

Indiana Children's Wish Fund Strategic Planning Retreat Executive Summary

OVERVIEW: NPC conducted a strategic planning retreat with ICWF leadership on Saturday, February 23, 2019. Participants completed a series of pre-retreat worksheets that were summarized to provide the platform for the retreat discussion. This included an analysis of the organization's strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats, identification of the top priority issues, and a visioning exercise for ICWF's long-term impact. A summary of the pre-work, retreat activity and recommended next steps follow.

OUTCOMES: Participants identified desired outcomes for the retreat:

- Identify high-level strategic issues
- Understand what research and/or additional resources might be needed
- Begin prioritizing goals and defining success
- Determine next steps for additional action

FUTURE VISION: Participants considered the following question: *If there were absolutely no restraints and resources were not an issue, what would ICWF look like in five years?*

- There is increased revenue to grant wishes that comes from multiple, stable sources
 - Sources include fundraising from individuals, corporations and grant-making entities and move beyond fundraising primarily through events
- The organization has a significant and growing endowment
- The number of wishes granted has increased significantly over the current level
- The organization is well known and is a major philanthropic force
- Business and board operations mirror industry best practices
- The staff is larger and includes an executive director

SCOT ANALYSIS: A summary of the pre-work analysis yielded the following attributes (responses identified by more than one respondent included here)

<p>STRENGTHS (internal) Staff - 7 Great events - 6 Board - 6 Organizational longevity - 6 Great relationships in the community - 5 Great mission - 4</p>	<p>CHALLENGES (internal) Fundraising - 9 Board involvement - 5 Staff - 4 <i>Differentiation from Make-A-Wish</i> - 3 Lack of endowment/ funds - 3 Efficiency - 3 Lack of leadership - 2 Lack of long-term staffing plan/uncertainty - 2 Lack of resources for staff development - 2 Lack of expertise/experience - 2 Managing inflationary Wish and administrative costs - 2 Marketing - 2</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES (external) Planned giving - 5 <i>Board</i> - 4 Fundraising - 4 Marketing - 4 Engaging young professionals - 3 Grants (including LEI) - 3 Geographic reach beyond Indianapolis - 2</p>	<p>THREATS (external) Confusion with Make-A-Wish/predatory/dominance - 4 Competition - 4 <i>Too dependent on events</i> - 4 Loss of events - 3 Economic downturn - 3 Terry/relationships - 2 Donor base (age/ loss of) - 2 <i>Lack of fundraising</i> - 2 <i>Small number of staff resign</i> - 2</p>

IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES: A post-retreat assessment of the pre-work and retreat day findings revealed great consistency among retreat participants in the following five priority areas:

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|--------------------------------|--|
| 1) Executive director | 4) Brand development/marketing |
| 2) Strategic planning | 5) Increased board involvement/fundraising |
| 3) Fundraising diversification | |

EMERGING THEMES AND GOALS: The following draft themes and goals represent the pre-retreat and retreat-day thinking among the participants.

Fundraising

- Diversify and increase revenue streams – move beyond events as the primary revenue source to include individuals, corporations and grants
- Increase board involvement in fundraising
- Hire fundraising staff
- Establish a planned giving program
- Develop educational opportunities - donor cultivation, non-event fundraising

Marketing

- Develop/refine brand
- Develop a comprehensive marketing/communications plan
- Increase marketing activity – social media, other; to increase awareness
- Strengthen hospital relationships – to become the preferred provider

Operations

- Staffing – right number, structure, executive director, diversity skill set, compensation
- Strategic plan – develop long-term plan
- Clearer roles for staff and board – defined structure, processes, budget management

Activity

- Analyze events for return-on-investment; change/improve as needed
- Become less reliant on events – increasing non-event revenue
- Develop new events

Board

- Develop an engaged, stronger and more committed board
- Conduct board education – roles, best practices, meetings, etc.

COUNSEL RECOMMENDATIONS: Based on counsel’s involvement with ICWF, the pre-retreat work and the activities at the strategic planning workshop, following are recommended next steps.

1. Take immediate steps to define the required duties of and desired attributes for ICWF’s next executive director with a strong recommendation to make fundraising a central priority for the organization’s next leader.
2. Follow up on the request to the Lilly Endowment, Inc. with a comprehensive proposal that outlines “building organizational capacity” as its central element.
3. Engage in a comprehensive strategic planning effort that will guide the organization’s primary activities over the next three years.
4. Invest in a comprehensive marketing and communications assessment and plan that promotes awareness and investment as key plan elements.
5. Continue investment in fundraising and planned giving program development to begin to diversify the revenue stream.
6. Make key investments in the board, including its construct, education and activities.