

**Casa de Esperanza
Board of Directors' Retreat
February 6, 2010**

Notes

Members Present: Athena Adkins, Yolanda Cotterall (by phone for part of the meeting), Gloria Fressia, Rick Johnson, Nicole McKoin, Miguel Ramos, Ruth Simmons and Diana Villella.

Staff Present: Patti Tototzintle, Amy Sánchez, Rosie Hidalgo, and Nancy Cicero

I. Gathering Together; Coffee and Continental Breakfast

Athena called the meeting to order.

**II. Welcome and Introductions;
Review Goals and Agenda**

After introductions, Amy informed the board about "Pastries & Policy," the forum that took place at Travelers on Thursday morning, February 4. The event was successful, with a good cross-section of people and organizations in attendance. Domestic Abuse Project (DAP) has asked us to present the national work to their staff, and we will also present to a United Way gathering of executive directors. Athena suggested presenting at a Minnesota Council of Nonprofits event. She can make the connection with Marcia Avner. Athena commented about how proud she was of our organization and that the room was buzzing after the presentation.

III. National Pop Quiz

Rosie gave the group a "quiz." Athena, Karen and Rick took top honors.

**IV. Strategic Plan Review
National Highlights**

Amy and Patti walked the group through the document, "Operational Vision 2007-2009." Rosie commented on our national work, presenting highlights from the past year. Amy added that we have established ourselves as a national organization. People are calling us, and they notice when Casa de Esperanza is not present at national meetings.

Patti explained that we are well positioned to apply for and be selected as one of the HHS institutes, which brings FPSA (Family Preservation and Support Act) funding. Athena asked what we need to do in order to take advantage of the national opportunities that are now open to Casa de Esperanza. Amy responded, saying that our first hurdle is to become one of the HHS institutes. Not only does it bring funding (\$400,000 over three years) but it also brings much more. Once Casa de Esperanza is the "go to" organization, more funding will be available. She added that we recently received a Women's Foundation grant for policy; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funds us for research; and we have just submitted a grant to the Ford Foundation. We are seeking different types of funding for stability.

Break

V. Strategic Plan – Wrap Up

Amy opened the session with the key questions about the strategic plan. What are the challenges? What is left to do? How long will it be relevant?

A period of discussion followed about how Casa de Esperanza's work touches the lives of Latin@s in the Twin Cities. Some of the points that were made:

- Casa de Esperanza touches the whole lives of Latin@, not just the issue of domestic violence, through our community engagement work: the *Centros de Información y Recursos*, working with partners to build connections on the East Side of St. Paul, working to improve access, dealing with issues of immigration and foreclosure, etc.
- Rosie is committed to understanding the work in the Twin Cities, which strengthens our policy efforts.

The discussion returned to the strategic plan. Amy outlined some areas of challenge from the strategic plan and noted that more work is needed in these areas in order to achieve the goals of the plan:

1. Strategic Area of Focus Four—Board Leadership and Development
 - a. Resource development
 - b. National board
2. Strategic Area of Focus Five—Resource Development
 - a. We must increase our fundraising.
 - b. We haven't reached our goal of \$100,000. At our budget level, we need to be able to raise \$300,000 - \$400,000 each year.
3. Strategic Area of Focus Two—Marketing/Communications
 - a. We are proud of the new brand.
 - b. There is much more work to be done.

Discussion followed about extending the strategic plan, writing addenda, and rewriting strategies. Patti and Amy believe the plan can hold up for another three years and that the strategic outcomes are broad enough to cover additional work. This plan is a comprehensive strategic plan that is bringing about the transformation of the organization. Discussion followed that if the plan was extended the board would not focus on trying to update the strategies. Amy, Patti and the staff would determine the appropriate strategies each year.

Motion made by Karen Smith and seconded by Diana Vilella to reaffirm the mission, vision, values and operational vision of the strategic plan until June 2013 as well as the strategic areas of focus and strategic outcomes and to approve strategies for each strategic outcome prior to the start of each fiscal year. Motion carried.

Lunch

VI. National Board Structure and Next Steps

Patti distributed the document, "National Board Expansion," proposing a target of recruiting four board members for July 1, 2010, including two national members. A discussion followed about what qualities and expertise we are looking for in national board members.

- A nationally recognized leader in the field of domestic violence. A "content expert" should be hand-picked by Patti, Amy, and Rosie. Consider whether we want someone from Texas or California or along the east coast corridor. We must be sure the person's philosophy is in line with Casa de Esperanza's philosophy.

- Someone in the corporate world. We want to look strategically at corporations that have resources and understand our national direction. We must think of all the ways that corporate partners can be helpful to us. It was also suggested that we can “hook” a corporation by seeking out in-kind services from their employees. The corporation may give in the long-term.
- Someone with financial capacity.
- Gender diversity
- A Latin@ personality that could be a spokesperson for the organization?
- Resource development is a priority—someone in fundraising circles, locally or nationally. The Jeremiah Program was cited as an example of an organization with an environment of resource development. They have benefactors they can call on—who are not necessarily on the board—who can support the organization when it’s most needed.
- Someone in national Latin@ media who can assist us to market and promote the organization.

Athena thanked everyone for the discussion. She will take these comments to the board development committee. Athena, Patti, and the committee will meet to strategize and continue recruiting. They want to have a docket ready for the May board meeting.

VIII. Leadership Structure

Patti distributed the organizational chart. Athena launched a discussion with the purpose of determining the board’s support for the co-director model.

Patti and Amy presented their thoughts about the structure.

- The structure was outlined in the strategic plan. It allows the co-directors to focus comprehensively on where the organization needs to go and grow.
- Roles are well-defined.
- Patti and Amy trust and back up each other.
- Skills are complementary. Their styles and approaches are different; when questions or problems arise, they come together.
- They are well networked, respected, and credible.
- Both come to their positions with the highest commitment to Casa de Esperanza’s goals, long-term vision and values.
- The organization wouldn’t be where it is without the co-director structure.
- They asked the management team for their feedback and were surprised at the group’s comments. The team believes the structure is what the organization needs to reach its current goals but was critical of the structure. The management team is not where Patti and Amy would like them to be; Patti and Amy will be focusing on it and re-evaluating.

Board members commented that it is a credit to both Amy and Patti that the structure is working--the structure works because of them.

Motion made by Karen Smith and seconded by Gloria Fressia to reaffirm the co-director model for Casa de Esperanza with the positions of Chief Executive Officer and Chief Executive for External Relations. Motion carried.

Athena praised Amy and Patti for their outstanding job and leadership.

IX. Check In/Next Steps

Karen presented a check for \$750 from Verizon Wireless because she has volunteered more than 50 hours to Casa de Esperanza.

Athena explained that she, Karen and Rick will review the board assessment tool and bring it to the next meeting. Board assessment/development is a priority for the next meeting.

The group discussed board donations to Casa de Esperanza. Athena expressed that we must have 100% participation in donating to the organization each fiscal year. She asked that Casa de Esperanza be in each board member's highest donation level. The end of the fiscal year is June 30.

The board discussed their participation in fundraising activities. Rick asked if we can say that each board member must participate in a fundraising activity. Athena expressed her interest in doing another wine raffle if there is an event before June 30, and Diana said she would help Athena.

Amy stressed the importance of making these activities happen. Casa de Esperanza has the staff to support board members in whatever they want to do. There are many types of activities that are possible; she has ideas; she can train board members. The question is: what do board members need to make these activities happen? The board self-assessment guide lists "participation in board-sponsored efforts" in fundraising.

Rick asked for an update on pledges for board giving. Athena said that the board will discuss the topic more at the next meeting.

Athena adjourned the meeting.