

# Vera House Incorporated

## Board Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, April 16, 2024, 5:30- 7:30

## Community Foundation

Virtual option available, link provided via email.

1. Welcome
  - a. Thank you to Dawn for stepping in and serving as the acting chair following Ebony's departure.
2. Board President Election\*
  - a. Nominees:
    - i. Dawn Penson
    - ii. Open floor for additional nominees.
  - b. Process:
    - i. Each nominee will be provided with a maximum of 3 minutes to speak to the board.
    - ii. Board members will ask each nominee the same questions and each nominee will have an opportunity to provide an answer to each question.
    - iii. The secretary will call a vote.
3. Housekeeping
  - a. Review/approve of March Minutes\*
  - b. Annual Documents\*
  - c. Consultant: Board Development\*
  - d. Board Application amendments\*
  - e. Personnel Committee
    - i. Establishment via By-law amendments\*
    - ii. Note: 2/3 vote, and quorum required for by-law amendments with a 10 day- written notice provided.
    - iii. Notice provided at 3/19/24 mtg., and 4/9/24 email.
4. Budget/Finances Discussion/Updates
  - a. 2022 Audit update
  - b. 2024 Budget update
  - c. Capital CFO Discussion
5. Executive Updates
  - a. Executive Team report
  - b. Template, review and discuss\*
  - c. Agency support: Feedback re: Board roles/support opportunities

6. Contingency Strategic Planning discussion
  - a. Identify action items, next steps.
7. Chief Executive Officer support/expectations
  - a. Discussion: method, process, timeline
  - b. No review of CEO, initial process development discussion only.
  - c. Identify action items, next steps.
8. Board Fundraising Development
  - a. White Ribbon Campaign
    - i. Status, general updates
    - ii. Board support
9. Committees Updates (Consent agenda, discussed only if required.)
  - i. Audit and Finance Committee  
Chair: Susan Petrosillo
  - ii. Board Development Committee  
Chair: Dawn Penson
  - iii. Program Committee  
Chair: Mitayah Donerlson
  - iv. Property Committee  
Chair: Kyle Metzler
  - v. Personnel Committee  
Chair: Kamesha Graves
10. Identify/assign action items

Please review the following attachments prior to our meeting:

- a. Board President candidate information
- b. March minutes
- c. Annual documents – Legal Documents Review
- d. Executive Team report template
- e. Contingency Strategic Planning
- f. Committee update reports
- g. Personnel Committee information
- h. Board Development consultant proposal

**Thank you!**

\*Denotes Board action item.

# Vera House Incorporated

Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Community Foundation

Virtual option available, link provided via email.

## **Attendance:**

**Present:** Ebony Pengel (President), Dawn Penson (1<sup>st</sup> Vice President), Susan Petrosillo (Board Treasurer), Stefanie Savory (Secretary), Sapna Kollali, Mitayah Donerlson, Kamesha Graves, Emilija Postolovska, Sandra Russell (Virtual), Daquetta Jones (CEO, Virtual), Dana Zanders (CFO, Virtual), and Felicity Hall (Executive Admin. Asst., Virtual).

**Excused:** Kyle Metzler (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President), Monica Coles, Nelisha Barron

**Guest:** Katie Centolella (Agency Attorney)

## **Motion to start meeting, 5:44: Mitayah, Second Sapna**

### 1. February Minutes:

Motion to approve: Susan motioned; Dawn seconded, no objections

Abstain: Stefanie due to not being present at the February meeting.

- ### 2. Katie Centolla presented to the board information pertaining to the legal and fiduciary responsibilities of being on a Board (generally). Discussion also included Board responsibilities pertaining to oversight. Her presentation cautioned the Board of overstepping roles into operation while stating the obligation to have confidence in the agency budget and asking a lot of questions pertaining to the same given the Board's obligation to ensure financial stability for the agency. The Board must document due diligence. This can be documented through the Board agenda and minutes identifying discussions and recording outcomes.

Board receives permission from CEO to provide support in operations and does not have the authority to step into operations without the CEO support. CEO is able to delegate tasks to Board members and/or committees of the Board for support in operations.

Ms. Savory asked Ms. Jones directly what the Board can do to support her team seeking permission to support the team. Ms. Jones indicated that the Board can seek funding and did not address the Board offer/request to provide operational support to the agency.

An example of legal compliance is asking the agency if 990 will be filed timely.

CEO attends meetings, unless it is related to the performance of the CEO. CEO does not participate in potential Board member interviews.

A Board evaluation of the CEO is recommended.

An annual Board Self-Evaluation is recommended. The CEO does not evaluate the Board collectively or individually.

Ms. Jones expressed a lack of on-boarding support when hired. Expectations should be clearly communicated to CEO.

3. Updated Annual Documents: Must be approved and then signed/submitted to Secretary. Time did not allow for this review; vote will occur in April.
4. Updated Board Application: Board Development Committee has revised the application and is seeking approval. Time did not allow for this review; vote will occur in April.

**Motion to end meeting, Susan motioned, Mitayah seconded, unanimous**

5. **Documents provided:**
  - a. February Minutes
  - b. March Agenda
  - c. Conflict of Interest Policy
  - d. Annual conflict of Interest Disclosure Form
  - e. Board Self-Evaluation
  - f. Confidentiality Policy
  - g. Record Retention Policy
  - h. Whistleblower Policy
  - i. Board Email Policy
  - j. Staff Contact Policy
  - k. Board Application
  - l. Board Development Legal Responsibilities
  - m. Executive Team report template
  - n. Contingency Strategic Plan

**Additional Items from Agenda not discussed, and moved to April:**

1. Budget/Finances Discussion/Updates
  - a. 2022 Audit update
  - b. 2024 Budget update
  - c. General discussion, update
2. Executive Updates, provided by Daquetta and Dana
  - a. Executive Team report

- b. 30<sup>th</sup> Annual White Ribbon Campaign – April 1<sup>st</sup>
    - i. Meetings in March, if you want to join reach out to Carrie.
  - c. Agency support: Feedback re: Board roles/support opportunities
  - d. Template, review and discuss
3. Contingency Strategic Planning discussion
4. Board Fundraising Development
- a. Harvey's Garden update, \$183 raised.
  - b. Carrie V. lead apparel fundraising opportunities.
  - c. Fundraising ideas/discussion
    - i. Additional ideas
    - ii. Restaurant days, percentage of sales that day (usually w/ flyer)
    - iii. Social media campaigns- help to identify specific needs.
    - iv. Discuss: Amazon Wish List focused – request/push.
5. Committees Updates/Discussion
- i. Audit and Finance Committee  
Chair: Susan Petrosillo
    - 1. No further action by Agency on the outstanding audit items required for Grossman St. Amour.
    - 2. Auditors returning to complete the 2022 Audit has not been scheduled, due to open items above.
    - 3. No financial reports shared with Committee.
    - 4. We agreed to meet with Capital CFO to understand their offerings and pricing. This is at Daquetta's request. They would assist Agency with getting caught up.
    - 5. Capital CFO must offer us a deliverable based SOW, which includes wrapping up the 2022 Audit.
    - 6. Daquetta will schedule the A&F Committee with Capital CFO week of March 25<sup>th</sup>.
  - ii. Board Development Committee  
Chair: Dawn Penson
    - 1. Bi-monthly meetings
    - 2. Finalized Board application
      - a. Requires board approval
    - 3. 2024 Board matrix
    - 4. Incoming prospects and scheduled interviews
    - 5. Board and Agency consultants

**Thank you!**



**Board Development Committee Minutes  
April 2, 2024**

Zoom: 1:30-3:30pm

Attended: Dawn Penson, Chair; Sapna Kollali; Daquetta Jones, CEO

Excused: Nelisha Barron

Meeting called to order at 1:35pm by Dawn Penson.

Overarching Objectives: Expanding the development of the board with additional trainings and new board members.

Roles: Committee members will seek consultants to expand board knowledge, board dynamics, and conflict resolutions. The committee will also interview board prospects with Chair taking the lead with approved question template.

Notetaker: Dawn Penson

- a. Scheduler: Daquetta Jones
- b. Reporter: Dawn Penson

1. Long-term goals:
  - a. Seek outside consultants to train board on necessary topics.
  - b. Seek qualified board candidates to enhance board diversity and skillsets.
2. Short term goals (within 2 months):
  - a.

Lifecycles Consultant Patty Weisse will explain to the Board of Directors and Board of Trustees what an organization looks like within the process of stabilizing (see attached documents).

- b. Board of Directors to view Board Matrix and click all that apply to themselves in SharePoint (see attached). Once completed by all, compile and assess data metrics, and build on weaknesses.
  - c. Roll out new Vera House Board Application.
  - d. Interview board prospects as incoming resumes come into the committee.
3. Action Items:
    - a. Lifecycles Consultant Patty Weisse—2 2hr training with Board of Directors and Board of Trustees; assist Daquetta with real-time dashboard (see 2 attached documents for review). Cost analysis: \$1200/ seeking payment options with local grants.

- b. Special Presidential Vote—President Ebony Pengel resigned effective March 28, 2024 and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Dawn Penson is the current Acting President until a new President is elected on April 16, 2024. BDC encouraged all board members to apply for the vacant seat by April 7, 2024 so that BDC and Secretary can prepare necessary slate and resumes. The floor is also open for Directors to nominate themselves and/or Directors at the board meeting. Each nominee will have 3-5 minutes to address the board and the board will have the opportunity to ask questions. Nominees are: Dawn Penson and Mitayah Donerlson (see attached resumes).
  - c. Approved all updated policies that are now in compliance with New York State Nonprofit regulations.
  - d. Approve Vera House Board Application.
4. Discussion:
- a. Need to discuss the three-board prospect—Captain Matthew Malinowski, Dr. Amanda Hopkins, and Aqila Hamilton-Collins –interviewed on April 2, 2024. This will be finalized over the next several weeks. Once completed, their slate will be sent alongside other interviewed candidates by June 2024.
  - b. Dawn Penson is attending 2-day Wellness Series with Consultant Lisa Newcomb on board and organizational burnout and trauma. Will bring resources back to the committee to discuss next options. Ms. Penson and Ms. Jones is schedule to participate in a 5-week cultural awareness training series later this month. Details will follow once completed.
5. Items requiring Board Approval/discussion:
- a. See above

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dawn Penson  
Board Development Chair  
Vera House Board of Directors  
April 16, 2024

Vera House, Inc. prevents, responds to and partners to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.



**Finance Committee Minutes**  
**April 12, 2024**

**Attended:** Ms. Zanders (CFO), Ms. Petrosillo (Board Treasurer), Ms. Coles (Member), Ms. Penson (Member)

**Excused:** Ms. Jones (CEO),

**Overarching Objectives:**

- Review status/progress of 2022 Audit
- Review Agency's Monthly Financial Reports (Cash Flow, Balance Sheet, Income Statement)
- Review Annual Budget

Roles: [identify who will take which responsibility]

- a. Notetaker: Ms. Petrosillo
- b. Scheduler: Felicity Hall
- c. Reporter: Ms. Petrosillo

1. Long term goals (>6 mos):

- a. Increase Agency cash flow via #1 Billings, #2 Fundraising and #3 Grants

2. Short term goals (within 2 months):

- a. Complete 2022 Audit
- b. Deliver 2024 Budget
- c. Catch-up on Billings

3. Action Items:

- a. Ms. Zanders
  - i. Carried Forward. Send timing of when the 2024 Budget will be ready.

4. Discussion:

- a. Agency will engage Capital CFO, an outsourced accounting & finance agency, to augment Agency resources. Agency will purchase 200 banked hours for \$14,000.
- b. Audit Committee
  - i. No further action by Agency on the outstanding audit items required for Grossman St. Amour.
  - ii. Auditors' return to complete the 2022 Audit has not been scheduled.
- c. Finance Committee – Key Reports
  - i. Balance Sheet – Not submitted to Committee.
  - ii. Income Statement – Not submitted to Committee.
  - iii. Trial Balance – Not submitted to Committee.

iv. Cash Flow (Jan – May 2024) – Submitted and reviewed.

d. Finance Committee – Supplemental Reports

i. Accounts Receivable Register – Submitted and reviewed.

ii. Cash Receipts Register – Submitted and reviewed.

e. Other Financial Discussion

i. None.

5. Items requiring Board Approval/discussion:

a. Nothing for the upcoming Board meeting 4/16/24

Vera House, Inc. prevents, responds to and partners to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.



It is the mission of Vera House, Inc. to prevent, respond to and partner to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

### Vera House Board of Director Nomination Form

The Board Development Committee recommends the following candidate for an Officer Position:

1. Candidate Information
  - A. Name: Dawn Penson
  - B. Position: President
  - C. Contact Information: 832-516-1381; [dpenson@verahouse.org](mailto:dpenson@verahouse.org)
2. Current Vera House Board Position(s)/Title(s):
  - A. First Vice-President
  - B. Board Development Chair
3. Vera House Committee(s):
  - A. Executive Committee
  - B. Board Development Committee
  - C. Finance and Audit Committee
  - D. Property Committee
  - E. Personnel Committee
  - F. Special Events Committee
  - G. CEO Search Committee
  - H. By-Laws Committee
4. Experience/Skills/Education/Diversity:
  - A. See attached resume
5. This candidate was nominated by the following person(s):
  - A. Dawn Penson
  - B. Sandra Russell
6. Notes:
  - A. Sandra Russell's nomination email attached; pg.2
  - B. Resume attached; pg.3

### Nomination by Sandra Russell

I would like to nominate Dawn Penson as Board President. Dawn has years of experience on this Board and other. She is very knowledgeable about Vera House and what it takes to make a board successful. Her desire to see Vera House succeed and to help the people we serve is exactly what this Board needs. She is articulate and presents herself with strength and confidence. All this and more make her an excellent candidate for Board President.

## **Dawn Penson Resume:**

### **Dawn Penson**

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Syracuse, NY | (832) 516-1381 | [dpenson1013@gmail.com](mailto:dpenson1013@gmail.com)

**NON-PROFIT GOVERNANCE | HUMAN RESOURCES | EVENT PLANNING | COMMUNITY RELATIONS | ADA, SECTION 504 | LEADERSHIP | BOARD DEVELOPMENT | PROJECT MANAGEMENT | ADMINISTRATION | EXECUTIVE PERFORMANCE REVIEW | LEGISLATIVE | INCLUSIVE POLICIES**

Seasoned leader with critical thinking skills and background driving success for boards of various levels. Exceptional at leadership and board development, relationship-building, agenda management and decision making.

### **SKILL HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Microsoft Office
- JAWS
- Data entry 60 WPM
- Critical Thinking
- Project Management/ Coordinator
- Active Listening
- Decision Making
- Problem-Solving
- Effective Communication

### **AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS:**

- Nourishing Tomorrow's Leaders Ambassador Award 2023
- Father Zewe "Social Justice" Scholarship Award \$5000
- National Federation of the Blind of New York State 2022 \$3500
- National Federation of the Blind of New York State 2019 \$2000
- Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society "New York All-State Cocoa Cola Award 2019
- SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence 2019
- Onondaga Community College Pinnacle Award 2019

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

**ARISE, Syracuse, NY – 2017**

HR Assistant

**Gifford Foundation, Syracuse, NY – 2015**

Front Desk Receptionist

**Leasing Specialist, Houston, NY 2008-2012**

West Point Apartments

**BOARD / CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:**

- **National Federation of the Blind of New York State Board of Directors, 2015—present**
  - **Committees:**
    - Legislative Committee
    - Employment Committee
    - Membership Committee
    - Scholarship Committee
  
- **National Federation of the Blind, Syracuse Chapter Board of Directors, 2014—Present**
  - **Officer Roles:**
    - Vice-President
    - Secretary
  
- **New York Association of Blind Students Board of Directors, 2018—2023**
  - **Officer Roles:**
    - President
    - Vice-President
  - **Committees:**
    - Executive Committee
  
- **ARISE Board of Directors, 2018 – Present**
  - **Committees:**
    - Executive Committee
    - Governance Committee Chair
    - CEO 360 Committee Chair
    - By-Laws Committee
    - Accessibility committee
    - Independent Living Council
  
- **Vera House, Inc., 2021—Present**
  - **Officer Roles:**
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Vice president
    - Acting Board President
  - **Committees:**
    - Executive Committee
    - Board Development Chair
    - CEO Search Committee
    - Property Committee
    - Audit and Finance Committee
    - Personnel Committee
    - Special Events Committee
    - By-Laws Committee

- **Onondaga Community College Board of Trustees, 2018-2019**
  
- **CENTRO, 2014—Present**
  - **Committees:**
    - Paratransit Committee
  
- **Araura of CNY, 2014—Present**
  - **Committees:**
    - Program Accessibility Committee

**MEMBERSHIP/AFFILIATIONS:**

- **Tau Sigma National Honor Society, Le Moyne College**
  - President Summer 2021 – Fall 2023
  - Member—Present
    - Campus Initiatives:
      - Collaborated with Information Technology, Disability Support Services and professors implementing disability initiatives campuswide, so all persons have full participation and equal access to academic success.
      - Helped establish “Ally” to Canvas, which increased the accessibility rate to 90%, and all course content was streamlined so everyone has equal access.
      - STRIVE Pre-College Program—Summer Teacher Mentored and enhanced skillsets needed for persons blind and visually impaired the opportunity to thrive personally, academically, socially, and culturally in a college setting.
  
- **Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honors Society, Le Moyne College**
  - Member May 2022-Present
  
- **Phi Beta Kappa, Onondaga Community College**
  - Member 2018-Present
  
- **Student Government Association, Onondaga Community College**
  - Member 2018-2020
    - **Student Government Association**
    - **Student Representative to Board of Trustees**
    - **Toast Masters Club**
    - **Electronics Information and Technology Accessibility Committee** assisted with planning and implementing campus policy that all electronic information, technology, website, curriculum, and classroom materials were fully accessible and compliant with ADA and Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act
    - **What If Safety Seminar** -- created, planned, and facilitated event with Campus Safety to connect 900 students with disabilities to larger campus concerns i.e., campus violence, sexual assaults, emergency egress, fire, sheltering in place, and active shooter situations. Originally intended just for the 900 disabled students on campus turned into a 2-day open event for all students and staff. Open dialogue fostered a collaborative effort between faculty, Campus Safety, and students to listen, learn, and work collectively moving forward.

**EDUCATION:**

**Le Moyne College** , *B.S. Sociology, Minor in Race in American Society, 2023*

**Onondaga Community College**, *A.A.S. Human Services, 2020*

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:**

- Nourishing Tomorrow's Leaders Annual Class Speaker
- Nourishing Tomorrow's Leaders 2016
- Careers in Sociology Panelist Webinar 2019
- Planting a Tree of Diversity Leadership Seminar 2020
- Gifford Foundation/Community Foundation Board Development Leadership Series 2022
- RAINN Certified 2022
- Gifford Foundation/Community Foundation Board Development Leadership Series 2023
- New York State Sexual Harassment Training 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
- Gifford Foundation/Lisa Newcomb Wellness Series Workshop 2024
- Together We can Cultural Awareness Series Workshop 2024



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### Vera House Board of Director Nomination Form

The Board Development Committee recommends the following candidate for an Officer Position:

1. Candidate Information
  - A. Name: Mitayah Donerlson
  - B. Position: President
  - C. Contact Information: 315-706-8178; [mdonerlson@verahouse.org](mailto:mdonerlson@verahouse.org)
2. Current Vera House Board Position(s)/Title(s):
  - A. Program Committee Chair
3. Vera House Committee(s):
  - A. Program Committee
  - B. By-Laws Committee
4. Experience/Skills/Education/Diversity:
  - A. See attached resume
5. This candidate was nominated by the following person(s):
  - A. Mitayah Donerlson
6. Notes:
  - A. Mitayah Donerlson email nomination attached; pg.2
  - B. Resume attached; pg.3

### Nomination by Mitayah Donerlson

## Mitayah Donerlson Resume:

Mitayah Donerlson - Resume.pdf  
Mitayah M. Donerlson  
7959 Aeropagitica Ave  
Bridgeport, NY 13030  
Cell: 315-706-8178  
Email: mdonerlson@hotmail.com

### Professional Profile

**I am a highly motivated professional with solid management and supervisory experience. I have developed an comprehensive skill set in communication and**

**customer service; while improving the quality of life of individuals with persisting mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse.**

### Summary of Qualifications

list of 7 items

- **Proficient in Compliance and Quality Improvement Audits**
- **Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Electronic Records & Incident Database Systems including NIRMS and IRMA**
- **Fluent in the regulations and operations of Residential Programs for Adults (OMH and NYS OPWDD)**
- **Produce concrete communication and organization skills**
- **Show a high level of analytical skills/cognitive skills in making responsible decisions**
- **Skilled in formalities of Billable Medicaid Services and Managed Care Documentation**
- **Skilled in Community Resources such as Case Management, Governmental Services, Social Security Benefits and Behavioral Health Care Services**

list end

## **Professional Experience**

### **Exceptional Family Resources**

#### **Employment Billing Specialist December 2018- January 2020**

**list of 5 items**

- **Resolving billing issues or disputes that arise with staff, such as incorrect information or billing errors.**
- **Maintaining accurate records of all billing documentation, including DSR's, payments, and client account information.**
- **Collaborating with other departments, work closely with other departments to ensure that billing procedures are efficient and effective.**
- **Updating billing procedures, keep up-to-date with changes in billing procedures, regulations, and laws, and make necessary updates to ensure compliance.**
- **Skill development training with onboarding staff and revision of billing requirements**

**list end**

#### **Access CNY, Syracuse, NY November 2017-December2018**

### **Quality Enhancement Specialist**

**list of 6 items**

- **Conduct incident investigation as assigned such as HIPAA Breach, compliance issues, Part 624-625 and 150's incidents types for both OPWDD and OMH for**

**certified and non- certified programs**

- **Conduct regularly scheduled program audits, to ensure regulatory compliance and adherence to quality standards.**
- **Make recommendations for any program specific systemic improvements.**
- **Completed Utilization Reviews for our OMH programs and conduct quarterly meeting**
- **Implement system to monitor participants satisfaction in the agency programs**
- **Assist with writing Plan of Corrective Action in the event of an audit Statement of Deficiencies**

**list end**

**CNYS Inc. Syracuse, NY April 2010-November 2017**

**Program Supervisor**

**list of 5 items**

- **Regulated a 24-bed, adult long-term certified residential facility.**
- **Oversees services provided to residents challenged with mental health, development disabilities and chemical addictions.**
- **Reports to and works cooperatively with the agency department to meet deadlines of NYS and Federal Regulatory Agencies in terms of functional program, re-certification, budgeting/spending, fire safety and compliance/reporting.**
- **Conduct enrollment intakes for new housing admissions and assist with housing upon discharge.**
- **Oversees the compliance of the medication rooms, inventory, staff training and development.**

**list end**

**list of 11 items**

- **Oversees and document files in an accurate, concise and professional manner to meet NYS and Federal Licensing requirements which includes reporting incident reports to the Office of Mental Health.**
- **Manage incident reporting and follow up to the agency, JC or OMH in a timely fashion.**
- **Preserve fiscal management, processing payroll, recruitment of new hires and uphold scheduling duties to fulfill program operations.**
- **Train new recruitments on managing Electronic Health Records (EHR) systems.**
- **Execute the satisfactions of the residents through utilization reviews, audits and steady compliance.**
- **Implement services with treatment provider, case management and other community providers to develop individualize treatments plans in conjunction with various goals and task to promote the individuals growth and change.**
- **Conduct monthly development training for both staff and residents.**

- **Attends regular trainings at HPC to further expand my community resources and network support.**
- **Complete annual performance reviews in corresponds to weekly supervision.**
- **Make timely decisions in both crisis/non-crisis situations by using good judgment and welcomes input from Director, appropriate staff, providers and significant others.**
- **Responsible for on-call duties.**

**list end**

#### **Additional Work Experience**

**Kiddie Daycare, Syracuse, NY**

**Administration Assistance -June 2003 – May 2011**

**Access CNY, Syracuse NY**

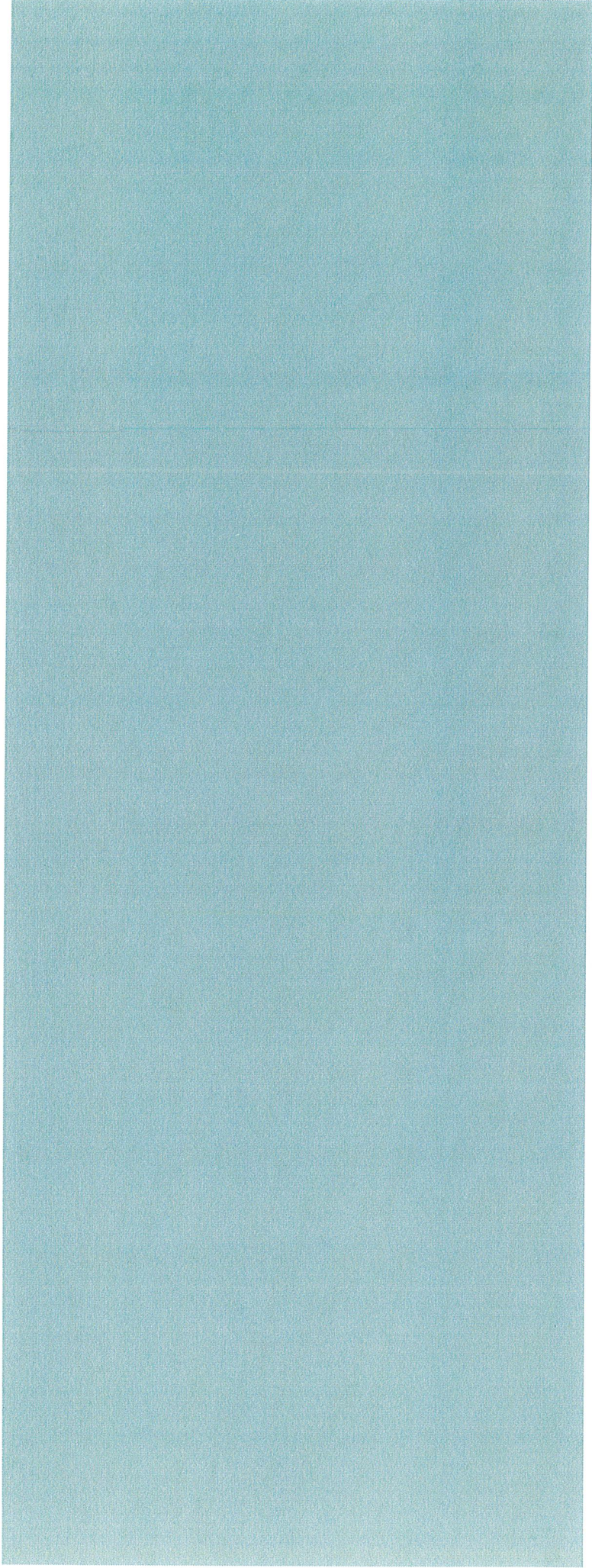
**Resident Counselor II -May 2010– November 2017**

#### **Special Trainings/Skills**

**list of 5 items**

- **Certified Trauma Informed**
- **Coaching 4 change**
- **Certified in CPR and First Aid**
- **Mental Health First Aid**
- **Approved Medication Administration Personnel (AMAP)**

**list end**



**EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP UPDATE**  
**APRIL 2024**



# WHAT'S NEW WITH CLINICAL TEAM 2024

Metric	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of separate individuals served	163	176										
# sessions completed	499	387	419									
% safety planning	100%	100%	100%									
# of no shows	63	40	46									

Clinical leaders are currently working to hire two full time therapists.

During March there were no clinical referrals from DCFS and one clinical referral from MMR CAC

# WHAT'S NEW WITH ADVOCACY 2024

Metric	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# Clients served	671	663	553									
# days between crisis call and assigned advocate	0	0	0									
# of referrals into Advocacy	99	76	85									

Consolidated training with the MMR Advocacy team



# WHAT'S NEW WITH PREVENTION EDUCATION 2024

Metric	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOVEM	DECEMBER
# of People Reached through Prevention Education Programs	432	706	529									
# of Direct Service hours	16	13	6									
# of Vacant Positions	4	4	4									

## March Highlights:

- Completed 12 Men Model facilitator training with our partners, PEACE INC. This is a significant milestone in the development of our program as mobilization strategy
- Met with additional community partners to facilitate our campus programming with OCC office hours, Le Moynes; meeting set up with Syracuse University to reengage Memorandum of Understanding.
- Youth Education Program: Jordan-Elbridge Schools; SCSD: ELMS;
- Direct service: Facilitating Heal and Reclaim
- Hired new Prevention Educator Jordan Rodriguez; Interviews held for three other positions. Offers have been extended.
- Community engagements: Tabling at Salt City Market
- RFA-request for application released by NYSDOH for community sexual prevention strategy due **May 24 5PM ET.**

# SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER — SANE 2024

Metric	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
# of Call Outs	27	24	16									
# of Call Outs w /o Exam	8	7	2									

- 3 fully trained (per diem) SANE's/1 SANE Program Director (full time) on call/responding 24/7 to hospitals
- (1) SANE trainee to respond to ADULT call outs (then will begin PEDS training)
- (1) SANE trainee (new hire- will begin responding to adult call outs as SANE trainee in April, approx.)
- Interviewing for vacant per diem SANE positions

## MARCH 2024 HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE ELDER ABUSE AND JUSTICE (EAJ) DEPARTMENT

### **General LEAJ Activity – Highlights:**

- A. Staffing – Following budget meetings on hiring, new searches are open, and interviews expected
- B. Onboarding and Staff Training – part two of Advocacy Dept training completed; preparing Onboarding for new hires
- C. Representation – represented VH at Senior Companion Council (IFW), Aging Services Network, DOJ meetings, and AATI planning board
- D. Grant Management – applied for a \$8K NYSOFA Grant for Outreach; preparing proposals for federal solicitations

### **ALTC-AGING Grant – Highlights:**

- A. Elder Abuse Conference – theme and SAVE THE DATE completed, schedule and keynote speakers nearly secure, starting marketing
- B. Elder Justice Coalition – monthly meetings convened and attended EAC Planning and Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression subcommittees
- C. Evergreen Network – expanded distribution to over 400 partners, preparing newsletter and EAC mailings
- D. Community Outreach – planning to expand community partnerships with new Outreach hire, prepping with CJJ

### **OVC Expanded Community Outreach Response to Elder Abuse (ECORE) GRANT – Highlights:**

- A. Christopher Communities – finalizing launch and hiring
- B. Center for Justice Innovations – finalizing partnership expansion and launch
- C. Case Management – victim services continue, and plans being made for transition to new programming

### **OWW Abuse in Later Life (ALL) GRANT – Highlights:**

- A. Syracuse Housing Authority – contract complete, training ready for launch with new staff
- B. Victim Services – the advocacy department has been addressing older client needs at this time
- C. Survivor Support Services – support group carried on with 10 continuing clients and preparing new educational curriculum
- D. Training and Cross-Training – continued reconnecting with NCALL the OWW TTA to launch activities with new partners

### **LIFESPAN Enhanced Multidisciplinary Team (EMDT) Coordination for Central New York – Highlights:**

- A. Currently serving seven counties of EMDT committees
- B. Caseload of over 30 cases currently during most months
- C. Typically, 2-3 new cases in the areas of domestic violence and financial

# ALTERNATIVE STEPS

## OUTCOMES FOR March 2024

- Continued participants – 66
- New participants – 16
- Total participants (as of January '24) - 84
- Total participants that completed 15 weeks - 15

• PREA BOD for the month of March 2024

• Total number of participants – 17.

# WHAT'S NEW WITH HUMAN RESOURCES 2024?

## STAFFING UPDATE

- **Offers/New Hires/Onboarding:**
  - Advocate **started** 3/18/24
  - Prevention Educator **started** 3/25/24
  - HUD Housing Coordinator **waiting on background check**
  - Campus Prevention Educator **starting** 4/15/24
  - Campus Prevention Educator **starting** 4/22/24
  - Assoc Director of Prevention Ed **reposting**
- **Terms/Internal Moves/Changes:**
  - PREA Project Coordinator **transferring** to Community Prevention Project Coordinator/Prevention Education effective 4/15/24

## INITIATIVES COMPLETED

- Finalized electronic data feeds for American Funds in effort to automate 403b funding upload process
- Directors completed Q1 Agency Orientation Training for new hires
- Completed NARCAN training w/ 30 attendees
- Reviewing/negotiating new Learning Management System (LMS) as extension of Human Resources Information System (HRIS)
- Drafting revised process/policies

# HUMAN RESOURCES PROJECT GOALS

- **Agency Orientation / Regulatory Compliance Training Program for 2024**
  - Orientation general session
  - New hire Workplace Sexual Harassment Prevention training for all Vera House
  - Self-paced, independent learning modules
  - Certification requirements for specialized areas
- **General Ledger Interface (GLI)**
  - Implementation in progress to supply electronic payroll data feeds to BlackBaud to strengthen efficiency and accuracy
- **Time off policy proposal for July 2024**
  - Evaluate PTO structure, rollover, thresholds, & propose PTO bank
  - Utilize HR systems to automate accruals
- **Staff performance review process for 2024**

# WHAT'S NEW IN DEVELOPMENT 2024

## **VH Annual Campaigns**

WRC – April 2024, underway.

Kick off – April 1, 2024 at CNY Comm Foundation. Sold out and successful, receiving approximately \$3500 in support that day between ticket sales and on-site donations.

EAC – June 21, 2024 - planning in progress

Gala/DV Campaign – Oct 19, 2024

## **Community Calendar April:**

Tabling at Destiny USA every Friday in April.

Take back the night at SU – April 10th

## **Currently Confirmed:**

2024 Pride Parade, June 22

August 14th – Fundraiser Anniversary Party @ Enfoque

## **Development Needs**

Development/Marketing/Events Coordinator

Training in Raisers Edge/Blackbaud/Greater Giving as these are the primary fundraising platforms used to support all events and all trained staff are no longer with the Org.

March 14, 2024

## Contingency Strategic Planning

General discussion points and concurrent planning in response to the agency's needs and sustainability.

Action Items: Establish a five-person task-oriented committee of three (3) board members and two (2) executive leaders for bi-weekly meetings (virtual) to ensure continued progress in this process.

Objective: Establish a formal, approved contingency plan.

1. Agency as Consultant, Supportive Services Agreement
  - a. VH seeks relationship with community agency (most likely, Large) with the ability to provide identified administrative support as a consultant. Services would be invoiced and paid to the supporting agency at a negotiated and agreed upon rate.
  - b. Consultant would require access to documents, staff, and confidential information requiring a Business Associate Agreement.
  - c. Differ from individual consultants:
    - i. Demonstrates willingness to collaborate
    - ii. Establishing relationships that we may not otherwise intersect with
    - iii. Financially, typically cheaper and single stream of service
    - iv. In-kind opportunities
  - d. Action items:
    - i. Identify administrative roles
    - ii. Identify agencies with robust staff that meets capacity
2. Shared Responsibilities Agreement (Joint programming)
  - a. Enter relationship with an agency (most likely, small) that needs administrative oversight support and would benefit from shared staff and responsibilities.
  - b. VH would support another agency with administrative duties and that agency would do the same. (I.e., billing support received in exchange for social media/marketing support provided.)
  - c. Action items:
    - i. Identify roles/responsibilities that would fit
    - ii. Identify agencies that might fit/be interested
3. Organization Transition/Partnership
  - a. Merger, co-brand
    - i. Subject to a governing body, VH still supports services, programs, and continues to have VH logo/branding.
    - ii. Governing agency assumes financial responsibility
    - iii. Subject to governing agency Board, create advisory board.
    - iv. Mission alignment element
    - v. Action items:
      1. Identify agencies with similar missions (this has started)
      2. Identify agencies that might fit/be interested
  - b. Merger, brand independence
    - i. A governing body serves as a silent partner.
    - ii. Subject to a governing body, VH still supports services, programs, and continues to have VH logo/branding.
    - iii. Governing agency assumes financial responsibility

- iv. Subject to governing agency Board, create advisory board.
- v. Mission alignment element
- vi. Action items:
  - 1. Identify agencies with similar missions (this has started)
  - 2. Identify agencies that might fit/be interested
- c. Merger, brand transition
  - i. Subject to a governing body, VH still supports services, programs
  - ii. Governing agency assumes financial responsibility
  - iii. Subject to governing agency Board, create advisory board.
  - iv. Mission alignment element
  - v. Negotiations include staff retention
  - vi. Action items:
    - 1. Identify agencies with similar missions (this has started)
    - 2. Identify agencies that might fit/be interested
- 4. Dissolution- Last resort.
- 5. Overarching things to consider:
  - a. Financial obligations
  - b. Permissions/authorizations
  - c. Community support
  - d. Property ownership, transfer, sales, refinance options
  - e. Assets including vehicles, furniture, office supplies,
  - f. Funding opportunities for strategic planning
    - i. CNY Community Foundation
      - 1. Strategic Partnership Fund
        - a. [Strategic Partnership Fund - Central New York Community Foundation \(cnycf.org\)](http://www.strategicpartnershipfund.org)
        - b. Applicants are encouraged to discuss intent before seeking application.
      - 2. Grants from the Strategic Partnership Fund support willing organizations pursuing the following:
        - a. Exploration, Pre-Negotiation, Negotiation & Due Diligence
        - b. Administrative consolidation
        - c. Joint programming
        - d. Joint venture
        - e. Regionalization
        - f. Formation of subsidiary or parent-subsidiary
        - g. Reengineering or restructuring
        - h. Mergers and consolidations
        - i. Nonprofit dissolution

## Profile:

# Baltimore Woods Nature Center Dashboards Help Steer Nature Centers on Rough Roads

Patty Weisse  
Executive Director  
Baltimore Woods Nature Center  
Marcellus, NY

Philip Mazza  
President of the Board  
Baltimore Woods Nature Center  
Marcellus, NY

Good governance thrives on effective communication. Keeping an organization's board, staff, and volunteers focused on the important, strategic initiatives is essential in today's tough economy. How many times have directors complained about their boards micro-managing? I have been guilty of this myself. In hindsight, I realize that the way I communicate information to my board can invite micro-management. It also can encourage a high-functioning, strategic focus.

The relationship between the executive director and board president or chair is critical to quality communication and governance. At Baltimore Woods, we have been fortunate to have Phil Mazza as our board president for the past two years. Phil is the Chief Human Resources Officer for one of our region's large employers. He also is a member of their board of directors and general manager of one the company's several corporate units. He proposed we rework our board reports into an organizational scorecard report format

that, once it was put into place it elevated our entire organization performance.

Our scorecard is just one of many good "organizational dashboard" approaches to board reporting.

Your car's dashboard gives you a quick and reliable way to know whether you should speed up, slow down, or get something checked, repaired, or replenished at the next available opportunity. Just as you don't need to know



photo courtesy of Baltimore Woods Nature Center

*An organizational dashboard is a quick and reliable tool to use for steering your center on rough roads.*

every detail about your engine's performance and fluid levels; your board doesn't need to know every detail of what goes on at your nature center.

Governance is one of the primary roles of a board. Developing a dashboard that gives your board a quick and consistent way to understand your nature center's financial condition, cash flow, high-level key performance

indicators, and progress towards strategic plans should keep your board focused on their governance role. Having the numbers juxtaposed against past performance gives board members the baseline performance that builds confidence and perspective.

The dashboard for Baltimore Woods has four sections:

1. Financial and Performance Indicator section contains a collapsed profit and loss with comparisons to total budget, year to date budget, as well as previous year comparison. It also contains a snapshot of cash position as well as program attendance, volunteer data, and membership data.

2. Strategic Plan and Key Priorities section is where our main strategic goals are listed along with monthly progress updates on each goal. This is where our mission's impact in the community is articulated. Here, we first took our strategic plan and crafted simple-to-read strategic theme statements designed to capture our goals. Every month we now report our specific actions by theme.

3. Committee Reports section is where standing and ad-hoc committees provide brief summaries of their meetings and progress. In most cases, their actions relate back to our strategic themes.

4. Upcoming Events and Key

(continued on page 12)

## DASHBOARDS (cont. from page 11)

Action Items section contains a complete monthly listing looking ahead a year for key events and action targets. We include targets for our annual planning and budgeting process in this section. This is our calendar of "to-do's." But it does change based on what we believe needs to be reviewed strategically and when. It is fluid. The key is this: we now have a historical reference that is carried-forward into the next year.

From a board perspective the dashboard has given board meetings a laser-like focus. At each meeting, we methodically review each section, one-by-one, asking the difficult questions as to help explain changing data and information. We have become a data-driven organization focusing resources on critical metrics that are the organization's life-line. Because of this focus we have seen increased board engagement, small ad-hoc groups forming to tackle an issue, more ideas flowing as to how to make improvements. Also, there can be no hiding from problems.

The board also now views data in a trend-like manner. Recently, the board established data goals regarding critical summer programs, this a result of negative trends. Additionally, board discussions are ever-centered on our strategic plan because our strategic themes are in front of the board each month.


Finally, staff members are more engaged as they too receive the scorecard. The strategic themes

stay at the forefront as does all the critical data. No secrets, no surprises.

We want our organizations to function strategically and proactively. If something important is missing from the report it is likely to surface as a problem sooner or later. No one wants to find out about a problem when it is already at the crisis level.

The executive director, board president, and members of the executive committee need to work together to evaluate whether the

communicate high-level information to the board takes time and effort, but is worth it in more proactive, focused, and strategic governance and management decisions. Our boards are tremendous allies and supports for our mission efforts. If we want them working with us on the right things that move our nature centers forward, we need to give them the right information to do their job well.

Our dashboard is an effective tool that allows us to filter out the noise and listen to what is most important. 

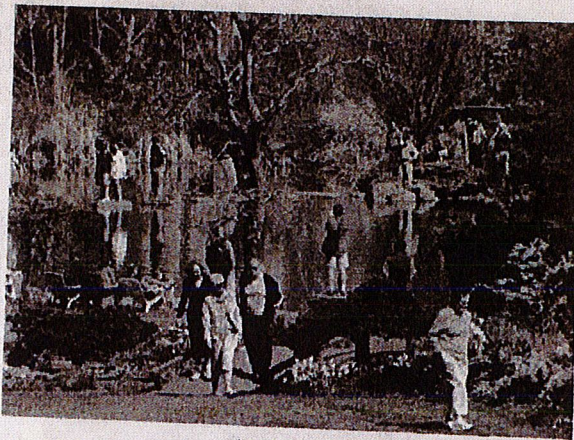



photo courtesy of Baltimore Woods Nature Center

Baltimore Woods Nature Center uses a dashboard that gives its board a consistent way to understand the center's programs and financial condition.

dashboard is communicating the right information in the most effective way. Good dashboards are dynamic. They can and should be periodically updated so that the organization's performance is accurately communicated at a high level. The executive director's insights into the mission, staff, and potential pitfalls insure the dashboard is measuring what's important and relevant to optimizing mission delivery.

We all know how difficult it is to resolve problems that reach crisis level. Having a dynamic, well-tuned dashboard to com-

communicate high-level information to the board takes time and effort, but is worth it in more proactive, focused, and strategic governance and management decisions. Our boards are tremendous allies and supports for our mission efforts. If we want them working with us on the right things that move our nature centers forward, we need to give them the right information to do their job well.

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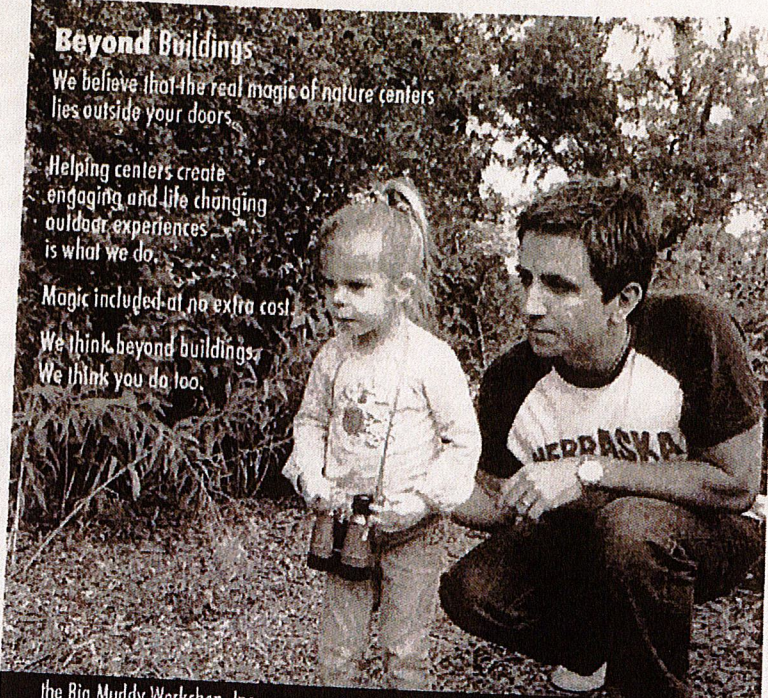
*Patty Weisse, executive director at Baltimore Woods Nature Center has a BS and MS in geology and taught geology at Wellesley College for three years before spending ten years as a secondary science educator. Her switch from the formal education setting to the informal setting at Baltimore Woods was fueled by a desire to support schools with their science teaching challenges. She created the Nature in the City program for urban elementary schools and was awarded the Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award from Syracuse University's Whitman School of Management in 2012. Weisse is serving as treasurer of the board of directors of the Association of Nature Center Administrators and is a member of the Marcellus Rotary.*

*Philip Mazza, president of the Baltimore Woods Nature Center board, is a human resources pro-*

(continued on page 13)

DASHBOARDS (cont. from page 12)

professional with over 25 years experience. He has held senior management positions with nationally renowned companies like Kemper Insurance, Barnes and Noble, and Intermedia Communications. Currently, Philip is the chief human resources officer for Byrne Dairy and general manager of its warehousing company, Syracuse Cold Storage. He is also a member of the board of directors of the Byrne Dairy Group. Also, Philip has instructed undergraduate courses in human resources management at both LeMoyne College and Bryant and Stratton College. Philip has presented at several conferences providing insight into human resources policies and procedures and good management practices. He has also published several articles related to leadership and management and has his MBA.



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- Markel Insurance Company

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- EarthRise Design
- Environment Design LLC
- Lord, Aeck & Sargent Architecture
- Nature Watch
- Outdoor Educators Insurance
- Rain Water Solutions

Bronze:

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- Cedarloch Research LLC
- KDesign
- Mesa
- Mithun
- 106 Group
- Naturalist Journeys
- The Kubala Washatko Architects



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Kohler-Andrae State Park, Sheboygan, WI

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**PATTY WEISSE CONSULTING  
SCOPE OF SERVICE PROPOSAL TO  
Vera House**

**SUMMARY**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal for coaching and board training services for Vera House. Since establishing my consulting practice in 2015, I have been active in capacity-building planning, strategic planning services, visioning, and executive coaching for many organizations.

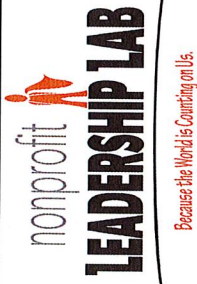
My consulting process is based on the principles of listening and learning. I am trained in the Lifecycles™ Approach to Capacity Consulting. As Executive Director of Baltimore Woods Nature Center, I personally found this approach the most effective in helping an organization recognize habitual behaviors holding the organization back. These insights help the board, staff, and volunteers work together to adopt new approaches and learn new skills that help nonprofits thrive.

What follows is a more detailed Scope of Service proposal which includes a timeline and cost projections.

**PROJECT DETAILS AND TIMELINE**

	Activity	Timeline	Cost Projections
Dashboard Report Development	Coaching to help Vera House’s Executive Director draft up a dashboard report that gives its board accurate, timely, and up-to-date information about its financial position, programs, and other key elements a board needs to be aware of to effectively govern.	April-May, 2024	Estimated 2-3 hours at \$125/hour or a flat fee of \$350
Board Training Sessions	Two (2) hour-long board training sessions to help the Vera House board embrace the challenge of turning the organization around with the new Executive Director. Each hour of training involves two hours of preparation.	May-September 2024	Estimated 6 hours at \$175/hour or a flat fee of \$900
<b>Total Proposed Cost</b>			<b>\$1,250</b>

- **Total proposed project lump sum fee is \$1,250**
- The fee will be invoiced, as follows:
  - Upon execution of Memorandum of Understanding- \$500
  - Final invoice sent. Upon completion of deliverables.



## START HERE - FIRST COPY THIS GOOGLE SHEET FOR YOUR OWN USE

This spreadsheet is intended to be a useful template your Nominations Committee can use to help to assess the current composition of your board and to identify gaps. Here's a roadmap for how you might consider using this template.

### Guidelines for Use

- Make a personal copy of this Google Sheet before you attempt to edit it.
- Review the template and customize it to meet your own needs. Some of the suggested items will not be relevant (although most of them will be) and there will be others you will want to add.
- Once the template is customized for your needs, assess each current member against each of the items by putting an X or check mark in the cell.
- You will find two columns at the end, "The first one is 'Gaps'" and should have an X where there is a gap in the current board roster. The second one is "Gaps with Impending Turnover" - this will give you a truer view of the gaps considering board members whose term limits are soon to expire or are planning to step down for other reasons
- It is now time to prioritize the gaps so that the Nominations Committee can propose a strategy for 'casting' for new board members moving forward.
- Diversity listed on the template should be seen as a lens. What we mean is that when you prioritize the experience and expertise gaps, you want to begin to think about how to network to identify diverse candidates with needed experience and expertise.

\*For example: Nominations may prioritize legal, digital and human resources experience. It will be the job of the board to seek out diverse candidates who fill these gaps. The committee might seek out:

- BIPOC community leaders network
- Minority owned businesses

Affinity groups of larger companies and build awareness of the work.

Community groups at target companies and build awareness of the work.

- Network with these groups and in so doing, build a diverse candidate pool that will help to fill identified gaps.

• Last and important step: the Nominations Committee should present a version of this composition to the full board. The full board should buy into the picture of the ideal board, ask questions and then share the ownership of working together to build toward it.







It is the mission of Vera House, Inc. to prevent, respond to and partner to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

## Board of Directors Candidate Application

Name:

Title:

Organization:

Home Address:

Email Address:

Phone:

### Demographics

Age:  18-29:  30-39:  40-49:  50-59:  60+

Race/Ethnicity (please select all that apply):

- White/Caucasian/European
- Black/African American/African
- Hispanic/Latin X
- Native American/American Indian/Indigenous
- Asian American/Pacific Islander/Asian
- Middle Eastern Multi-racial/Multi-ethnic

- Gender Identity:
- Woman/female (she/her/hers):
- Man/male (he/his):
- Non-binary (they/their/them):
- Transman/woman:
- A-gender:
- Other:

Do you have a disability  yes  no

If yes, please provide a list of reasonable accommodations:

Are you an active United States Military/veteran  yes  no

1. In your own words, describe your knowledge of Vera House, Inc:
  
2. Why would you like to become one of the next Vera House Board of Directors:
  
3. How did you hear about us (please check all that apply):
  - Board of Directors: Name:
  - Board of Trustees: Name:
  - Vera House, Inc.: Name:
  - Nourishing Tomorrow's Leaders (NTL): Year:
  - Leadership of Greater Syracuse (LGS): Year:
  - Social media, radio, newspaper
  
4. Describe what knowledge, skillsets, and attributes you would bring with Board Membership:
  
5. What experiences do you have that relate to our mission?

6. On what other non-profit boards do you currently serve, or previously served?  
(please list dates of terms and expirations for each):
  
7. Please list current and past community and/or volunteer activities:
  
8. What, if any, fundraising experiences do you have, and are you comfortable networking your connections in the community:
  
9. As a Board Member, you would be responsible for representing the organization in the community. Do you envision yourself being comfortable having conversations about Vera House programs, possible collaboration opportunities, and fundraising opportunities?  
 yes  no

### **Vera House Board Expectations**

- All Vera House Board of Directors and Board of Trustees must adhere to New York State Non-profit laws.
  
- Board terms are three (3) years. You can serve a total of two (2) terms.
  
- The Board of Directors meet monthly every third Tuesday (except July) from 5:30pm - 7:30pm. Location of meetings are subject to change; members will be notified of location prior to meetings.
  
- It is expected that all Directors attend at least eight (8) of eleven (11) Board Meetings. If you are unable to attend, it is still your responsibility to read the board packet. Additionally, members of the board are required to attend periodic trainings.
  
- Each Board Member is required to participate on at least one (1) of the following committees:
  - a. Audit and Finance Committee
  - b. Board Development Committee
  - c. Personnel Committee
  - d. Program Committee
  - e. Property Committee
  - f. White Ribbon Committee
  - g. New Beginnings Gala Committee
  
- All Board Members are required to make an annual financial contribution that is manageable and meaningful to you.

Name

Date

Signature