
of GC*



Below is a brief overview from Bob Dalessandro about the SHOP.COM NPO program that **People for People/Heart of Gloucester County** has started in our mission toward sustainability. As an ongoing feature of the COTT program we will share with you ideas for fund raising and other avenues of bringing in funds to your organizations.

Fundraising moves into the 21st Century

Traditional fund raising for the 501(c)(3) community hasn't changed much over the years. Grant writing, Corporate gifting, Private sector gifting and Event-based revenue generators have been and continue to be the prime movers for meeting budgetary goals and beneficiary results for all sectors of the Non-Profit community. Economic and political pressures, however, continue to chip away at actual revenue growth vs. meeting the specific needs of the individual non-profit's goals. Budget

shortfalls are almost inevitable, creating the need to "look outside the box" for additional royalty revenue streams.

Consider these two facts:

1. 70% of the U.S. economy is driven by consumer spending.
2. E-Commerce (online spending) grew by 14.8% in 2013 over 2012 revenue of \$225.5 Billion. Find a way to combine these two economic trends into a royalty revenue stream for the non-profit community and you may have a sustainable model to help cover your existing budget shortfalls. Enter SHOP.COM, a leading comparative shopping marketplace with a credible model for the 501.C community to benefit from the double-digit growth, year-over-year, of E-Commerce.

The People For People Foundation of Gloucester County/*Hands Across the County* took a hard look at the SHOP.COM NPO program and took a leap of faith to participate. Their online marketplace is: WWW.Shop.Com/PFPF. Royalty revenue is generated from activities that people are doing

everyday: online shopping. Shop.Com offers over 40 million products and services and thousands of world-class brands. The online shopper benefits by earning cashback on their purchases and the organization benefits on all transactions from their branded shop.com marketplace.

A July 13, 2015 press release on CNN.Com/Money, titled "**Reelcause, Inc. and Shop.com Enter Marketing Agreement**"; The CEO of Reelcause, Inc., Michael Jacobsen, stated "Shoppers save money plus get cash back. **At the same time, the consumers non-profit receives the largest royalty in the industry.** When purchases are compared, the royalty revenue to the nonprofit is significantly more than they would receive from Amazon's "Smiles" program.

For more information, contact: **Bob Dalessandro**, 856-524-9911, or redalessandro@gmail.com

Robert E. Dalessandro
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RESOURCES AND NEWS

RESOURCES

The quote on the front page from Wendell Berry is drawn from the essay “Local Economies to Save the Land and People,” included in the book **Our Only World: Ten Essays** (Counterpoint Press, 2015). The conviction that efforts to serve a community always have to be grounded in local realities runs through all of his large and eloquent body of work on farming, the environment, the restoration of small towns and the creation of a more humane and fulfilling economy.

Michael Shuman has written a series of books on the potential of revived and intensely local economies to transform struggling neighborhoods and communities. **The Local Economy Solution** (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2015) is particularly useful, offering profiles of twenty-eight “pollinator” businesses around the nation committed

to reviving the economies of their local areas and explaining in detail how they have managed to foster other businesses, inspire greater efficiency, “neighborhood improvements, entrepreneurship, local purchasing and investing, profitable business partnerships, stronger labor and environmental performance,” all without government funding. Both the manner in which this is being accomplished and some of the outcomes are of relevance to small nonprofits, no matter the focus of their mission, and of value in the creation of sustainability plans.

The website “**The Local Crowd**” (<https://www.thelocalcrowd.biz/>) carries additional reports on the subject demonstrating how “strong local economies hold the key to a stronger national economy.”

Balle (the name stands for “Business Alliance for Local Living Economies”), another website (<https://bealocalist.org/>) offers a “forum for visionary local economy leaders and funders to connect, build capacity and innovate,” and additional specifics on the revival of local economies and thus municipalities around the nation. Like Shuman’s work, these websites offer specific explanations of how the ideas and practices of the local revival movement can be adapted to meet a variety of local goals—including, by extension, those of nonprofits.

Think Like a Commoner, a book by David Bollier (New Society Publishers, 2014) is the best introduction to the “Commons” movement, which seeks to regenerate locales by encouraging groups and neighborhoods to come together to reclaim and

restore the land, pool resources to stimulate local economies, and encourage local participation in most aspects of municipal government.

The Commons magazine (found online at <http://www.onthecommons.org/>) publishes a variety of studies of particular activities, projects, and innovations around the

world. The website also offers several downloadable books with more specifics on the effort to create more resilient communities by fostering on-the-ground participation and locally generated economic and environmental initiatives.

NEWS

We would like the COTT newsletter to help facilitate

the sharing of news and information among nonprofits in southern New Jersey. Please send us updates on your projects and events, and on your milestones and achievements. We all benefit by sharing with our peers.

Richard Nicholls
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For more information about membership in **COTT**, please contact **Paul Blackstock** by e-mailing paul@pfpfoundation.org or by phoning the People for People Foundation at [856-579-7561](tel:856-579-7561). For questions regarding the content of the newsletter, please email **Richard Nicholls** at ricknichollspfpf@gmail.com.

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