



The mission of ECHO Minnesota is to leverage partnerships to deliver vital health, safety, emergency and civic engagement information to help the ever-changing, diverse population integrate and become successful in our communities.

**Board Development and Strategy Retreat
July 7, 2010 / 12:00-4:30 pm
NOTES**

Attendees:

Board Members: Jay Elepano, Kristen Norman-Major, Jill DeBoer, Astrid Ollerenshaw, Bob Herman, Troy Dickinson, Kevin Verzal, Sandy Lien, Chris Kuhlman, Valerie Donovan.

Staff: Lillian McDonald, Suzanne LaPalm.

Guests: Leo Espinoza (ECHO Talent), Lasamy Mila (City of MSP HR), Xia Xong (West Side Clinic), Thao Vang (Viewer)

Facilitator: Christie Hammes, Director of Strategic Development, MAP for Nonprofits

I. Introductions

Kristen and Lillian welcome the board members and guests. New board member Valerie Donovan, United Health Group, was introduced. Valerie explained she will work on the emergency preparedness committee and explained her role at United Health.

Facilitator Christie Hammes, Director of Strategic Development at MAP for Nonprofits was introduced. She outlined the two objectives for this afternoon as follows:

- Who are we and what is our role as a board?
- How will we best move ECHO's work forward strategically?

Introductions were made around the table and each person noted what their day job is, and one thing that stood out over Independence Day Holiday weekend or their favorite cultural experience.

II. Community guests bring mission alive (over lunch)

The guests were asked to relate their ECHO experience on what really matters, is it meaningful and why, or an anecdote. They then were available for questions.

Question: How can we make people more aware of ECHO?

Marketing, tables at community centers, social media, go where the people are and tell them what ECHO does—get to the communities. Let the communities know that ECHO and the TV shows exist, and how to get information from ECHO if there is an emergency. ECHO could have an information table at the July 4 tournament and the Hmong New Year celebration. Do an ECHO TV show on the board of directors so people can get to know them. Present ECHO information through Hmong Times and Asian Pages.



Question: What are the other ways that will get the message through to your communities?

Internet targeted to teenagers. TV is most accessible for elders and feels very safe for them. Have shows on more frequently (weekly) at a consistent time. Hmong elders often listen to Hmong radio. Provide information at Hmong flea markets.

Lillian talked about the need to find a way to diversify funding; getting sponsors for an entire year; much more community oriented, and explained there are some grants out there for this. She noted that ECHO TV is now on Sundays at 7:00 p.m., each week a different language. It is hoped that eventually we'll be weekly for each language. ECHO phone is very under-utilized and it's possible it could become more of a hotline.

Sandy suggested ECHO utilize the health plans to provide information at health fairs. Lillian pointed out that our Marketing/Communications Coordinator does a weekly newsletter and sends other information out, however, that's only in English. ECHO also advertises to the ethnic media. It was the consensus that there is a need to touch the communities face-to-face.

III. Governance at Its Best for ECHO

- Mini-workshop on key practices of effective boards
- Board in the context of ECHO's organizational life stage

The question was posed: Who are we as a board and how are we going to move forward strategically?

Christie explained governance boards and support boards. Governance boards are policy-making, strategy boards. Support boards are working boards. Ground rules for the next 3 hours were identified.

Board minimum daily requirements were discussed and Christie reviewed a PowerPoint presentation entitled: Governance at its Best for ECHO's Life Stage. She noted that the mission is what you are in this for, and it is much harder to measure than the return on investment, therefore, it's important for a board to understand their mission.

IV. Where are we headed the next three years?

Used form Strategic Chapter – Strengthening our Strategy” 2010-13

Discussion ensued regarding national or regional expansion; several opinions said not right now, but keep it on the future plan. For “household name” recognition – add a pull strategy in addition to push strategy. Discussion. Taking what we do well to more people (not necessarily to a larger geographic area). Possibly providing the model for “ECHO Ohio” etc., but don't necessarily own it. Market or sell our model and use the State's media model as a frame. It's important that ECHO is a household name with funders too, not just the people we serve. It was noted not to forget to engage service providers as a link.

V. How will the board advance our strategic priorities (small groups)?

- In our *Governance* role
- In our *Support* role



BE HEALTHY. BE SAFE. BE READY.

Christie posed the question: If you were to invent starting today a way for the board to invest in these three:

- Household name
- Awareness
- Easy Access

How will the board invest to achieve. Small groups were formed to think about this strategic chapter for ECHO and how the board can best align itself to make this happen.

Tools: using the “at-a-glance” sheet and Tissue Paper Task Group, mobilize others towards this initiative with only 1 or 2 board members on each task group.

Small groups reconvened in full and each group reported:

Group 1 (Kristen’s group):

Board, Executive Committee, more committees doing outreach and getting the board out to community events. One task force for the Ask Event; potentially another on community events with volunteers. Identified the need for volunteer recruitment and coordination. Possibly a teen ambassador program. Other ways to bring volunteers in; group leadership; development is also key. Clear measurements needed across all areas.

Group 2 (Kevin’s group)

Keep the Executive, Communications, Development, Programming & Emergency Preparedness committees, which are actually running quite well, but combine Development & Programming. Add community outreach as a responsibility for the Communications Committee. Leverage corporate and community organizations at health fairs; community events (parades, tournaments), clinics – flyers, ad (on TV), etc. at clinics (or DVDs on a loop in clinic). Suggestion of TPT ads, slogans in native languages.

Group 3 (Jay’s group) – Keep the Executive Committee. They likened their strategy to the three legs of a table: community, delivery, and content. Content is programming; community is gathering data on what communities look like, what’s worked, etc.; delivery – how to get our message to the right people. Young people could spread information from Facebook to parents. Nixed development committee and built development work back into the board as a group responsibility. Emergency Response and Activation worked well when they had something to do, so that committee needs should be on an “as needed” basis.

VI. Building the scaffold on which we’ll do our work

- Structure and process and Re-cap & next steps

It was noted that the guests brought great insight. Guest input was debriefed and governance discussed, along with the life evolution of nonprofits.

Board members were asked what they heard today that holds most promise:

Sandy – community outreach was a theme in everything. The board can help guide that work and feed connections to staff.

Kevin – we currently are a working board, subcommittees are based around tasks. With the goal of ECHO becoming a household name, will move from working board to more of a governance board and it maybe rocky at certain points.



Troy – ECHO is a good product that we put out to the community, but need to work on getting it out to more of the community.

Jill – openly considering restructuring some committees is refreshing. Focus on community outreach and know who we are and what we have to offer.

Valerie – aligned with community outreach. Having 4 spokespersons here showed value. Lots of promise with this goal.

Lillian – refocus and strengthen the community trust. They need us and we need them.

Chris – Community outreach – reaffirmation that we provide a product that is highly regarded, but we need to get it out to more.

Kristen – getting people in through the front door, instead of people backing in.

Jay – Working with the full board today rather than in committees was a first, and to see that everyone is on the same page is promising.

With some business meeting items not covered today due to time constraints, within the next few days, some items will come electronically to review. Kristen will be out of town, so they will come from Lillian or Suzanne.

Meeting adjourned.

An email request for votes on the following items was sent to board members on July 8:

1. *Minutes from May meeting (VOTE YES OR NO) _____*
2. *Financials through May (VOTE YES OR NO) _____*
3. *ED Incentive pay language – addition (VOTE YES OR NO) _____*
4. *ED Mid-Year Report (VOTE YES OR NO) _____*

With the votes compiled via electronic responses, all four items passed unanimously.