

Hot Topics for Out-of-School Time Directors and Administrators

January 2014

Hot Topic: Human Resources and Supervision

“The Art of Managing Difficult Conversations with Staff”

by Stacy Litteral

Overview: This article from the National Afterschool Association highlights 10 tips to communicating effectively with staff for program managers. Featured tips include understanding the importance of preparation, speaking with clarity and honesty, and being solutions-oriented. While each program manager understandably has their own style when addressing conflict or misalignment in their organizations, this article provides some general guidelines to help those that may struggle with it. The article highlights the fact that difficult conversations will inevitably arise. What distinguishes good leaders is their ability to use challenges as opportunities for growth and development.

Where to Find It:

<http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc/doclibrary/documents/ArtofMasteringDifficultConversationswithStaff.pdf>

Hot Topic: Recruitment and Retention

“Cultivating the Ultimate Board”

Interview conducted by GuideStar USA, Inc.

Overview: In an interview with Kay Sprinkel Grace, author of *The Ultimate Board Member's Book*, GuideStar uncovers characteristics of ideal board members and common pitfalls nonprofits make when selecting them. Ms. Sprinkel Grace emphasizes clear expectations as a critical skill for nonprofit managers to have in order to keep board members engaged. She also notes that the need for passion in a prospective board member should not be overlooked, underscoring it as a critical part of advancing mission-critical work and avoiding pure pragmatism.

Where to Find It:

<http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc/doclibrary/documents/CultivatingtheUltimateBoard.pdf>

Featured Hot Topic:

“Cutting Cost, Keeping Quality: Financing Strategies for Youth- Serving Organizations in a Difficult Economy”

This research brief highlights three financing strategies that successful youth-serving organizations are using in spite of constrained fiscal climates. The article dives deep into the details of each strategy and provides examples of strategy implementation in organizations across the United States in the form of case studies, qualitative data, and other tools. While the brief provides much more context for what this work looks like on the ground, the three key strategies consistent in every example are:

- Aggressively managing costs
- Creatively generating new revenues and support
- Forming partnerships

While the economy may not make it easy to deliver services to children and youth, high quality programming is still possible when organizations think creatively.

Where to find the full article:

<http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc/doclibrary/pma/Budgeting%20and%20Fiscal%20Management/Cutting%20Cost%20Keeping%20Quality.pdf>