

Design for Social Impact

Communication Design

Liska + Associates



Liska designs brand identities and clear communications material for nonprofit and community-based organizations that make an impact.

Our work plays a crucial role in helping organizations reach target audiences through brand awareness and clear messaging.

Twist Out Cancer Annual Report 2023



Backbone

By Suhani Amin

Inspired by Donna Dang, Caregiver to fiancé with chondrosarcoma and osteosarcoma

The Impact of Brushes With Cancer



An impact report for Brushes With Cancer, a Twist Out Cancer program



2023 Impact Report



PEAK
GRANTMAKING

Journal

Winter 2024, Issue 21



COMMUNITY VOICES

Among the many highlights of PEAK2023 was a collection of illustrations featuring members of our community reflecting on what it means to learn, share, and evolve. We've selected a few to feature in this edition.



Going Above and Beyond the Status Quo in Grantmaking

By Lita Ugarte Partl

Let's face it: Change is hard, and both people and institutions often struggle to implement even simple changes. But grantmaking organizations have the power to change their ways and disrupt the status quo. In the last two decades alone, we have seen an increased provision of general operating support and an openness to risk that hadn't been witnessed before. We've seen a rise in support for small, grassroots organizations and for organizations led by people who identify as Black, Indigenous, or a person of color. Though the calls for flexible and trust-centered grantmaking started long before the various 2020 crises, that's when many funders changed their grantmaking processes, and relatively quickly.

Grantmaking organizations must continue to evolve their practices and funding strategies if they are to remain relevant and achieve their full potential. They must change to meet evolving community needs and to drive equity and opportunity. Additionally, grantmaking processes and practices must evolve to be more streamlined and less burdensome, as some nonprofits are now deciding not to apply for funding if an application process is too time consuming or if reporting requirements are onerous. The world is continuously changing—community issues change and new technology emerges—and grantmaking organizations must also evolve.

"The world is continuously changing—community issues change and new technology emerges—and grantmaking organizations must also evolve."

What are the requirements and conditions for change to be sustainable?

- Support from organizational leadership
- Understanding and buy-in from internal stakeholders
- Financial resources
- Input from any external stakeholders who will be impacted
- Data that can be transformed into information and knowledge that can be used in making informed decisions
- Time to analyze data, information, and knowledge; to identify options and discuss the pros and cons; and to make decisions and plan for implementation

Grants management professionals are poised to lead change within their organizations and for the field, given that their roles are found at a critical nexus point within philanthropic institutions. Uniquely positioned between people and processes, they have access to insights about their institution's giving patterns and can help advocate for more equitable processes while identifying systemic issues that might perpetuate biases. They are the ones who connect the dots across knowledge, relationships, and systems to improve grantmaking decisions and designs.



In a new after-school program at the Child and Family Center in Chisinau, Moldova, children who had to flee Ukraine are taught by teachers and assistants who are also Ukrainian refugees. Photo courtesy of the Diocese of Chisinau.

Empowering Refugees to Respond to Crisis and Restore Hope

By Jennifer Healy

When it became clear that the millions of refugees who had fled Ukraine in the first weeks of the crisis in 2022 would not be returning anytime soon, relief organizations in the surrounding countries had to adapt. They turned their efforts from first response—offering food, shelter, and basic medical supplies—to developing long-term integration and resettlement programs. Instead of providing for daily needs alone, they began helping refugees find work or school options and attending to the psychological wounds of the traumatized. This is an ongoing and massive task, requiring sizable resources.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), through the work of its Church in Central and Eastern Europe program, has accompanied several organizations with such projects by providing financial support. Rather than viewing this aid as merely a monetary transaction, we consider it a privileged opportunity to see more clearly and learn from the expertise of those who are responding directly to the situation. The work of the Order of Malta Relief Organization (OMRO) in Riga, Latvia, is one example of why we want to learn with and from our partners.

Instead of just handing out aid, the staff of OMRO began employing Ukrainian refugees who had left everything behind. One in particular, Tetyana, was a trained

psychologist who began providing therapy to individuals and in groups. In addition to flipping the circumstances for this one professional, the therapy she provided restored hope to many like Yulia from Starobilsk in the Luhansk region: “I overcame depression, found new strength to continue living my life and set new goals for the future. After the horror of the occupation, the therapy had a healing effect on me and gave me a good start on my new life.”

“Recognizing talent allowed our partner organizations to turn helplessness into usefulness and neediness into productivity.”

Instead of allowing the status of refugee to simply mean *needy*, the leaders of OMRO gave opportunities to capable people who were ready to work. Recognizing talent allowed our partner organizations to turn helplessness into usefulness and neediness into productivity. They were able to both reduce costs—not hiring outside professional psychologists—and decrease need—providing employment and psychological support. The hope they gave to others helps the USCCB and our donors across the US know that their contributions are meaningful and genuinely helping people in a lasting way.

This is one example of many in which Ukrainian psychologists, teachers, translators, and medical personnel have become part of the solution to the crisis. The USCCB has learned with and from our partner organizations to honor the dignity of each person, whatever the circumstances, and to give people opportunities to work alongside others. ▲



Jennifer Healy (she, her, hers) is the director for aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Moving From Formal Reporting to Genuine Conversation

By Ines Burbulis, Breanna Bycroft, and Virginia Gentilcore

In an attempt to reduce some of the administrative burdens for our nonprofit partners, the **Bainum Family Foundation** recently implemented an oral reporting component for one of our Family Philanthropy sub-initiatives. Although this did result in our needing more time to turn these conversations into written reports for our review committee, we immediately reaped the benefits of making that shift. By only asking a fixed set of questions in our written reports, we were losing out on the opportunity to gain insights from our partners that went beyond what had already been shared in their initial proposals and application.

The goal was to make these oral reporting calls with field staff informal and easy-going, yielding our power and making our time together more like a conversation and less like an interrogation. We quickly began building stronger relationships, and our field partners felt more comfortable in sharing their basic needs, which allowed us to better implement our program. On one call with an organization running a preschool program for refugee children, we learned that children’s vital nutritional needs are often left unexamined in favor of other critical classroom necessities. The appeal was urgent and direct: Children cannot learn when they’re hungry, and global food insecurity continues to be compounded by the climate crisis.

As a foundation, we’re fortunate that we were able to provide the resources to meet this basic need so that children can learn as part of the early care and education program we were funding within a refugee setting. We’re working to build trust with our nonprofit partners in the field and to gain a better understanding of what is most urgently needed on the ground.

“In listening to the voices of the people closest to the work, we’ve opened our eyes and ears as grantmakers in ways that numerical data or words on a page never could.”



At their 2022 staff retreat, Bainum Family Foundation staff reflected on their individual, team, and organizational impacts, which led to new opportunities designed to ease the burden on grant partners. Photo courtesy of Bainum Family Foundation.

Partners also shared their appreciation for this new process. They felt seen and heard while experiencing a lower administrative burden, giving them more time to do the work that matters.

In response to these findings, we’ve become more intentional in creating opportunities for connection, moving beyond depending as heavily on written applications and reports. We intend to continue evaluating our reporting processes through future grantmaking cycles. We want to remain nimble and adaptive in supporting community needs and partner priorities as part of our organization’s core strategy. And to understand those needs, we are committed to seeking out and listening to our grant partners’ stories. In listening to the voices of the people closest to the work, we’ve opened our eyes and ears as grantmakers in ways that numerical data or words on a page never could. ▲



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equitablebizgrowth.org



The Fund
for Equitable
Business Growth

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The Fund for Equitable Business Growth

**What if we could work together to build a more just,
equitable, and resilient society?**

The mission of **The Fund for Equitable Business Growth (FEBG)** is to help entrepreneurs of color succeed by funding organizations and institutions that support these entrepreneurs at every step of creating and growing their businesses.

A website for a funding collaborative that supports entrepreneurs of color in the Chicago region



Impact

Communities of color have been left out of the conversation for too long and have missed opportunities to build wealth—for themselves and their communities.

FEBG's work ensures entrepreneurs of color are getting the resources they need to grow their businesses and increase their wealth. Part of that includes investing in the ecosystem that supports these entrepreneurs so that future generations of entrepreneurs don't face the same barriers.

Supporting entrepreneurs of color creates economic development and local employment opportunities, healthier and safer neighborhoods, and a more inclusive and equitable economic region.

We are working toward a more inclusive and equitable environment for future generations of entrepreneurs.



Bridges to Brighter Futures aims to bridge the gap between Black, Latinx, and low-income postsecondary students and good jobs that offer long-term economic security, by providing grants to organizations that address the challenges students are facing.

Each student is on a different path to a **good career and to economic security.**

Bridges to Brighter Futures is a funding initiative based in Chicago.

We support programs and institutions that propel students through postsecondary pathways that incur limited debt and lead to careers that provide living wages and advancement to economic wealth. These include workforce development and community college programs, including Associate's degree transfer to Bachelor's degree programs.



AHK Update

Spring Summer 2024



Communications material that highlights the value of this healthcare organization that supports children with medical complexities



**Almost
Home Kids**
Share the Care



The bridge from hospital to home.

Almost Home Kids provides a bridge from hospital to home through an innovative community-based care system for children with medical complexities. We respond to the needs of families, train caregivers, offer respite care, advocate for accessibility and inclusion and educate healthcare professionals.

How can we help?



Caregiver Resources



Clinical Referrals



Donate Online



Almost Home Kids™

Share the Care

2023 Annual Report





READY TO IGNITE POSSIBLE?



Georgia Center  for Nonprofits
Ignite Possible.

BUILDING ON A PHILANTHROPIC LEGACY AT THE HOME DEPOT FOUNDATION

By Karen Beavor



As new **Executive Director Shannon Gerber** takes the reins at The Home Depot Foundation this fall, GCN's **Karen Beavor** asked her to share her perspective on what drives the company's philanthropic mission, dedication to hometown giving, and powerful employee volunteerism initiatives, as well as what she's most excited about achieving as she settles into her new position.

Karen Beavor: The Home Depot Foundation is one of Atlanta's biggest philanthropic leaders—from the Building Community Network to Team Depot projects, to taking a bold stand on veterans housing, and so much more. Why are philanthropy and community involvement important to the Foundation? And why are they important to you personally?

Shannon Gerber: One of the greatest gifts that our founders, Bernie Marcus and Arthur Blank, gave us is our "values wheel." We have eight core values that have guided our company since the first Home Depot store opened. Two of those core values are *giving back* and *doing the right thing*. These two are at the center of everything we do through the Foundation, and I think they set us apart as a company. Personally, I believe we're stronger, as a company and as individuals, when we're able to make a meaningful difference in the communities where we live and work.

"I truly believe we're stronger, as a company and as individuals, when we're able to make a meaningful difference in the communities where we live and work."

"Every day, we hear from associates who choose to work at The Home Depot because we enable them to give back."

Beavor: How does the Foundation's philanthropy, volunteerism, and commitment to giving back affect The Home Depot's employees and brand?

Gerber: We're a service-oriented company, both in the aisles of our stores and in the communities where we do business. Every day, we hear from associates who choose to work at The Home Depot because we enable them to give back through Team Depot. It gives them a sense of pride to work for a company that cares. Similarly, we often hear from customers who are touched by the work we do in their communities. When we mobilize Team Depot, our associate-led volunteer force, both associates and customers see that our commitment to service reaches far beyond the four walls of our stores. Our orange heart shines through when our Team Depot volunteers are in action.

Beavor: Having been in charge of the fundraising and events which fuel the Foundation, you know the organization from the inside out. What advantage will this give you in your new role?

STRATEGIES TO MAXIMIZE YOUR GEORGIA GIVES DAY CAMPAIGN

Our **Georgia Gives Day 2016** campaign kick-off, held September 16, brought together more than a hundred nonprofit representatives to rally and prepare for Gives Day success. We started with a group photo-shoot in Woodruff Park where GCN President & CEO Karen Beavor led the group chant, "Come together now!" That teed off a full morning of sharing winning strategies and tactics, featuring a panel discussion featuring leaders from two nonprofits with highly successful 2015 campaigns, **Senior Connections** and **Girls Inc. of Greater Atlanta**—and representatives from GCN's partners, **Sun Trust Foundation** and **Edelman Atlanta**. Attendees also covered an idea board with their Gives Day plans, and shared their questions and perspectives in four topic-specific breakout sessions focusing on social media, new donors, leveraging incentives, and campaign planning.

Following, we share some of the takeaways worth applying to your own campaign, and to your development efforts year round.







Unlocking Capital for Catalytic Development

Mission

To catalyze **equitable economic prosperity** in communities of color, Community Desk Chicago leverages private market expertise and trusted investor relationships to **unlock capital** for transformative real estate development.



Services

Learn more about how we support transformative development projects

Capital Providers

Help bridge the funding gap for community-oriented development

Collaborators

Lend your industry expertise to support community projects

Communities of color are challenged with capital access for real estate development and investments in their neighborhoods. Nonprofits have limited financial resources and capacity to tackle complex development transactions. And, Black and Latinx developers and entrepreneurs are often denied equitable access to capital to start or grow their businesses. Community Desk Chicago works to close these gaps by promoting direct catalytic capital to Black and Latinx communities in historically underserved Chicago neighborhoods.

We Believe



Unlocking Capital for Catalytic Development

Communities of color are challenged with capital access for real estate development and investments in their neighborhoods for many reasons. From chronic disinvestment and perceived risk to undervalued assets and constrained development capacity, these and other obstacles—many traced to systemic discrimination—prevent projects from meeting “traditional” financial benchmarks to secure funding. Community Desk Chicago translates these **challenges into opportunities** by leveraging private market expertise and trusted investor relationships to direct catalytic capital to historically underserved Black and Latinx neighborhoods.

Connecting Community and Investment for a Better Chicago

Black and Latinx development projects have the potential **to transform and stabilize neighborhoods** through job creation and wealth-building.

The Desk engages capital providers to support community developers and their projects for mutual benefit. Investing in thoroughly vetted, transformative projects in historically Black and Latinx neighborhoods can help ensure long-term success, **provide growth** for small business owners with already-strong fiscal track records, and offer investors the flexibility to explore tangible but non-traditional methods to **earn returns**.

Alternative funding sources, such as CDFIs, are limited in the support they provide to fund new ventures or expand existing businesses. In addition to equity investments, community developers require other types of flexible capital sources, including credit enhancements, grants, and low-interest loans. The Desk helps to bridge funding gaps.

We Believe:



Strong talent and commercial development opportunities exist in communities, but face challenges accessing the necessary capital and resources.



Communities deserve holistic development, including commercial projects that create wealth building opportunities and improve quality of life.



Projects in communities of color should have equitable access to capital without fear of racial bias.



Our role is to collaborate, not duplicate — partnering with the existing ecosystem to add capacity and fill gaps.



Metropolitan Planning Council

MPC

**Higher quality
schools.
A brighter future
for today's
students and
tomorrow's
workforce.**



**Metropolitan Planning Council
Bold Plans, Bright Future
Campaign 2003–2004
www.metroplanning.org**

MPC

**Livable spaces
for everyone
to treasure.
Prosperous
communities
now and in
the future.**



**Metropolitan Planning Council
Bold Plans, Bright Future
Campaign 2003–2004
www.metroplanning.org**

MPC

**Housing people
can afford.
Neighborhoods
where people
want to live.**



**Metropolitan Planning Council
Bold Plans, Bright Future
Campaign 2003–2004
www.metroplanning.org**

"It's not enough to measure inputs and outputs; we must be measuring impact and outcomes."

— Lesa Ukman

Dashboards and Datasets

PSV is also developing online valuation software that is being used by fledgling and small businesses. The application is pre-emptive of other leading research and social scientists.

Once you or the client has completed the Valuation Statement, PSV Statisticians sponsor the data into green new organizations.



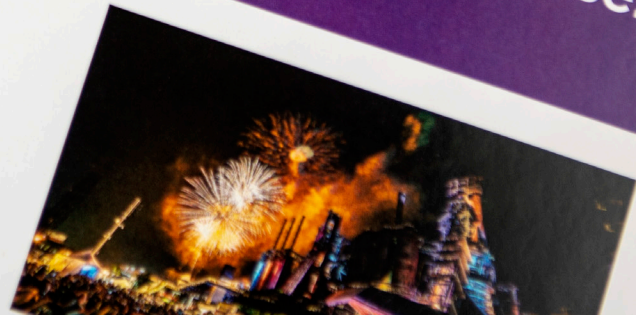
Social Capital and Return On Purpose: the New Metrics of Value

What is social capital?

Simply put, social capital is the currency created by the production, support and distribution of resources that contribute to the common good. We use the term broadly to refer to all types of **positive outcomes for people and planet**—health, education, social justice, animal welfare, cultural heritage, climate action and much more.

Through sports, entertainment, event and cause marketing, philanthropy and sponsorships, volunteerism and advocacy, support of the Sustainable Development Goals and more, **your organization creates substantial amounts of social capital.**

However, current measurement and evaluation methods which rely on inputs and outputs but fail to measure matters, impacts and outcomes are not the most powerful asset to



Return on Purpose

More →

Sign up here for *Return on Purpose*, your guide to advocacy and impact.
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Why Foundations Should Step Up Their Game in Impact Investing
A group of 45 impact investors, researchers and others recently met to discuss the critical role of philanthropy in creating not just impact enterprises, but an "impact economy".
forbes.com

Sep 26, 2018

ProSocial Valuation
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Impact Investors Should Use #UN Targets as Investing Guide
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#SRI



Impact Investors Should Use U.N. Targets as Investing Guide
Targeting the Sustainable Development Goals can lead to real change, the Global Impact Investing Network says



Community Engagement

UrbanWorks

Material that highlights this architecture firm's impact and involvement in the community

Grand Rapids is Michigan's second largest city, with only Detroit having a larger population. The Boston Square Grand Rapids neighborhood had wanted to redevelop its neighborhood center for years, but was stymied by a lack of consensus.

UrbanWorks led a multi-part process with three public meetings to identify opportunities, needs, and desires through a broad representative group of community stakeholders. Ideas were created, tested, and explored with these groups in a collaborative manner that resulted in a fully implementable plan with wide support that draws on the natural history of the site to create an engaging series of new public spaces.

Engagement

Revitalizing community dialogue about the future of a centrally located site in Grand Rapids.

Resolution

Using a variety of communication strategies to allow stakeholders to directly participate in imagining a new mixed-use development as focal point for their community.



The Skyspace Digital Library is the heart and soul of the Galewood School in Chicago. Situated at the summit of the soaring, slope-roofed space at the south end of the building, the double-height room provides students with the building's most dramatic spatial experience while positively representing the institution to the surrounding neighborhood. This compelling combination of form and function communicates the school's high regard for digital and spontaneous learning for all.

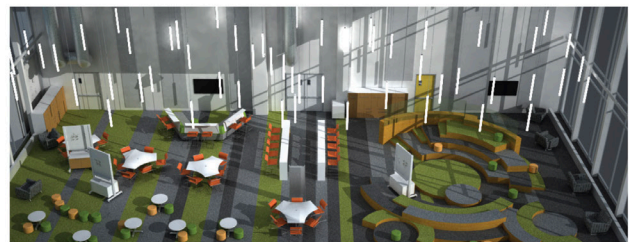
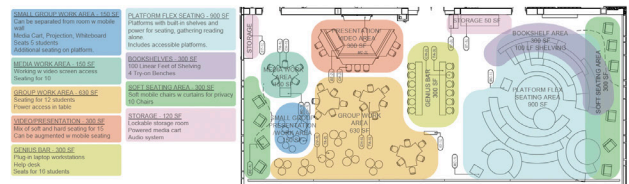
Over the course of a two-day panel discussion and design charrette, the architectural team met with educational leaders, librarians and students to discuss the needs of a 21st century library. The resulting learning environment meets the needs of the surrounding community and advances the digital literacy of the student body.

Engagement

Establishing parameters for a contemporary Chicago school's library through effective listening sessions with educators, librarians, and students.

Resolution

Providing flexibility through spatial design and technology that facilitates evolving needs for a 21st century library whose form functions as an evocative lantern for the community.





Because
nothing
matters more
than a child's
early years.

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Institute**

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