



FRONT PAGE

Capacity-Building News to Use for Wiregrass Organizations



HOT TOPIC **Collective Impact**

Many of us working in non-profits, education, civic organizations, and government are familiar with the term, "collective impact." A brief and totally inadequate definition would be the intentional combining of resources and entities focused on a common issue and working through an infrastructure (all "turfs" cast aside) created specifically to achieve a defined, measureable and measured outcome. A much more comprehensive explanation can be found in this weblink from Stanford Social Innovation Review (guest access available for free): http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

The challenges facing communities in 2015 can seem overwhelming. As nonprofits, we sometimes get so caught up working to fulfill our own missions that we may miss the big picture. If our mission is to feed people, we put every ounce of effort into making sure no one in the Wiregrass goes hungry. If our mission is to educate children, we do everything possible to ensure our children are reading on or above grade level. All of this is important work. But there are bigger, broader pictures: a hungry child cannot concentrate on reading, and an undereducated adult cannot get a job to put food on the family table. Our problems are connected, and many of our solutions must be as well.

In the Wiregrass, cooperation comes naturally to us. However, even the best-intended partnership will only get us so far if we still work in siloes. For those of us involved in the Houston County Gives Day effort, consider how that has evolved. It may have started with a dozen or so area nonprofits participating in a one-day fundraising effort (Alabama Gives) a few years ago. But it has taken on its own identity with a unified purpose defined by the group. HCGD has its own voluntary infrastructure, and though the group has leaders, no one entity is "in charge." (Even the meeting table is a closed square.) What if we brought that same kind of energy and selfless abandonment of "turf" to all of our major challenges?

Addressing basic needs, special needs, education, jobs, safety, public health, etc... is going to take us all. We will work together; that is our culture. But we should also consider new ways of working together to achieve our desired "collective impact."

GRANTS UPDATE

Our 2014 Annual Report will soon be published on our website. Here is a preview recap of our approx. awards for last year, by our three *WF Zones of Interest*:

Education--\$229,000;
Health--\$109,000; and
Quality of Life--\$1,300,000
and the \$400,000 WUW challenge grant

Totals do not include Micro-grants, discretionary grants and direct charitable support.

Some of you have asked if we set annual dollar "targets" for our three zones. We do not. Each application, each project, is considered individually based on the strength of the proposal and the "fit" of the project with our goals and objectives. If an application is not selected, we try to give you some feedback. Most of the time, the project is an excellent idea that just is not right for WF at this time. But we encourage you to keep bringing good ideas to us, and keep on looking for the right funders for your projects that may not resonate with us. No application well-considered is ever wasted effort!



GRANTEE HIGHLIGHT **WF Grant Schedule Reminder**

We hope your 2015 is off to a strong start. Here at Wiregrass Foundation, we have been working on several programs that we hope will provide

our grantees and our community with new and exciting opportunities. Stay tuned for more information on **Capacity Building** and **Bright Key!**

In addition, our grant award cycle for 2015 has already begun. If you plan to submit an application this year, remember to use our on-line application process. You will find all instructions on our website but please give us a call if you have any questions or need assistance. Deadlines for all WF capital, project and micro-grants:

Application Deadline	Board Meeting Review
March 2	April 20
May 1	June 15
July 1	August 17
September 1	October 19

We look forward to working with you in 2015!