

SUCCESSFUL MODELS OF FUNDER INVESTMENT IN VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

CASA



Volunteer engagement is a means to an end. It leverages a source of renewable energy (volunteers) to efficiently and effectively reach mission fulfillment. In working with CASA of Colorado Springs for 25 years, The Leighty Foundation has witnessed first hand the organization's dramatic evolution. Outcomes have included:

- Elevating the volunteer coordinator to a Manager of Volunteer Services placed her on the executive team where her input was critical.
- Revising the mission statement to include a reference to volunteers and their critical role in the accomplishment of our mission.
- Approving volunteer engagement as one of the organization's annual strategic planning goals.
- Placing volunteer engagement in all staff job descriptions and as performance indicators in their annual reviews.
- Creating a women's giving circle, of primarily Baby Boomer women, which donates more than \$80,000 annually.
- Creating a position of Peer Coordinator. These leadership volunteers were recruited from CASA's experienced volunteer pool. They now train and mentor every new volunteer.

Impact on mission fulfillment:

In 2012- 2013 when the peer coordinator project was implemented, CASA served 443 children with no peer level volunteers. In mid-year 2017, 578 children are being served with 28 peer coordinators. The projection is to serve over 600 children before fiscal year end June 30, 2017. The organization is on track to meet the goal of serving 900 children by year 2020-2021.

Overall, this strategy has been a cost-effective way to expand the volunteer pool of advocates and improve retention rates, as well as affording CASA with the opportunity to reach more children.

Under the leadership of key volunteers, a used clothing store was created where teens in foster care shop for clothes and accessories at no cost to them. Clothes are donated and collected by high school students. Foster teens staff the store gaining retail and customer service experience. The store is run solely by a team of millennial and foster teen volunteers, who have experienced their vision become a reality.

The above transformation has led to improved measurable outcomes, growth in diversity of our volunteer resources, and an increase in volunteerism at every level of the agency. The strategic utilization of volunteers has resulted in great progress toward providing an advocate for every abused and neglected child in the Pikes Peak Region through efficient and effective capacity building strategies.