

News & Views:

Non-Profits

An Informational Resource

Nonprofits Brace for 2012 Challenges

The down economy is responsible for flat or declining funding of nonprofits. Meanwhile the booming demand for their services and increased operating costs are producing more challenges. As a result, many nonprofits are at risk.



Some will not

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Factors Affecting Non-profits in 2012

The American landscape has changed in the past few years and non-profits must respond accordingly if they are to succeed.

1. The number of people living poverty in America is at a record high.
2. The median net worth of American households headed by someone who is at least 65 years old is 47 times higher than those headed by someone under 35, according to a Pew study.
3. Social activism is on the rise: the Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street, etc.
4. Participation in online social media continues to grow.

5. Philanthropy of the “super rich” is shaping non-profits’ agendas.
6. Larger non-profits’ responsibilities are evolving.
7. Cuts in government spending translate to increased demand for non-profits’ services.
8. Government initiatives are being considered that would raise revenue from non-profits via new taxes and fees.
9. Stakeholders demand to be heard.
10. The news media have less ability to cover non-profits’ news.

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Electronics Trends to Watch in 2012

Consumer Reports, the nonprofit and world’s largest independent product -testing organization, gave us a heads up in January on what new developments in consumer electronics we can expect to see this year. The buzz words are “thinner, lighter, more powerful and stronger” across the board.

The emergence and growth of cloud computing is facilitating some of this by letting consumers access content and applications on their devices without the

need to store them on their cell phones, laptops, tablets, appliances, toys and more. The next generation of computer chips are the other enablers.

Voice activation of everything from phones to TVs will make it quicker and easier to use their electronic devices at home and away from home. Consumers will be more connected than ever wherever they happen to be in the world.

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College Grads Spark Non-Profits Growth

For example, when working as an Ameri-Corps volunteer to help restore Cedar Rapids, Iowa, after ruinous flooding Elie Lowenfeld was surprised that all the relief groups working alongside him were Christian based. That changed after he returned to New York University where he was a student. With the help of an NYU Jewish student group, Lowenfeld started Jewish Disaster Response Corp (JDRC),

which recruits Jewish volunteers to assist where needed across the country. In three years, JDRC budget has grown from \$10,000 to \$187,000 and changed Lowenfeld's life significantly.

According to Columbia Business School Professor Clifford Schorer, students have been changed by the tough economic times and want to use their lives to help improve society. It's not just about making as

much money as they can to live "the good life" because they have redefined what it means to live a good life.

A study by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement supports the professor's claim. It reports that between 80% and 85% of all incoming college freshmen have community-service experience prior to starting their higher education—or about 20 percent more

than in 1989.

According to experts, the flood of young adults who are creating new non-profits stems from two trends: a desire to do something meaningful and the need to express oneself in their work life. The successful new nonprofits tackle unique problems, and are often run more efficiently than the established organizations. For example, JDRC only sends volunteers to U.S.-based disasters while most other Jewish volunteers groups go overseas.

Another strategy that seems to work is to close the non-profit after it achieves its goal. After Out2Play built 176 public school playgrounds, its founder, Andrea Wenner, a Columbia M.B.A. student, closed its doors.

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survive, especially smaller ones and those that do will have to be leaner and more focused to adapt to these challenging times. The keys to survival include:

1. Demonstrate value by documenting strong, positive results
2. Collaborate and consolidate to facilitate cost-cutting
3. Recruit volunteers to offset needed belt-tightening initiatives

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While 3D TVs will continue to evolve with enhanced imaging and easier access to viewing, 2D imaging will also improve with super-high resolution TV sets that will triple the clarity of today's HD sets in the next few years.

Green Building Trends in 2012

According to nonprofit, Earth Advantage Institute (EAI), the following are this year's top green building trends:

1. Increased volume in urban density
2. More green multi-family housing
3. Home remodeling driven by energy upgrades
4. Deployment of new materials in construction
5. Increased popularity in home energy tracking devices
6. Increased transparency in the marketing of green housing
7. More accurate appraisals of "green" property
8. Broader adoption of residential energy ratings for homes



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