OHIO | Nonprofits

The Newsletter of the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations

Remember— Programs @ OANO

Annual Conference

OANO's eighth annual statewide nonprofit management and leadership conference will take place May 9-10 at the Westin Great Southern Hotel in downtown Columbus. Keynote speakers include Stedman Graham, Judith O'Connor, and Delena Wilkerson. Turn to page 6 for more details.

Standards for Excellence Application Clinics

Application clinics for the Standards for Excellence voluntary certification program will be held May 22, June 12, June 26, and July 10. The four-part series will walk participants through each section of the Standards code with the goal of completing the application by the end of the series. Visit www.ohiononprofits.org for more information and registration forms.

Save on Unemployment Taxes

First Nonprofits and OANO will be sponsoring informational meetings about the unemployment savings program that can save your organization thousands of dollars each year. Learn how to put your resources where you need them—in services and programs rather than in tax coffers. June 3rd's program will be held in Cincinnati; June 4 in Columbus; and June 5 in Cleveland. Visit the OANO website for more details and location information.

Online Event Calendar

Set OANO's website as a "favorite" place so you may regularly check our new, continually updated calendar of events: www.ohiononprofits.org/Programs.asp.

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

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What's Inside

Remembering John Gardner

Former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare John. W. Gardner died February 16. As an architect of the Great Society programs, he launched the Medicare program, oversaw the passage of the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and presided over the creation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Gardner was also an early force in recognizing the power of private nonprofits. Gardner founded the citizen's advocacy group Common Cause in 1970, and in 1980 founded INDEPENDENT SECTOR, the national coalition of nonprofits, foundations, and corporate giving programs.

INDEPENDENT SECTOR president Sara E. Meléndez writes that "his leadership and ideas have influenced thousands of leaders who are in turn applying his ideas of community building and renewal around the world. In his passing, we have lost a great friend and mentor and the national has lost a great advocate for vibrant, health communities."

For more information, visit www.independentsector.org.

The article at right reports on the series of meetings across the state that convened grantmakers and grant-seekers to discuss the current fund-raising environment for Ohio's nonprofit organizations. In addition to reporting on participant comments, I wanted to offer some of my personal observations after all three sessions.

First, the sky is *not* falling. When we first began working with our partners to plan the "Straight Talk" sessions, the impact of September 11 was unclear and predictions were dire. Gradually the recession came into focus as the issue of greatest concern, and the economy continues to have an adverse effect on the state budget and funding for many programs and services provided by nonprofits with public money. However, the crisis is not universal. Many organizations reported continued fundraising success.

Second, Ohio's nonprofit organizations are committed and resilient. Throughout all three sessions—which involved hundreds of our nonprofit leaders—there was no general undercurrent of pessimism or defeatism. Despite the difficult environment, leaders spoke with passion and conviction about the ways in which their organizations were adapting to change, the importance of their work, and their ongoing commitment.

Finally, we need more dialogue—conversations between funders and nonprofits; conversations that involve all of us across the sector in exploring how we can work together around common issues, such as strategies to increase giving; and discussions that include policymakers, the media, and other community leaders. I hope you will join us for future events, including our annual conference May 9 and 10 in Columbus, to continue the conversation.

Richard L. Moyers

Richard L. Moyers
Executive Director
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Straight Talk for Uncertain Times: What We Learned

Over the past four months, in partnership with the Ohio Grantmakers Forum and the Foundation Center, OANO has convened a series of three regional meetings across the state to discuss the effects of the events of September 11 and the uncertain economy on the ability of Ohio's nonprofit organizations to serve their communities.

More than 400 nonprofit executives, grantmakers, and others with an interest in the effectiveness of Ohio's nonprofit organizations attended programs in Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati. The half-day events included brief keynote presentations, a panel discussion featuring grantmakers and nonprofit executives, and, in Columbus and Cincinnati, small group interaction that stimulated rich and productive conversations between funders and their grantees.

STRAIGHT TALK
FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES

While it is a challenge to capture the full diversity of ideas and questions raised by hundreds of participants, some common threads ran through all three discussions. Small groups were asked to generate their highest priority messages for funders and nonprofits and to share their suggestions for positive and collaborative actions funders and nonprofits can take to address the current challenging environment. At all three meetings, participants discussed several key issues:

Proliferation of nonprofits. Funders and nonprofit leaders expressed concern over the rapid growth of Ohio's nonprofit sector and the resulting competition for scarce resources. A number of funders, particularly those from private foundations, described dramatic increases in the number of grant proposals received, with no commensurate increase in the resources available for funding. Many funders view collaboration, merger, and consolidation as partial solutions to this problem, while nonprofits were concerned that some funders mandate collaboration and have unrealistic expectations about the costs and cost-savings associated with consolidation and merger.

Capacity-building. Funders and nonprofits demonstrated increased recognition of the need to build the capacity of existing nonprofit organizations, particularly in areas such as such as technology, financial management, fundraising, evaluation, and planning. As one participant in Cincinnati observed, "We must work together to resolve the constant tension between funders' preference for new projects and initiatives and nonprofits' need for general operating support to help produce the kinds of systems funders ultimately want."

Operating support. Grantseeking organizations repeatedly cited the need for general operating support rather than restricted programming support; many expressed the hope that more grantmakers would shift toward providing ongoing support for effective programs rather than seed money for new initiatives.

Increased foundation giving. Some grantmakers recognized the need to spend more during extraordinary times. Private foundations are required by law to make grants equivalent to 5 percent of their net assets. Some foundation leaders who participated in the Straight Talk sessions suggested that challenging times and urgent community needs may require higher levels of giving.

Streamlined processes. Both grantmakers and grantseekers recognized a need to streamline the application and reporting process. While many communities across the nation have developed common grant applications, which allow the same proposal to be submitted to multiple funders, Cincinnati is the only Ohio community to have done so. In addition, many nonprofit executives expressed a desire for more feedback from funders and for greater clarity on their funding policies and program priorities.

Need for ongoing dialogue. An element most appreciated by participants in Straight Talk sessions was the opportunity for funders and nonprofits to come together for dialogue—and the recognition that such opportunities are too rare. Almost all participants suggested future joint conversations around issues of common concern. ◗

Management

RETHINKING AUDITORS' ROLES: ENRON AND GAO

Perhaps nonprofit managers and executives watch the biggest bankruptcy in U.S. history only as bemused spectators. After all, the spectre of greed does not typically shadow the nonprofit sector. But the Enron debate could have repercussions even in the nonprofit world. A February 11 poll conducted by *Business Week* found that adult investors place primary blame on Enron's board (89%) and the Arthur Andersen auditors (83%) for Enron's bankruptcy and scandal. As corporate entities under public scrutiny, nonprofits can also be affected by any negative perceptions of stakeholders about their governance and financial systems.

Auditor Independence

Arthur Andersen, one of the world's largest auditing firms, performed two functions for Enron: as the company's independent auditor it was responsible to shareholders for ensuring the accuracy of its financial statements. As Enron's financial consultant, it helped Enron devise ways of running the business more profitably. Auditors and consultants occupied an entire floor of Enron's headquarters. Critics note that Andersen's revenue from work for Enron was evenly divided between its audit and consulting work, and that it was the closeness of the consulting relationship that compromised the integrity of the audit.

Coincidentally, in the midst of the Enron and Arthur Andersen scandal, the Comptroller General of the United States and head of the General Accounting Office (GAO) David M. Walker announced in January significant changes to the auditor independence requirements under Government Auditing Standards. Commonly referred to as the "Yellow Book," these standards cover federal entities and those organizations receiving federal funds. The changes will affect a significant number of nonprofit organizations that receive federal grants, loans, or contracts.

Although these changes were in the works long before Arthur Andersen's public disgrace, the most significant relate to rules associated with nonaudit or consulting services. The GAO press statement issued late January noted "in some circumstances it is not appropriate for [auditors] to perform both audit and certain nonaudit services for the same client," in order to serve the public interest and to maintain a high degree of integrity, objectivity, and independence. The changes will affect all audits beginning on or after October 1, 2002.

Two overarching principles guide the new independence standard:

1. **Auditors should not perform management functions or make management decisions.**

2. **Auditors should not audit their own work or provide nonaudit services in situations where the amounts or services involved are significant/material to the subject matter of the audit.**

The GAO fact sheet on the new standard also specifies that even if organizations meet these two criteria, each of seven other specific safeguards must be in place to assure auditor independence.

Implications for Nonprofits

According to the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), some of the new GAO provisions—particularly the restrictions on bookkeeping and human resource services—would adversely affect smaller organizations that rely heavily on the wide range of expertise of their CPA firms.

For nonprofits, the question of auditor independence clearly intersects the area of governance. The board's fiduciary responsibility is sometimes undefined for its members, many of whom may not be trained in the examination of financial statements. In addition, the GAO standard expressly addresses the fact that audit organizations should not perform management functions, citing in particular that auditors should not serve as members of the board of directors. However, auditors may participate on committees or task forces in a purely advisory capacity.

Kevin Lowry, audit manager at OANO associate member Schneider Downs LLC notes, "Although CPAs won't be able to offer certain services to their audit clients under the new GAO standards, consulting for nonprofits is still an important business operation. In the long run, there's really no substitute for individual integrity."

Find the new GAO Independence Standard and related documents at www.gao.gov/govaud/ybk01.htm.

9 Proven Principles of Capacity Building

In Successful Capacity Building, the Process Outweighs the Content

The presence of certain core principles govern-ing the working relationship between a competent consultant and a nonprofit organiza-tion ready and willing to participate in capacity building is more important than the particular methods used, asserts a new report from The Environmental Support Center and Innovation Network, Inc.

The report, *Echoes From the Field: Proven Capacity-Building Principles for Nonprofits*, identifies nine principles that form a standard for exemplary practice for providers of training and consulting for nonprofits. Interviews with expert providers and representatives of organizations who received their assistance formed the methodology of the study, which also included a review of literature.

Starting by acknowledging the reality of different levels of organizational capacity (see related article below), the report defines capacity-building activi-ties as "any kind of activity that builds the capacity of an organization to achieve its mission." More than a particular set of skills in areas such as fundraising or board development, capacity building includes an organization's vision and values in the equation. Particularly for social justice organizations, a wider view of capacity building can include scientific research, public advocacy, or anti-racism skills training.

While the content of the activities may change from organization to organization, the study found specific, identifiable core principles that charac-terize the best practices of capacity building efforts:

1. A holistic "systems perspective" is essential for effective capacity building.

Understanding the organization as a holistic system means that the trainer or consultant develops ways to address distinct problems within an examina-tion of the entire organization. A project to build the capacity of the organization involves the full organiza-tion and everyone within it, not just the executive or board of directors. The systems perspective also means that, since everything is related, we can start anywhere in the system to create change. This perspective also acknowl-edges that the organization itself is part of a larger community system, which is in turn part of the global community.

2. Effective capacity building is contextual.

Successful capacity building activities take into account the culture of the organization: its values and mission, the climate in which it operates, and the culture(s) of its constituents. Effective service providers adopt different strategies depending on the way the client organization traditionally operates and the composition of its members.

3. Respect for the organization's ability to build its own capacity is essential.

A genuine belief that the organization is in charge of its own capacity building is another hallmark of an effective provider of training. Expert providers respect a community's ability to frame its situation, and the provider's role is to facilitate the process and add his or her expertise as appropriate.

4. A culture of ongoing questioning and learning elevates the quality of capacity building.

Developing the ability to set goals, evaluate their achievement, and to adapt and change in response to that evaluation creates an organization focused on learning and growth. The capacity of the organization grows when individuals, programs, and departments are continually looking for ways to learn and grow in order to stay on track with the mission.

5. Team and peer learning promote effective capacity building.

Reflecting the belief that an organization is in charge of its own capacity building process, successful service providers emphasize participatory peer and team-based learning. Not only do more members of the organization become involved, but trainers help facilitate the skills across the organization that it needs to build capacity.

6. Capacity building models should accommodate different learning styles.

Effective training providers continually gauge their audiences and pay attention to the pacing and structure of their workshops or discussions. They try different techniques as needed in order to achieve the widest impact within the organization.

7. A relationship of trust between the organization and the provider is essential.

Trust is both the quality that allows the other principles to flourish and a by-product of the other principles. Long-term relationships are especially helpful, and providers who educate themselves about the organization and are willing to ask questions about the client's needs start to build this trust.

8. The organization's readiness to engage in capacity building is essential.

Organizations at different stages of development can still benefit from some kind of capacity building activities if they share certain readiness qualities: a willingness to learn and change, a belief that the activities will contribute to the organization, the ability to articulate a clear mission, and the unwavering commitment of time and resources.

9. Capacity building should take place over time, to the extent possible.

The trust between the organization and the provider is built over time, and effective capacity-building strategies take place on an ongoing basis. Some organizations use the same consultant in fits and starts as the organization develops. Effective consultants avoid quick-hit training conducted in a vacuum without any follow-up or outside of the context of an overall organizational plan.

Implications

The report identifies the core principles of exemplary providers of capacity building training and consulting and notes that the most consistent barrier for organizations wishing to engage in capacity building is a lack of funds. While funding for capacity building projects has increased, many grantmakers still target programs and services for their grantmaking activities. Smaller organizations and advocacy groups especially may lack access to important ways to build their capacity and increase their ability to fulfill their missions. ◗

Adapted from Echoes from the Field: Proven Capacity-Building Principles for Nonprofits, *from The Environmental Support Center and Innovation Network, Inc. Visit* www.innonet.org.

Is Your Organization Ready for Capacity Building?

The widely cited book *High Performance Nonprofit Organizations: Managing Upstream for Greater Impact* describes three kinds of organizational capacity that the *Echoes From the Field* report uses in its approach to examining the best practices of organizational capacity building.

The starting point for an organization is its capacity to deliver its program—in fact, the organization and the program may be one in the same, with very little corporate effort beyond ensuring the delivery of the program.

Once a program develops and expands, organizations often begin to require policies and procedures, internal systems, and structures not needed in the initial stage of their development. Decisions must be made that go beyond the simple delivery of the program or service.

Adaptive Capacity

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Program Expansion Capacity

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Program Delivery Capacity

Finally, at the highest level of capacity, adaptive capacity, an organization is able to change and grow in response to changing conditions, in order to meet its mission effectively. The skills required at this stage differ from program delivery and expansion skills; organizations will reflect on their own performance and redirect their efforts based on this reflection.

An organization may engage in effective capacity building efforts at any of these stages, but providers should be sensitive to an organization's level of development when crafting a plan. The key to a successful effort lies in the organization's openness to change, its commitment of time and resources to the project, and its ability to articulate its mission. ◗
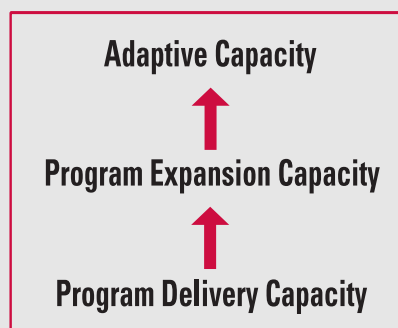
Changes in Store for .org

At the end of 2002, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), a private nonprofit organization which coordinates management of the Internet's domain name system, will make major changes to policies governing the use of the **.**org top level domain (TLD), the extension used by most nonprofits.

A for-profit company, VeriSign, has held a monopoly as the "registry operator" for **.**org since May 2001. No formal policies govern the ability to register as a **.**org—for-profit companies and individuals can name their domains with the **.**org extension.

Nonprofits may have a chance to question those policies in December, when VeriSign's registry agreement runs out. An ICANN task force studying the **.**org extension recommended the following:

- That the **.**org registry be operated "for the benefit of the worldwide community of organizations, groups, and individuals engaged in noncommercial communication";
- That responsibility for **.**org administration be delegated to a nonprofit organization that has widespread support and acts on behalf of the noncommercial community; and
- That the registry fee should be low, though consistent with the maintenance of good quality service, and that the administrator should consider using any surplus income to encourage nonprofit representatives to participate in ICANN meetings.

The new organization responsible for **.**org will be asked to help define the eligible community, but the task force was clear in its recommendation that no formal eligibility requirements be put in place to govern the use of **.**org. Registrants will still be on the honor system to self-identify as noncommercial entities.

VeriSign will provide a $5 million operating endowment to help meet operating expenses associated with administering .org. To read the final report of the task force, visit www.icann.org/accra/org-topic.htm.

Leadership

Inspired Leadership for Challenging Times: OANO's Eighth Annual Conference

Popular lecturer and best-selling author Stedman Graham heads the lineup of keynote speakers at OANO's eighth annual statewide nonprofit management and leadership conference happening May 9-10 at the Westin Great Southern Hotel, in downtown Columbus.

Other plenary speakers include Judith O'Connor, president and CEO of BoardSource (formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards), and Delena Wilkerson, executive director of Chicago's Nonprofit Financial Institute.

Sponsored by Bank One, Medical Mutual of Ohio, and Lincoln Financial Services, the two-day event promises pertinent information and networking opportunities for Ohio nonprofit executives and staff, service providers and consultants, and board members.

For registration and continually updated details, visit OANO's website at www.oano.org/programs.asp.
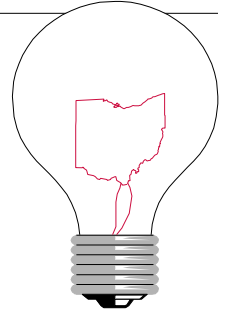
May 9

Pre-conference Sessions, 9:00 - 12:00

Increase Your Efficiency: Ask the Technology Experts

Assessing and Strengthening Your Organization Through the OANO Standards for Excellence

Opening Plenary, 1:30 – 2:30

Judith O'Connor, BoardSource
Rising to the Challenge: Inspired Board Leadership

Concurrent Sessions, 2:45 – 4:00

1. Sustaining the Inspiration of the Strategic Plan
2. Warning Signs: What Your Financial Ratios Can Tell You
3. The ABC's of Advocacy: Getting Started with Public Policy
4. Assessing Your Organization's Resource Development Program

Concurrent Sessions, 4:15 – 5:30

1. Marketing Your Mission in Challenging Times
2. Building Winning Relationships: Corporate/Nonprofit Partnerships that Work
3. Using Program Evaluations for Strategic Problem-Solving
4. Public Policy Update: The Faith-Based Initiative

Reception, 5:45 –

Strengthening the Partnership Between Government and Nonprofits

May 10, 2002

Breakfast Roundtables, 8:00 – 8:45

Breakfast Plenary, 9:00 – 10:15

Delena Wilkerson, Nonprofit Financial Center
Strategic Financial Management for Uncertain Times

Concurrent Sessions, 10:30 – 11:45

1. Capacity Building: More Than Just Good Management?
2. Finding the Right Revenue Mix
3. Who You Know: Building Relationships with Policymakers
4. Build an Effective Partnership with the Board

Luncheon Keynote, 12:00 – 1:15

Stedman Graham
Inspired Leadership: You Can Make It Happen!

Concurrent Sessions, 1:30 – 2:45

1. Mergers, Partnerships, and Collaborations: Opportunities to Thrive
2. Crisis Communication—Beyond "The Plan"
3. Relaxed Productivity: Maintaining Control and Effectiveness
4. Focus on Nonprofit Financial Accountability Legislation and Action

Closing Plenary Session, 3:00 – 4:00

Passing the Torch: Strategies for Successful Leadership Transitions

OANO at Your Service

New Solutions for Telecommunications

CoreComm Communications, Inc., a leading provider of local phone service, long distance, Internet access, and other telecommunications services has agreed to provide discounted services to OANO members will offer telecom solutions packages for members of OANO. Its suite of products includes long distance and local phone service, Internet access, website hosting and development, travel calling, paging, network integration, and much more.

OANO selectedCoreComm because of its competitive portfolio of services, knowledgeable and experienced team of professionals, and its commitment to helping nonprofits manage their telecommunications in the most effective manner possible.

An experienced CoreComm consultant will meet with each interested OANO member to assess its requirements and develop a customized package to fit its telecommunications needs. The consultant will explain how CoreComm services, such as web hosting and development, can help an organization take advantage of the latest technology at a reasonable cost.

For more information, contact CoreComm at 877-933-2428. ◗

Nonprofit Insurance Company to Offer Coverage in Ohio

To help its members obtain insurance coverage at the lowest possible rates, OANO is working with a new national nonprofit insurance company, the Alliance of Nonprofits for Insurance, Risk Retention Group (ANI-RRG), which will begin writing p9olicies in OHio on May 1. ANI-RRG is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization devoted exclusively to service nonprofits, and has been capitalized with $10 million in grant funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

ANI-RRG is modeled after the Nonprofits' Insurance Alliance of California (NIAC), which has a successful 12-year track record and currently insures more than 2,800 nonprofit organizations in California. NIAC was founded in 1989 in response to an insurance crisis faced by California's nonprofit organizations in the mid-1980s.

Between 1984 and 1986, general liability insurance premiums in-creased 200 percent or more for one out of four charitable nonprofit organizations in California. During the same period, insurance companies canceled or refused to renew the general liability policies of one out of five California charitable nonprofits.

ANI-RRG is already writing policies in Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. In Ohio, the types of coverage to be offered will include general liability, employee benefits liability, directors and officers, property/fidelity, and student/volunteer/participant accident.

In addition to offering insurance products specifically designed for nonprofits, ANI-RRG also offers free or highly subsidized loss control and risk management resources for members. For more information, contact Susan Bradshaw at 800-359-6422 ext. 41 or visit www.ani-rrg.org. ◗

Online Recruiting

Advertising online can help nonprofit organizations reach thousands of potential staff members across the country. With OANO's latest member benefit, electronic recruiting becomes even more cost-effective.

OANO has negotiated a bulk purchase of job postings on Monster.com, the leading online employee recruitment and job search website. Organizations posting with Monster.com through OANO save $100 over the normal list price of the advertisement. Your organization creates the description and manages the process. You make keep the username and password you are assigned in order to post multiple employment ads.

To learn more about Monster.com, visit their website at www.monster.com. ◗

Communities Connecting Together Build Social Capital

We live in a reckless disconnected world; where individuals are searching for answers to many social issues. As individuals are looking for answers they are asking difficult questions. Yes, the concern of terrorism and unemployment has pulled at the heartstrings across our nation and yes it has positively affected our nation to connect with one another. But difficult questions still remain in local communities: What about safety? What about our schools? Who can provide the program leadership or volunteer responsibilities at a local community event? How about money to support these events?

As individuals continue to search for these answers, it is critical that professionals who work with community leaders understand how to reconnect individuals to their communities and rebuild communities' social capital.

The concept of *social capital* is the depth of a community's social connectedness. By analogy to "human capital"—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—"social capital" refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation.

It doesn't mean just warm feelings of connectedness but quite specific benefits that occur because of the existence of strong social networks: information flows, mutual aid, cooperation, and collective action.

According to a recent survey Ohio's social capital ranked 29 out of 50 states. This means that as a collective group of people in our state we are *average* in connecting and working with one another.

In addressing the lack of connectedness in communities, a book that I find helpful is *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon & Schuster, 2000), written by Robert D. Putnam. In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam sets out to answer four fundamental questions:

- What has been happening to civic engagement and social connectedness over the past three decades?
- Why has this happened?
- So what? What are the consequences of a decline in social capital?
- What can we do about it?

Putnam's research shows how social bonds are the most powerful predictors of life satisfaction. Communities with less social capital have lower educational performance and more teen pregnancy, child suicide, low birth weight, prenatal mortality, crime rates, and other measures of a neighborhood's declining quality of life.

In another community that is varied and complex, where civic engagement and social connectedness exist, social capital is found. A community's social capital provides a unifying framework and context for interaction that produces better schools, faster economic development, lower crime, and more effective government.

Social capital is thus a "public good" that is visible when people work together which helps strengthen community ties, empower people, develop community leaders, and transfer trust from one social setting to another. Putnam states, "The social capital approach promises to uncover new ways of combining private social infrastructure with public policies that work, and, in turn, using wise public policies to revitalize America's stocks of social capital." Working together is easier in a community blessed with substantial social capital. Social capital is not a substitute for effective public policy but rather a prerequisite for it and, in part, a consequence of it. ◗

Susan S. Shockey is an Associate Professor with Ohio State University Extension. She is the Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent in Franklin County. Since 1998, she has worked with local communities to develop OSU DIRECT (Developing Individuals, Resources, Education in Communities Together). The goal of this program is to promote social capital throughout Franklin County. In 2001, the Columbus City Council provided funding to offer OSU DIRECT in the Franklinton/Hilltop areas of Columbus. Susan earned her Ph.D. in Family and Consumer Sciences Education Administration with a minor in Public Policy Management from the Ohio State University.