

THE  
SODERQUIST  
CENTER

# Partnership for Success

2008-2009 Year End Summary

*"This is a unique opportunity for businesses and not-for-profit organizations to partner together for the benefit of the residents of northwest Arkansas. My wife, Jo, and I are so proud to be engaging with senior leaders, working together in providing greater strategic support and capacity for these six outstanding agencies."*

*– Don Soderquist*

*Lead Facilitator: Heather Davidson, Talent & Resource Manager  
Lead Coordinator: Nolan Thomas, Project Coordinator*

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### ***What it is:***

Partnership for Success is a sophisticated approach to leadership development, brought to NWA by The Soderquist Center in conjunction with The Northwest Arkansas Community Foundation (NWACF) and the Wal-Mart Foundation. It is an initiative to strengthen the Northwest Arkansas community through an innovative partnership involving the business community, the not-for-profit community and organizational development.

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### ***How it works:***

Six “blue ribbon” not-for-profit agencies were selected through an application process, as well as eighteen corporate leaders coming from a variety of backgrounds. Each agency received an assessment of strengths and weaknesses, enhanced capacity through an engagement with talented leaders, team development sessions, and the opportunity to share their work. In addition to “hands-on learning” through consulting with the six agencies, the senior leaders chosen participated in leadership development sessions, received individual leadership assessments and one-on-one coaching with experienced facilitators.

The corporate participants engaged, in teams of three, with a not-for-profit agency over the course of eight months in a project specific to that agency’s need. The teams consulted with the agencies, providing support and business expertise towards strategic initiatives. The project helped to deepen company ties to the local community, while providing a challenging development opportunity for high potential leaders in both the corporate and not-for-profit settings.

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### ***How it helped:***

Partnership for Success boosted performance by providing additional capacity and strategic leadership to organizations. The program helped to develop the agencies’ relationships with local business experts as well as increase the community’s awareness of each agency through Soderquist Center driven public relations activities. It helped the corporate participants grow in their professional skills to apply “on the job” as well as increased their community awareness and involvement.

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### ***Who was involved:***

#### **Agencies**

Elizabeth Richardson Center - John Buck, *Executive Director*

Helen Walton Children’s Enrichment Center - Michelle Stephens, *Executive Director*

Helping Oncology Patients Excel (HOPE), Inc. - Cyndi Bilyeu, *Executive Director*

Northwest Arkansas Children’s Shelter - Tim Nichols, *Executive Director*

Peace at Home Family Shelter, Inc. - Judi Selle, *CEO*

Samaritan Community Center - Debbie Rambo, *Executive Director*

## Corporate Leaders

Lori Allen, *Portfolio Development Manager*, Sara Lee Food and Beverage  
Sam Bates, *Vice President*, WorkMatters  
Don Butcher, *Customer Relations Manager*, The Soderquist Center for Leadership and Ethics  
Greg Cosper, *Director of Sales*, The Scotts Company  
Clayton Crosby, *Vice President of Key Customer Development*, Acosta Sales & Marketing  
Rob Hey, *Vice President Staffing and Development*, America's CAR-MART, Inc.  
Amy Infante, *President/Owner*, Plan B Consultants, Inc.  
Giovanni Infante-Still, *Director of Business Development*, Associated Hygienic Products  
Laurel Jackson, *Director of Sales*, Disney Consumer Products  
David Lester, *GM Light Gauge Sales*, Central States Manufacturing  
Pete Louree, *Director of Sales*, The Dial Corporation – A Henkel Company  
Stacey Mason, *former Senior Manager of Global Leadership Development & Culture*, Wal-Mart Store, Inc.  
Paul Nast, *Chief Information Officer*, John Brown University  
Ashley Kelley Siwec, *Communications Coordinator*, Rogers Public Schools  
Chris Sohosky, *Financial Advisor/Guided Portfolio Manager*, Morgan Stanley Smith Barney  
Seritha Twist, *Director of People Services/Safety*, Simmons Foods  
Laura G. Wilson, *Senior Vice President/Branch Administrator*, Arvest Bank, Rogers  
Brent Young, *Director of Corporate and Public Relations*, John Brown University

**The Teams:** Participants were placed into teams to work on a project specific to the needs of the agency.

### **Elizabeth Richardson Center:**

#### **John Buck, Executive Director**

Rob Hey, America's CAR-MART, Inc.

Paul Nast, John Brown University

Brent Young, John Brown University

### **Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter:**

#### **Tim Nichols, Executive Director**

Laurel Jackson, Disney Consumer Products

Pete Louree, The Dial Corporation - A Henkel Company

Chris Sohosky, Morgan Stanley Smith Barney

### **Helen Walton Children's Enrichment Center:**

#### **Michelle Stephens, Executive Director**

Lori Allen, Sara Lee Food and Beverage

David Lester, Central States Manufacturing

Ashley Kelley Siwec, Rogers Public Schools

### **Peace at Home Family Shelter:**

#### **Judi Selle, CEO**

Don Butcher, The Soderquist Center for Leadership and Ethics

Clayton Crosby, Acosta Sales & Marketing

Laura G. Wilson, Arvest Bank, Rogers

### **Helping Oncology Patients Excel (HOPE), Inc.:**

#### **Cyndi Bilyeu, Executive Director**

Sam Bates, Work Matters

Amy Infante, Plan B Consultants, Inc.

Seritha Twist, Simmons Foods

### **Samaritan Community Center:**

#### **Debbie Rambo, Executive Director**

Greg Cosper, The Scotts Company

Giovanni Infante-Still, Associated Hygienic Products

Stacey Mason, formerly with Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.

## ***Team Projects:***

### **Elizabeth Richardson Center:**

#### Project Overview:

Their primary objective was to create a **3-5 year Technology Plan**. It included a detailed implementation plan for two major areas of focus that had been designated as most important by the leadership of the organization:

- A reliable and efficient network infrastructure within and between all facilities.
- Implementation of specialized line-of-business software to increase the strategic and operational effectiveness of the ERC.

Additionally, the ERC Technology Plan documented recommendations for the use of productivity software, client hardware cycles, telecommunications, printers/copiers, and other technologies as time allowed. ERC documented a cost/benefit analysis, training plan, and ongoing maintenance/support plan within the scope of the ERC Technology Plan.

ERC chose to implement technology in order to reduce their reliance on a non-integrated paper system and to prepare for future growth as well as improve efficiency and effectiveness. The program implementation was “cost neutral” to the organization.

### **Helen Walton Children’s Enrichment Center:**

#### Project Overview:

Their project involved the development of a cost conscious, yet effective three year **Communication Plan** focused on their unique stakeholders. HWCEC’s team of senior leaders helped them to identify their stakeholders as: Potential clients; Current clients; Employees (future and present); Volunteers; Donors; Early Childhood Teachers; Early Childhood Administrators/Directors; and Early Childhood Partners/Support Services.

In their plan, they Defined communication goals; Answered the “what’s in it for me?” question; and Spoke to their stakeholders with “***our voice*** but in ***their language.***”

The project outcomes include creating a paradigm shift for the early childhood industry, keeping stakeholders interested and engaged, and creating sustainability. Part of the plan includes communicating the value of early childhood education, which creates quality options for families, prepares children well for school success, and recognizes that NW Arkansas gains \$9.21 for every \$1 invested in early childhood programs.

## **Helping Oncology Patients Excel (HOPE), Inc.:**

### Project Overview:

The goal of HOPE's project was to build a **comprehensive volunteer program** to support the mission of HOPE. The main elements of the team's project incorporated the systems and process to support volunteer engagement; including:

- Develop volunteer policies.
- Make a recruitment plan.
- Create an orientation and training curriculum (for staff too).
- Formulate screening processes for placement.
  - Application, background check, interview.
- Create volunteer job descriptions.
- Develop a plan for ongoing retention and education.
- Make a budget and sustainability plan for the program.

The team sought to engage volunteers from their "Been There" program, collaborate with Highlands Oncology Group to design "In Clinic" volunteer opportunities, define current volunteer roles more clearly, and identify other volunteer opportunities.

HOPE has accomplished formalizing a partnership with Highlands Oncology Group. They have put systems and processes defined in their project into place, identified volunteers to be placed, and have trained 12 new volunteers for placement in the clinic and the Been There program.

The impact that has already been realized includes engaging 31 Active Clinic, Been There, Office and Special Event Volunteers; clocking over 250 Volunteer Hours since July 1 (valued at over \$5,000).

And, in order to maintain sustainability, HOPE has an intern in place to continue progress of the program and create long-term goals and plans. They also have a recruitment and marketing plan in place and are actively seeking funding for future success of program.

## **Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter:**

### Project Overview:

The project was to formulate a **business plan for a thrift store** to generate income for the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter.

In 2009, The Children's Shelter received a grant to build a new facility which will increase costs in terms of operations. They are looking to build a thrift store to increase revenue to help with these costs so that donations and can be focused on other efforts involving their specific services. The team sought help from John Brown University graduate students to complete a feasibility study on a thrift store in NWA. Through the study, a possible location was determined in which the store would be most cost efficient.

They discovered three possible target markets through the feasibility study that are the most likely to shop at a thrift store:

- Generation-Y individuals (college students),
- Stay-at-home moms,
- Value shoppers (main focus for the plan will be here).

Resource Design, an architectural design firm (<http://www.rede316.com>), donated their services to aid in this process.

The Children's Shelter met with other not-for-profit organizations that have run or are currently running thrift stores to gain their insights on implementing such a venture.

The business plan that was developed recommends purchasing and running a thrift store as an alternate revenue stream for the organization. The plan is being sent to the Shelter's Board of Directors for consideration and approval.

### **Peace at Home Family Shelter:**

#### Project Overview:

Peace at Home's project was to create a program to **develop sustainable relationships with corporate and business partners**. The project began with an initial survey to capture information about potential corporate and business partners. The data obtained from the survey was intended to help shape the second step - designing a methodology for approaching corporate and business partners. The last step involved designing a tracking system for relationships once they are established. The goal was to create or strengthen at least twelve new corporate or business partners.

The survey was met with much resistance in terms of being distributed in corporate offices; therefore, a secondary plan was established to redistribute the survey to the general population at a later date as a means to market Peace at Home with statistical facts.

Through the process of communicating with corporate entities, Peace at Home has gleaned insight regarding how to approach organizations for financial donations, why organizations hesitate, what organizational concerns might be, and their willingness (or lack thereof) to respond with information.

As part of the redirected plan, Peace at Home worked with a practitioner in managing funding relationships.

Currently, the team is formalizing their process, called "**Moves Management**" in order to foster the development of donor relationships.

## **Samaritan Community Center:**

### Project Overview:

Their original project was revolving around an organizational structure for the staff, volunteers, etc. However, the project morphed into **organizational structure** around what the business “stands for”, essentially a **program effectiveness evaluation**.

After analyzing data about the current state of SCC, they realized there wasn’t enough focus on specific areas of service. They are focusing on the **core** “business” of the center and how that impacts the community.

Three areas they discovered that best serve their mission include:

- Their food pantry,
- Their soup kitchen,
- And their backpacks (snacks) program

They have surveyed their client base so they could know they are providing the right kind of food and supplies to meet the needs of their clients. SCC will continue to focus more of their attention and resources on these three core programs in order to have the best impact on their clients, as well as effectively outsourcing other programs to appropriate community partners.

## Pre- and Post-Program Survey Comparison:

Prior to beginning the program, both the agencies and corporate participants completed a survey that helped The Soderquist Center better understand the participants’ level of knowledge about and engagement with the not-for-profit and corporate community as well as their current leadership skills. The pre-program survey also sought to assess the participants’ level of exposure to and understanding of various leadership and organizational challenges and opportunities.

Following the conclusion of the program, the participants were again asked to complete a survey regarding their experience and involvement with Partnership for Success. The questions were intentionally kept the same for both surveys in order to benchmark the results from the start of the program to its conclusion.

### SURVEY RESULTS

#### Community and Not-for-profit Involvement ratings

According to these results, there was an increase in the corporate participants’ involvement with and understanding of not-for-profits, including knowledge of social issues, operations, and challenges N-F-P’s face.

[Pre-program results in **Black** | Post-program results in **Red**]

<u>Corporate Participant Responses</u>	I am involved in the community through not-for-profit organizations	I have a working knowledge of social issue in the NWA community	I have a working knowledge of how not-for-profit organizations operate	I have a working knowledge of the challenges not-for-profit organizations face
MEAN	2.2   2.8	2.6   3.6	2.8   4.1	2.9   3.3
MEDIAN	2.0   3.0	3.0   4.0	3.0   4.0	3.0   3.0
MAX	4.0   4.0	4.0   5.0	5.0   5.0	4.0   4.0
MIN	1.0   2.0	1.0   2.0	1.0   3.0	2.0   3.0

Pre-survey, n= 17 | Post-survey, n= 12

### Corporate Involvement ratings

According to these results, there was an increase in the agencies' ability to engage and recruit funding from the corporate community; as well as an increase in their corporate network.

[Pre-program results in **Black** | Post-program results in **Red**]

<b><u>Not-for-profit Agency Responses</u></b>	I am involved in the corporate community	I have a network of contacts in the corporate community	My organization is effective at recruiting funds from the corporate community	My organization is effective at recruiting volunteers from the corporate community
MEAN	3.2   3.5	3.4   3.7	2.8   3.2	3.2   3.8
MEDIAN	3.0   3.5	3.0   3.5	3.0   3.0	3.0   4.0
MAX	4.0   4.0	4.0   5.0	3.0   5.0	4.0   5.0
MIN	3.0   3.0	3.0   3.0	2.0   2.0	2.0   3.0

Pre-survey, n= 5 | Post-survey, n= 6

### Leadership Skills ratings

According to these results, there was an increase in the corporate participants' skills in leading change & strategic initiatives, as well as collaboration, critical thinking, priority & resource management, innovative problem solving, and coaching others.

[Pre-program results in **Black** | Post-program results in **Red**]

<b><u>Corporate Participant Responses</u></b>	Leading Organizational Change	Leading strategic organizational initiatives	Collaborating with team members	Communicating with team members	Critical thinking	Managing Priorities & resources	Applying knowledge to solve problems in new areas	Coaching & Mentoring others
MEAN	2.9   3.3	3.0   3.4	3.4   3.5	3.4   3.4	3.3   3.4	3.0   3.3	3.0   3.3	3.0   3.3
MEDIAN	3.0   3.0	3.0   3.0	3.0   3.5	3.0   3.0	3.0   3.0	3.0   3.0	3.0   3.0	3.0   3.0
MAX	4.0   4.0	4.0   4.0	4.0   4.0	4.0   4.0	4.0   4.0	4.0   4.0	4.0   4.0	4.0   4.0
MIN	2.0   3.0	2.0   3.0	3.0   3.0	3.0   3.0	2.0   3.0	2.0   2.0	2.0   2.0	2.0   2.0

Pre-survey, n= 17 | Post-survey, n= 12

### Leadership Skills ratings

According to these results, there was an increase in the agencies’ participants’ skills in collaboration, critical thinking, priority & resource management, and innovative problem solving; other skills remained consistent.

[Pre-program results in **Black** | Post-program results in **Red**]

<b><u>Not-for-profit Agency Responses</u></b>	<b>Leading Organizational Change</b>	<b>Leading strategic organizational initiatives</b>	<b>Collaborating with team members</b>	<b>Communicating with team members</b>	<b>Critical thinking</b>	<b>Managing Priorities &amp; resources</b>	<b>Applying knowledge to solve problems in new areas</b>
<b>MEAN</b>	3.2   <b>3.2</b>	3.2   <b>3.2</b>	3.0   <b>3.2</b>	2.8   <b>2.8</b>	3.2   <b>3.5</b>	3.0   <b>3.2</b>	3.2   <b>3.5</b>
<b>MEDIAN</b>	3.0   <b>3.0</b>	3.0   <b>3.0</b>	3.0   <b>3.0</b>	3.0   <b>3.0</b>	3.0   <b>3.5</b>	3.0   <b>3.0</b>	3.0   <b>3.5</b>
<b>MAX</b>	4.0   <b>4.0</b>	4.0   <b>4.0</b>	3.0   <b>4.0</b>	3.0   <b>3.0</b>	4.0   <b>4.0</b>	4.0   <b>4.0</b>	4.0   <b>4.0</b>
<b>MIN</b>	3.0   <b>2.0</b>	3.0   <b>2.0</b>	3.0   <b>3.0</b>	2.0   <b>2.0</b>	3.0   <b>3.0</b>	2.0   <b>3.0</b>	3.0   <b>3.0</b>

Pre-survey, n= 5 | Post-survey, n= 6

### Community/Not-for-profit & Corporate Involvement Comments

The participants were also asked to provide additional comments on their levels of involvement with both the corporate and not-for-profit community. They were asked in the pre- survey as well as the post-survey what their involvement was and how they (the agencies) sought resources. It was not a primary objective of Partnership for Success to secure loyal participation between corporate participants and the agencies following the program; however, it was an outcome we hoped to see.

According to the post-program survey responses, **three** corporate participants stated that they would continue their involvement with the agency they engaged with for the program and others expressed excitement about just having engaged with their agency.

There were no major changes in these responses from the not-for-profit agencies. One agency’s response in how they recruit resources included items they’ve implemented as a result of the program, and all of them seemed to have more clarity around how to communicate this.

## **Feedback:**

Additional questions were included at the end of the post-program survey to provide The Soderquist Center with feedback on the program as a whole in terms of the impact it had on the individuals involved as well as the not-for-profit agencies.

## **Comments from Corporate Participants |**

### **Participants' Highlights**

*Getting to know more about the ERC. I didn't know anything about them prior to PFS. They are a great bunch and [I] hope to work with them in the future. It was also great to see them implement so many of the suggestions by the team and that [our suggestions] are helping them run more efficiently so they can do what they do best in helping people with disabilities.*

*Driving the level of business acumen for the NFP agency [and] being involved in something "others oriented", which is not what a typical day looks like in corporate America.*

*Working with the non-for profit agency and truly finding a solution that will leave a lasting impact.*

### **Additional Comments**

*This is a great program and a wonderful opportunity for anyone interested in serving the community. I would highly recommend it.*

*I feel honored to have been selected and to have the opportunity to work with the Helen Walton Center. I would also be interested in any other future opportunities.*

## Comments from Agencies |

### Participants' Highlights

*It was a great opportunity to take time to really reflect on our organization, the things we do well and the areas in which we need to focus on improving. Sometimes in our busy organizations, we tend to focus on the immediate needs and issues rather than reflect on the long term sustainability (both financially and operationally).*

*We essentially assembled a team of strangers with similar interests into a team that accomplished a great deal in a year, from diagnosing a problem, to developing a complex set of solutions; and getting a number of them implemented. We [also] built relationships that will last beyond this year, as our corporate partners have developed a connection with our mission and values.*

### Additional Comments

*I love the program. I believe it was a great success for all of the non-profits and broadened the horizons of the corporate folks. It was a good process, and it produced good results. Since it was done before in Phoenix, it is clearly replicable.*

*Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this project. It was an opportunity to meet corporate leaders interested in volunteering and learning from their experience. Thoroughly enjoyed the process and found it to be highly beneficial.*

The Soderquist Center feels that the Partnership for Success program in Northwest Arkansas was, overall, an incredible success.

We would like to recognize and thank the Care Foundation, Inc. and the Walmart Foundation for their support through allocating funding and resources to deliver this program in 2008-2009.

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Other non-funding contributors included:

Doubletree Guest Suites | [doubletree1.hilton.com](http://doubletree1.hilton.com)

Catering Concepts | [www.cateringconceptsna.com](http://www.cateringconceptsna.com)

Affordable Events | [www.affordableevents.biz](http://www.affordableevents.biz)

Eventures | [www.eventurespartyrentals.com](http://www.eventurespartyrentals.com)

John Brown University | [www.jbu.edu](http://www.jbu.edu)

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