INVESTING IN COMMUNITY CHANGE: A FUNDER’S EXPERIENCE

The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust
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Virginia G. Piper

“Managing the stewardship of charitable giving is a moment-to-moment dignified responsibility of a truly high calling.”
Program Areas

• Healthcare and Medical Research
• Children
• Older Adults
• Arts and Culture
• Education
• Religious Organizations
After the Gold Watch?

★ In Maricopa County 83% of older adults are healthy and have no limitation on activity

★ There are few programs to assist older adults to transition to this third stage of their lives

★ Most public programs target frail older adults
Successful Aging

1. Prevention of disease and disability

2. Attainment of peak physical and psychological functioning

3. Participation in rewarding, productive activities

Successful Aging, Rowe and Kahn
Rewarding/Productive Activities

- **Next Chapter Projects** – four grants to provide meaningful options for older adults – 2 libraries, 2 community colleges

- **Experience Corps** – two projects that train older adults to assist at-risk readers - 1 library

- **Career Transition Center** – Gateway Community College to retrain in careers in education, healthcare or social work

- **National Council on Aging** – work with 10 nonprofits to utilize older adults to achieve agency mission – 1 library
Next Chapter/ Life Options

- Life planning
- Lifelong learning
- Meaningful volunteer and paid opportunities
- Links to services
- Places and spaces to gather
- Leadership Development
- Employment and Careers
- Computer Information
- Health and Fitness
- Caregiving
- Financial Planning
- Relationships
- Spirituality
Value of Boomers to Nonprofits

- Experienced
- Desire to help community – help fulfill agency mission
- Flexible hours
- Provide more management capacity
- Potential mentors to staff
- Volunteers often turn into donors

BUT - -

- Nonprofits and the public sector do not know how to use these older adults
NCOA Nonprofit Project

• Mentor new nurses for chronically ill, medically fragile infants and children
• Establish school sites for Big Brothers & Big Sisters
• Develop diversity programs for three arts institutions
• Develop science curriculum and projects for children and adults at Science Center
• Develop balanced menu options for adults with developmental disabilities
Piper Trust Lessons Learned

- Older adults are seeking active, purposeful, engaged life of learning, service and community connections – paid and unpaid, full or part time
- Business and nonprofit organizations are unprepared - require time, commitment and a different way of doing business
- Marketing/branding and language are critical
- Institutional change is complex and takes longer than expected – planning grants and technical assistance are key
National Lessons Learned

- Importance of collaboration
- Advisory committees helpful
- Older adults are engaged though not necessarily in visible ways – especially in minority community
- Technical assistance to nonprofits
- Recruitment incentives
- Asset-based approach
- Multi-generational approaches
- Time-intensive and financial resources
- Great local and national interest in this issue
And More Lessons…
Atlantic Philanthropies’ Community Foundation Effort

- Older adults are not all the same – social status, economic status, culture, gender, religion, education, ethnicity
- Labels are problematic – no agreed-upon name for the group
- There are barriers to civic engagement – health, transportation, care-giving, income
- Institutions are not prepared – public, private, nonprofit
Role of a Foundation

- Search for models
- Take risk
- Act as the local catalyst
- Support planning
- Support implementation phase
- Provide on-going technical assistance
- Assist with evaluation
- Collaborate to share best practices
California’s Aging Opportunity
Office of the Governor

Identifies action steps:

• Launch a communications campaign and matching program
• Prepare the capacity and infrastructure of public and nonprofit sectors
• Establish “life options centers”
• Provide incentives for intensive service
• Reform state policy
Libraries Can...

- Act as a collaborative partner
- Act as a community catalyst and convener
- Focus on lifelong learning
- Recognize new type of older adults
- Provide meaningful volunteer opportunities to provide better library services
- Connect older adults with other community programs
Are you prepared??

- Leadership committed to creating meaningful positions that provide personal fulfillment?
- Open to change?
- Recruitment strategies – appropriate messages?
- Role of volunteer coordinator integral?
- Staff resistance?
- Flexible opportunities – project related, part-time, seasonal, virtual
- Benefits? – health insurance, stipends, expenses, training, educational credit, honorarium
- Value recognition – clear job descriptions, ability to shape projects, business cards?
Call to Action

• Recognize time, talent expertise of older adults
• Identify ways older adults can help to better achieve your mission
• Think about flexible, project-related tasks
• Market and recruit to attract these individuals
• Consider a small stipend or recognition of their efforts
• Link to local and national efforts – benefit from experience
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