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Meeting Overview

GRANTEE MEETING AND COACHING SESSIONS

The December 2000 Grantee Meeting and Coaching Sessions were presented as a learning community event to address the self-identified learning needs of grantees in CSAT's Recovery Community Support Program (RCSP). The meeting was designed for RCSP grantee leadership and focused primarily on the challenge of sustainability.

The meeting, planned in consultation with grantees, had the following goals:

- To explore concepts, strategies, and skills that can be helpful in developing a plan to sustain recovery community organizing after Federal funding ends.
- To participate in discussions with RCSP colleagues on ideas, practices, problems, and solutions of common interest and concern.

The RCSP Grantee Meeting and Coaching Sessions were built around the challenge of sustaining RCSP efforts beyond the ending of Federal funding in 2001. The meeting was designed on the premise that individual grantees had portions of the answer to this challenge and that, by sharing with each other what they had learned, participants could piece together a sustainability strategy. The meeting also was predicated on the assumption that each grantee could both teach and learn.

At the core of the design were **Show-and-Tell Dialogues** and **Group Coaching Sessions**. In the dialogues, individual grantees described how they had achieved a particular accomplishment, and meeting participants then commented (with **Ahas!**) on how that accomplishment could apply to their own projects and how the success could be part of a sustainability strategy.

The Coaching Sessions were designed to enable small groups of participants to work with knowledgeable coaches to “figure things out together.” The Coaching Sessions were built around four subsets of the sustainability issue:

1. **Leadership/Partner Development**—How to build the capacity of internal and external stakeholders to continue the effort.
2. **Organizational and Program Redevelopment**—How to spin off or reshape the initiative so that it can continue when Federal support ends.
3. **Program Promotion**—How to monitor, measure, and market RCSP outcomes to mobilize and expand support.
4. **Resource Development**—How to diversify the project’s funding base.

Over the course of the two days, the energy and enthusiasm of the participants grew. The Show-and-Tell Dialogues demonstrated, over and over again, that grantees had achievements they could be proud of, and that these achievements could be marshalled in ways that would contribute to sustaining the effort when Federal funding ended. Many overarching themes and messages emerged.

SUSTAINABILITY—OVERARCHING THEMES

- Sustaining an RCSP project is not just about securing enough funds to support project operation.
- Sustainability also involves deepening members’ involvement and commitment, establishing a presence and reputation in the community, building strong relationships with other individuals and organizations, developing compelling messages, and thinking creatively about how the recovery group effort can be integrated into other community efforts without losing its specific voice.
- Sustainability is built upon a project’s concrete accomplishments and successes. Being able to identify such accomplishments and successes is the first step in developing a sustainability strategy. Identifying accomplishments and successes also helps the recovery community project identify what more it wants to achieve and helps focus requests for future funding.

- Many times, an effort or activity planned to achieve one goal actually accomplishes additional organizational goals. For example, a “Putting a Face on Recovery” march, intended as a stigma-reduction effort, can enhance the commitment and build the skills of membership, improve the recovery group’s relationship with allies, raise its profile in the community, sharpen its message, and—raise funds as well.
- It is important to see fundraising in the context of the project’s other goals. Fundraising efforts that directly advance the group’s vision and mission are often rewarding in ways beyond the financial.
- Many skills that RCSP projects and their members have developed in other contexts—message development, for example, or networking or organizing competencies—are directly relevant to attracting support, including funding. The context may be different, but the skill sets are the same.
- Involving members in fundraising and implementing other sustainability strategies builds members’ skills and sense of ownership.
- Anything done well contributes in some way to sustainability.

Welcome and Introductions

GRANTEE MEETING AND COACHING SESSIONS

RICK SAMPSON

Director

Division of State and Community Assistance

CSAT

Rick Sampson's greeting set the tone for the three days' deliberations. "I'd like to give you all a big hug," he said. "It is wonderful to come back, after several months, to family and roots. It is always a privilege for us at CSAT to be with you, because it reminds us why we do what we do."

Sampson noted that he had taken the subway to the meeting that morning. "Riding Metro gives you a snapshot of the world most of us live in," he said. "People board the trains every day, and often see the same people riding, day after day. But they are usually very careful not to make eye contact with one another."

Seeing people in close contact with others, but reluctant to engage with them, reminded Sampson of what the RCSP is all about. "You are making eye contact with the rest of the world, rising out of a hidden culture and making recovery visible, proud of what you've overcome. You are enabling people to see the gifts that you are and that you have given your families and communities."

CATHY NUGENT
RCSP Project Officer
CSAT

Welcoming everyone to Washington, Cathy Nugent noted that when RCSP grantees had been asked to select a topic for this Grantee Meeting, the nearly unanimous suggestion was how to ensure project sustainability. Grantees at the RCSP “Think Tank” meeting (July 2000), the “Lessons Learned” meeting (October 2000), and in a Year 3 Technical Assistance Needs Survey (October 2000) also identified sustainability as a critical challenge at this stage of RCSP development.

CSAT understands that this challenge is a real one, Nugent said. “Your projects have been start-ups, and it takes a while to build a record of accomplishment that can sustain your work. Different projects are in different places in this developmental process, and it has been challenging to develop a training for this meeting that all of you can learn from. We hope that what we, with your help, have planned, will give each of you take-away lessons that you can apply when you go home.”

Nugent also distributed copies of the just-published CSAT *National Treatment Plan*, observing that it had a “sustained focus on the importance of the participation of the recovery community in decision-making about treatment.” She pointed out that many grantees had provided testimony at the CSAT-sponsored Public Hearings that formed the foundation of the *National Treatment Plan*, and noted that grantee participation in the effort “had the effect of increasing demand for what grantees have to offer.” This, she said, “demonstrates a basic sustainability lesson—when you are doing important work, and doing it well, others recognize that and want more of it.”

Nugent then introduced the team from Campaign Consultation, Inc. (CCI), who had helped design the Grantee Meeting and Coaching Sessions and would facilitate the Show-and-Tell Dialogues and lead the Coaching Sessions.

■ FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGIES FOR TURNING CURRENT SUCCESSES INTO FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY

STEVEN RIVELIS
SUSAN HAILMAN
JACKIE JORDON DAVIS
CYNTHIA COLEBROOK

*Campaign Consultation, Inc.
Baltimore, Maryland*

To set a context for the sustainability training, the CCI team first facilitated a brainstorming session, asking participants to focus on: What is unique about RCSP projects in relation to five specific issues:

- Leadership development?
- Partner development?
- Organizational and program redevelopment?
- Program promotion?
- Resource development?

Out of this initial work there emerged a general framework for the work that would follow:

- As CSAT funding ends, the world is changing for the RCSP. Change creates uncertainties and anxieties, but it also creates opportunities. Projects need to look at themselves in new ways, and think of how they can understand and even embrace change in order to sustain the recovery community voice that is emerging through their efforts.
- Sustaining an effort is part planning, but the larger part is action. In the words of Tom Peters, the management expert, “Instead of thinking, planning, and waiting until we have something to do, we must do, do, do, and then think.” Grantees have been doing, and for the next two days the task would be thinking about how to translate the doing into a plan for the future.

■ MEETING REPORT NO. 1

Show-and-Tell Dialogues

GRANTEE MEETING AND COACHING SESSIONS

■ A PRO-ACT Story—

EMPOWERING MEMBERS WHO FELT EXCLUDED

Beverly Haberle

*Promoting Recovery Organizations- Achieving Community Togetherness Project
Bucks County, Pennsylvania*

Initially, PRO-ACT leaders were disappointed that family members did not seem to feel “connected” with the organization and its activities. Then they decided to find out why.

When asked, a number of family members indicated that they felt excluded by such phrases as “recovery community,” which they took to mean people in personal recovery, and that, although they were sympathetic with PRO-ACT’s goals, they did not know what they could contribute.

Deciding to look harder at this, PRO-ACT leaders convened a focus group of family members to explore what was behind these feelings. They learned that, in these days of treatment cutbacks, many family members had not had the opportunity for meaningful participation in their loved ones’ treatment programs. Others had not been able to find good treatment for their loved ones at all.

When asked what they thought was needed, family members had a consensus answer: Families need better information about addiction and treatment, and

The Ahas!

- ▶ “It is critical to identify members’ self-interests, because these interests can be used to shape successful community mobilization activities.”
- ▶ “It is important for leaders of the project to take time to look, not only at what is working, but what is not, and try to figure out why.”
- ▶ “When you let people tell you what they want, in their own words, it helps you figure out how to build the organization.”

The Ahas!

► “This was a great use of a focus group as a tool for building a recovery organization.”

► “By devoting energy to work that members had identified as important, you enabled them to become the knowledgeable spokespersons you wanted them to be, and that they didn’t know they could be.”

► “Starting where the members are, rather than where you are, promotes sustainability. Members identified a real need among families of the addicted, and now you have a member-created product that meets that need—a curriculum—as well as members who are motivated to train their peers as mentors to support follow-through. This has also become a strategy for new member recruitment. PRO-ACT is very smart to see that this product is fundable as part of an ongoing sustainability effort.”

they need training and support in spelling out their loved ones’ treatment needs. They were enthusiastic when asked if they would participate in building such an effort within PRO-ACT.

PRO-ACT leaders then turned to their Education Committee, comprised primarily of member volunteers, and asked the Committee to meet with the family members. The result was a decision to develop a curriculum on understanding treatment and enabling family members to become knowledgeable spokespersons on behalf of other family members in need. The curriculum was developed jointly by the Committee, family members, and host agency staff. Grant money to help support the project was allocated through the host agency.

They also developed a plan for marketing PRO-ACT to families. “The whole activity demonstrated how resourceful volunteers can be. They even developed some quality assurance procedures to help ensure that their curriculum and marketing paid off,” Beverly Haberle noted.

Because PRO-ACT leaders took special steps to find out why one group of members wasn’t connecting with the organization and its activities, those members are now actively participating. “This segment of PRO-ACT’s membership is now active and growing incredibly,” Haberle said. “They have taken ownership and become advocates, within PRO-ACT and in the community, on behalf of other families.”

■ RCU in Chicagoland—
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR
THE RECOVERY COMMUNITY EVERYWHERE

Don Malec

*Recovery Communities United Project
Chicago, Illinois*

After receiving the RCSP grant, the City of Chicago identified Don Malec, a person in recovery, to head the project. Both the City and Malec realized the benefits of accelerating a goal of the project to create a new nonprofit organization at the outset, rather than waiting until year 3 of the grant. Malec faced the responsibility of turning the ideas in the grant application into reality.

“The challenge was so big,” Malec said. “I asked myself how I could possibly do this. What could I do? So I looked around, and began to conceptualize my task as though I were building a business. When you build a business, you have to open every door that might provide access to ideas. I actually got my approach to building the RCU as the result of being invited to the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce to talk about Drug Free Workplaces.”

Watching people interact at the Chamber meeting, Malec saw that they were introducing themselves to others and getting to know each other. Quickly grasping that this activity was all about building relationships, he realized that he could establish relationships through contacts at the Chamber meetings that might benefit the developing Recovery Communities United (RCU). Malec now has access to all the business and industrial organizations in Chicago affiliated with the Chamber and he is attending all the Chamber meetings he can.

How did he get invited back to the Chamber’s meetings? His knowledge of addiction and recovery was the ticket. Malec is now Director of the Chamber’s Committee on Drug Free Workplaces. Working on behalf of recovered people on their jobs, he continues to use the Chamber as a resource in building relationships that benefit RCU. It has introduced him to many prospective supporters, and has given him some valuable ideas about the skills of people asked to serve on RCU’s Board of Directors.

“One of my roles in this position is making sure that employers recognize the importance and contributions of the people in their workforces who are in recovery,” Malec said. “I am devoted to using every contact to help ensure that the voice of recovery is heard in the workplace.”

The Ahas!

▶ “Always be open to the opportunity to make new allies. You might be surprised how even a contact unrelated to the recovery community turns into one for building an important relationship.”

▶ “What works in the world at large probably has some value to the recovery community. People network for business success, and networking works for building a nonprofit as well.”

▶ “Sometimes when forming a board of directors, the tendency is to choose one’s friends. If you want to do something with your friends, it is better just to have a party.”

▶ “If you want to build a community of recovery community supporters, you may find some of the people who can help you do that in your contacts outside the recovery community itself.”

▶ “To build a sustainable organization, you have to open every door.”

■ RAP—
BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH
RELATIONSHIPS IN PORTLAND

Kim Matic

Alan Levine

Recovery Association Project

Portland, Oregon

The Ahas!

► “Use the resources in your community. They are there, and they want to help. In fact, they want to be asked to help.”

► “Use contacts to make contacts. The person you are talking to may know other people you want an introduction to.”

► “RAP recognized that people in recovery can be a source of funds, and is developing a systematic way to reach that group of potential supporters. And some even have money to give!”

► “If you do it all yourself, you won’t be taking advantage of contacts with allies to build sustainability. Jazz listeners now know about RAP, even if they didn’t come to the dinner. So do the church members and the caterers, as well as everyone who bought a raffle ticket. The more people know about you, the likelier you are to sustain.”

Portland’s RCSP project is rooting itself firmly through relationships. “Our approach to everything is relationship building,” Kim Matic said. “Relationships are the means of involving members and developing leadership, and they are the basis of support from the community and from other organizations.”

For example, New Avenues for Youth (NAY) contacted RAP and asked for a presentation, Alan Levine said. “We shared our method of organizing in the recovery community, and encouraged participation from the youth and youth workers. As a result of this presentation, NAY offered RAP a grant for \$2,000, for the purpose of working with their youth.”

In another contact, RAP was able to build on a relationship to get an appointment with the President of the Northwest Health Foundation. “When we visited him, we told him about RAP and said we might be looking to his group for funding some day. Once he had learned about us, and what we do, he said he was grateful we had approached him. He said he now has a group—RAP—to turn to for information when he is reviewing proposals that deal with addiction,” Matic said.

RAP members read *Fundraising for Social Change* by Kim Klein, which was recommended by the RCSP TA Project, and “this lit a fire under us,” Matic commented. “It pointed out that 80 percent of funds for nonprofits come from individuals. We began to ask ourselves whether we shouldn’t work at tapping into the larger community of recovery people, as one means to achieving long-term sustainability.”

RAP decided to bring individuals together through a fundraising event which would be the first step in establishing an individual donor base. Leaders and members alike found that planning and conducting a fundraising dinner had many benefits in addition to raising funds. It was also an opportunity for leadership development and exposing the larger community to RAP and its goals and accomplishments.

“We couldn’t have done it without relationships,” Matic said. “For example, we had a relationship with a prominent local jazz singer and pianist. She let us tie her name to RAP and use it to advertise our fundraiser on the jazz stations.”

The fundraiser planners got a church they had worked with in a community group to provide the space for the dinner. Caterers and restaurants donated food and volunteers. A raffle was held to attract attendance.

“Doing a fundraiser is very labor intensive,” Matic said. “We had to write a lot of letters and it takes work to get in-kind contributions. We talked it up with other community activists, and with the health department and the parole and probation department. But we want these folks to know about RAP anyway, so it was an opportunity to spread our message. It also was an opportunity for our members to get out there and spread the word, and this built confidence and skills.”

Best of all, RAP discovered that there were people in the recovery community who might not want to become activists—and in some cases, might even want to remain anonymous—who were willing to attend a fundraiser or contribute money. In addition to the money raised by the fundraising dinner, RAP now has the beginnings of an individual donor list from within the recovery community.

The Ahas!

▶ “The relationship between the group requesting funds and the donor of funds is two directional. When RAP told the foundation that it would be coming to it later for funds, the foundation told RAP that there was something RAP could do for the foundation right now. That’s a great opportunity to build a relationship with a funder.”

▶ “Constantly cultivate your own recovery community, even those who aren’t ready to be members. People are willing to contribute in different ways, and money is one of them.”

▶ “Members can contribute to, and grow from, fundraising efforts.”

▶ “Building relationships, with every person and group you can, helps build and sustain the recovery organization.”

■ FOR-NH—

INCORPORATING IS NOT EXCITING, BUT YOU MAY NEED TO DO IT ANYWAY

Joe Harding

Friends of Recovery—New Hampshire (NEAAR affiliate)

Manchester, New Hampshire

The Ahas!

▶ “It’s important to keep going back to the community during the process of decision-making about 501(3)(c) status. One member shouldn’t do it alone.”

▶ “Joe demonstrated that we often take ourselves too seriously. This task was probably less burdensome because Joe had a sense of humor about it.”

▶ “Even getting an attorney is an opportunity for relationship building.”

▶ “Make sure the attorney who assists you knows the ‘ins-and-outs’ of nonprofits, and the pitfalls you might get into. State Bar Associations have a list of nonprofit pro bono lawyers. You may be able to find one who is in recovery.”

▶ “Some people think a 501(3)(c) organization can’t do lobbying. It can, so long as it stays within limits set by the IRS and doesn’t use Federal funds for lobbying. That’s one reason keeping good books is so important.”

The impetus for incorporating Friends of Recovery (FOR), New Hampshire, a NEAAR affiliate, was the desire to establish an organizational identity clearly separate from the treatment community. “We want people to understand that we represent recovery, for which treatment is an important aspect. We don’t want to be perceived as simply promoting the business interests of treatment providers. In fact, we realized that there is potential for us to have a different position from providers on any given issue.”

In addition, Joe Harding said, FOR-NH knew that many funders would require FOR-NH to incorporate as a nonprofit corporation to be eligible to receive funds. That meant FOR-NH would have to seek incorporation from the State as a nonprofit organization.

“Getting incorporated is not an exciting thing to do,” Harding said. “People normally head for the door when you raise the topic. So, we had to make the case that our very survival depended on incorporating, and then our members agreed we should do it. We made sure that members participated in all decision-making, at every step of the way.”

To incorporate in New Hampshire, it is necessary to go to the Office of the Secretary of State and fill out forms, stating the object for which you are establishing the corporation, as well as the provisions for establishing membership, etc., and file paperwork. The group seeking incorporation has to write Articles of Incorporation, develop by-laws, and form a Board. Members have to sign the Articles of Incorporation. “You have to think about important details, such as including a disclaimer that eliminates the personal liability of members who serve on the Board,” Harding said.

Once the decision was made to go through this process, FOR-NH looked to “its leaders”—the New England Institute of Alcohol Studies (NEAAR’s host agency) and CCAR (which was also in the process of incorporating). “Developing by-laws was quite an undertaking, and we relied on membership to help us. By-laws are important, since they define who we are, how we operate, who holds power, and how decisions are made,” Harding said. “We developed our own set, using by-laws of other organizations as models.”

After having an attorney review the draft by-laws, they were ratified at a FOR-NH meeting. The next step was filling out the 501(3)(c) application form. Help

is available through The National Consumer Supporter Technical Assistance Center, which has a website (www.ncstac.org) and a phone number (800-969-6642) you can call. The IRS also has information on its website (www.irs.gov). Important documents are IRS Pub. 557 on tax exempt status and IRS Form 1023, the application form. “One thing this process convinced us of was that we would have to do a lot of good recordkeeping and reporting to the IRS,” Harding noted.

Another side benefit of this process was that it required FOR-NH to look again at the question of lobbying. FOR-NH elected to be able to do so, within the limits allowed by the IRS—and, of course, not using Federal grant funds. It is important to note here that CSAT has made it abundantly clear that lobbying activities that go outside the legal parameters could cause serious consequences for an organization and its funding sources. In this instance, Harding said, “we want to be sure to uphold the principle, ‘If nothing else, do no harm.’”

The Ahas!

▶“It is very important to make sure that the assets of Board members are not at risk. You can build in this assurance. Board members will all want to know that you have it.”

▶“It is interesting that FOR-NH saw incorporation as a step in creating an identity as a recovery—rather than treatment—organization, and that they saw that unique identity as a critical factor in attracting financial support.”

▶“Incorporating can be a step toward financial sustainability, since major donors won’t consider granting funds to an organization that is not incorporated.”

■ PWRD—

IF YOU CAN ONLY ADVANCE SLOWLY, DO IT SURELY

Ilene Baker

People With Recovery and Disabilities

Tucson, Arizona

The Ahas!

▶ “To stumble is just to move forward faster.”
(African proverb)

▶ “Entrepreneurial activities can help members develop skills, not just dollars.”

▶ “Forming alliances can be very important to the growth of an organization.”

▶ “Enabling members to have pride in what they do is certainly a worthy RCSP goal.”

▶ “Activities of many sorts can contribute to sustainability—as diverse as capitalizing on members’ skills, developing relationships with partners, and providing training. In fact, just about all organizational activities can contribute to sustainability.”

▶ “Each RCSP project has its unique population of members, and needs to look at sustainability in light of that population. Looking at the big picture, it is important to the recovery community movement as a whole that some projects are not left out because they may not be ready to be self-sufficient just yet.”

Members of the PWRD (pronounced “powered”) recovery community have significant physical disabilities, and may also have a co-occurring mental illness. Many have major communication difficulties, as well as serious transportation issues.

“In creating our organizational structure and procedures,” Ilene Baker noted, “we found that we had to take into account our members’ levels of energy and endurance. We had to take into account special communication challenges, and the fact that many of our members have been isolated by their histories of disability. In thinking about sustainability, we have tried to develop a menu of sustainability approaches that takes into account where PWRD members really are.”

For example, PWRD decided to build on skills members already had. “Members who knew how to make jewelry taught others, and we set up a structure for a business, enabling members to learn about operating a business. This has not raised much money, but it was worth the effort to see the pride that members felt in their work.”

In another sustainability effort, PWRD spent more than a year “romancing” another group with goals similar to its own. “We had just built the trust that was necessary for an alliance, when the organization had the rug pulled out from under it, and lost its funding,” Baker said. “At that point, PWRD was able to say, ‘Come and join us.’ Members of the other group had advanced leadership skills, and some organizational approaches we had never seen, even though 75 percent of its membership is disabled. They joined us, and we see an increased potential of growth for PWRD as a result.”

PWRD’s strategic plan focused on getting members on relevant boards and committees. “But that was a slow process because, once on boards, members were unable to articulate their concerns. We realized we had to help them develop leadership skills,” Baker noted. “So we have created a Leadership Academy, and we are finding this is a strong tool for sustainability.” The Academy is built around group participation, with opportunities for members to practice new behaviors, such as leading mock meetings.

“It’s all a very slow process,” Baker said. “We have to be very methodical and take care to avoid mistakes. But with every mistake, we leap forward.”

■ FOR-VT—
ARTISTIC AVENUES TO
GIFT DEVELOPMENT CAN BE PROFITABLE

Sarah Munro

Friends of Recovery—Vermont

Montpelier, Vermont (NEAAR Affiliate)

An artist and singer, Sarah Munro noticed that “the longer people are in recovery, the more they begin to tap into their creativity.” That creative talent, she believes, can be used to spread the word about recovery. It also can represent a source of fundraising. “We all have creative ideas,” she said, “and we can use them to raise money.”

Munro has been in the silk painting business for 20 years, selling products with slogans on them. Organizations, such as home health care or hospice organizations, often ask her to make T-shirts, banners, or posters, which they resell at a profit. She connects with people when she sells these products, using the contacts as opportunities to speak about the gift of recovery.

FOR-VT, a NEAAR affiliate, is using this approach for multiple purposes. For example, the group conducts a recovery workshop “finding your genius,” and this attracts and retains members. FOR-VT also puts into circulation products that promote recovery and reduce stigma, and it creates opportunities to discuss recovery in the larger community, and it raises money.

Munro shared with participants the T-shirts, notecards and other recovery-oriented products created by FOR-VT. “Other RCSP projects could try this approach, tapping into members’ creative ideas. Such an activity might also help energize the group, because we would simply be using the strengths of the people who show up. It feels good to support people in developing their own sense of direction. Genius comes from the inside out. Just like recovery.”

The Ahas!

- ▶ “Developing personal gifts has real potential for recovery community groups.”

- ▶ “Members’ artistic products can be used to develop an innovative approach to marketing.”

- ▶ “This is about turning passion and caring into a business.”

- ▶ “We can be our own resource.”

- ▶ “Resources that can be tapped as sources of financial sustainability can be all around you. When you use them, they also can help tell the recovery story, a key to organizational sustainability.”

■ NEAAR—

SINGLE STATE AGENCIES:
A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

Neill Miner

Denise Devlin

New England Alliance for Addiction Recovery

Augusta, Maine

The Ahas!

▶ “The SSA sounds like an incredible source to tap into, for numerous kinds of assistance, as well as funds.”

▶ “It would be a good idea to develop a strategic plan for approaching the SSA and find ways of working with the SSA.”

▶ “We could begin collecting information by visiting the SSA and NASADAD websites.”

▶ “County or City administrators of block grant funds can be sources of support, too. Groups organizing on the local level can explore this possibility.”

▶ It’s not enough to figure out what the SSA can do for the RCSP project; you need to figure out what the recovery community group can do for the SSA.”

▶ “Figuring out what a funder wants is a lot like figuring out what a specific audience will respond to in an advocacy message. In both cases, you have to tailor your approach, while remaining true to what you are all about and what you believe in.”

The Single State Agency (SSA), which has the responsibility in each State to manage the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant funds and to monitor quality assurance and licensing, “needs what an RCSP project can provide,” Neill Miner said. “The State Agencies need sources of reliable information, and the recovery community can provide some of the information they need. An RCSP project has an insider’s view about how the system really works; it represents a new credible voice on recovery issues; and, unlike groups representing the treatment business who work with the SSA and other policymakers, recovery community groups are not interested in getting State money into their own pockets.”

Other RCSP projects may not have the built-in alliance that NEAAR had with New England SSAs, who had encouraged the New England Institute of Alcohol Studies to develop NEAAR’s grant application to create a recovery community voice. But other RCSPs would be wise to work on building such an alliance because the recovery community has much useful information to offer the SSA, and the SSA, in turn, can be a source of funds.

“This takes time,” Miner said. “We meet with the SSAs every three months and take that opportunity to review both the progress State by State and the benefits of continuing to invest in recovery organizations.” Even with this committed group, it was a couple of years before funding was finalized with all six State agencies. “Responding to many other demands may keep the SSAs from immediately providing funds to recovery community groups, even when they want to,” Miner commented. And, you have to factor in their funding calendar. It can take two years from the time you make “The Ask” until you get the money.

“But even if you can’t get funding right away, the SSA may provide in-kind services, such as speakers and workshops. Or, it may be interested in funding you to conduct a survey, targeted education, or forums. These are the services SSAs buy.”

Miner’s advice to other RCSP projects is to begin by researching the State agency and becoming familiar with its priorities. “You have to target agency staff, along with the director. State directors change, and when that happens, you will need continuing solid contacts in the agency. Middle managers stay in their posi-

tions, and many of them are naturally committed to what we do.” He also suggests asking the State agency to be part of the RCSP project in some form or another.

Denise Devlin said that NEAAR had the insight to form an “inner circle” with people on the staff of the SSA, as well as with NASADAD, the association of directors of SSAs. “Both groups recognize the need for consumer input into their planning process,” she commented.

■ CRN—
SOMETIMES YOU TURN A
CORNER YOU HADN'T EXPECTED

Sonya Baker

Community Recovery Network

Santa Barbara, California

The Ahas!

▶ “It pays to have faith in volunteers, who often can accomplish more than you expect, when you just let them do it.”

▶ “Santa Barbara tapped into the business community. That gives me some ideas to take back home.”

▶ “This shows that you have to have more than a list of names. You have to develop relationships with the people on the list.”

▶ “There are many recovering people in the business community. All the more reason to contact that community.”

▶ “CRN’s experience proves that volunteers can pull off impressive ventures.”

▶ “Grants can be critical to financial sustainability, but individuals also make large donations.”

Santa Barbara’s Community Recovery Network (CRN) decided to poll donors and supporters and find out what motivates them to donate funds or time to an organization. A planning committee of volunteers was responsible for this activity. “We were glad to get family members involved in this activity; they inject a lot of enthusiasm and passion, and are very focused. In addition, they are motivated to work and share with other people,” Sonya Baker said. “The planning committee was beautiful. They took over the survey project, and we didn’t know what would come of it, but they were very enthusiastic and we encouraged them.”

A family member chosen to chair the committee recruited new members. She wanted to solicit funds for a Recovery Month event, and created a literature package she could take with her when contacting donors among the business people she knew. “She tried to bring home the message that addiction affects everyone, not just the person with the illness.”

The relationships volunteers made in conducting this activity proved very important to CRN’s development. “One person we were referred to was the co-founder of the company that manufactures Balance Bars. After talking to one of our members, he became enthusiastic about CRN. He made a large financial pledge, promised to help us leverage the money effectively, and recruited his publicist to help us.” As a result of this volunteer-referred contact, CRN thus found itself the recipient of funding and had the involvement of a publicist to help it refine its marketing approach.

“We had turned a corner,” Baker said. “You never know when you may come to that corner.”

■ PRO-A—

MAKING A STATEWIDE RALLY PAY OFF

Dona Dmitrovic

*Pennsylvania Recovery Organizations Alliance
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania*

“It takes a long, hard effort to plan and conduct a statewide conference, especially when planning is being done in three different parts of the State. But the effort can bring in new members and a little money and raise policymakers’ awareness of the recovery community,” Dona Dmitrovic said. “It is worth the effort.”

To begin planning, PRO-A members from across the State took advantage of being together at the April 2000 RCSP Grantee Meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, to meet and start work on the event. It would be held five months later in the State Capitol, in conjunction with Substance Abuse Awareness Day.

“We had already been working actively with the SSA and the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and the conference was the first step in showing them that we can mobilize the recovery community and that we are, in fact, here to work with them, not against them.” Dmitrovic also said that PRO-A wanted to use the conference to build relationships across the State, and “wanted the focus to be on recovering individuals and the grassroots, not treatment providers.”

“We wanted to keep the cost low, but have an attractive conference. We were able to put together a \$300 package with a hotel, which covered registration, accommodations, and all meals. And we were able to get nine Counties to agree to provide scholarships covering the cost for local consumers and family members who couldn’t have attended otherwise,” Dmitrovic noted. A public relations firm was hired to prepare programs and handle all printing. Arrangements were made for exhibitors advertising treatment programs.

“The rally was exciting,” Dmitrovic said. “We got a proclamation from Governor Ridge and the Harrisburg Mayor recognizing recovery.” One day was devoted to topics of interest to the recovery community, and included speakers from CSAT and the Single State Agency. Time was also spent preparing for a visit to the Legislature to share the message that recovery works. “We turned the ‘Treatment Works’ message into ‘Recovery Works!’” she commented. “The experience of meeting with Legislators gave the recovery community an opportunity to see how the system works, and gave policymakers an insight into what recovery is all about.”

The Ahas!

► “Getting members to demonstrate that people do recover is an intangible product, but very important in breaking down the notion that we are just sick people.”

► “Focusing on recovery instead of treatment gives you multiple targets. It enables you to bring up issues such as expunging criminal records for drug use, getting employment for people in recovery, and showing that we don’t have to be anonymous. It also helps you build a unique identity, and that ought to help when you start looking for future funding.”

► “The conference may not have raised a lot of money for PRO-A, but, by getting Counties to provide consumer/family scholarships, you got buy-in from potential allies and that can be important to your sustainability as you move forward.”

► “PRO-A is a statewide organization. The conference gave you statewide visibility, and must have raised PRO-A’s profile in the mindset of potential allies like the SSA. What kind of follow-up are you planning?”

■ PIRA—
SOMETIMES, HAVING MONEY
IS NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

Tom Aswad

Partners in Recovery Alliance

Martinez, California

The Ahas!

► “It is encouraging to know that PIRA actually began in an organization whose Federal funding had ended but that has endured.”

► “We’re new to all of this in Rhode Island Cares, and it is valuable to see how persistence over years pays off in building a voice.”

► “I like the idea that you got across to people when you simply said, ‘You are making decisions that affect us, and we will be at the table.’ You just made it clear that you would be involved.”

► “In California, we have to work in a lot of political arenas; there are many power players in every County . . . the departments of mental health and probation, for example. It is very hard to get the Board of Supervisors to buck those huge empires. You did well!”

PIRA has high hopes for continuation, but no matter what happens with respect to future funding, this project will continue. PIRA was born out of an organizing effort in Contra Costa County that had once been funded by the Community Partnership Program of the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), and which to this day is still operating. “What we did when CSAP funding ended, we will do again when CSAT steps aside,” Tom Aswad said. “We will simply keep going.”

Even while the CSAP funds were still available in Contra Costa County, it had become apparent that people in recovery from addiction had no voice and were not represented in the deliberations of County decisionmakers on alcohol and drug issues. “The Partnership convinced the County Substance Abuse Advisory Board (SAAB) to add a recovery community representative to its ranks. And, because the recovery community was represented on the SAAB, the SAAB persuaded the County to provide a grant writer to prepare the application that led to PIRA,” Aswad said. “We’ve been making progress ever since, and PIRA has succeeded in gaining a recovery community voice on other bodies in Contra Costa County.”

PIRA now advises the County Board of Supervisors. “For example, the Board of Supervisors initially thought that planning for drug courts should involve law enforcement agencies but did not invite treatment agencies to the table. That changed when PIRA told the Board of Supervisors that the recovery community had to be included in drug court planning, and that it made no sense to move forward without involving community members and treatment professionals,” Aswad says.

Aswad reported on PIRA’s activities when planning began for implementing Proposition 36 (which changed California law to require many offenders using or possessing illegal drugs to receive drug treatment and supervision rather than being incarcerated or supervised in the community without treatment). “PIRA told the Board of Supervisors, ‘You are making decisions regarding us, so we will be at the table, part of your discussion.’ It turned out the Supervisors were very interested in getting the perspectives of PIRA members, and more than ready to listen to members who testified about their personal knowledge of the issues involved.”

Sometimes, in the process of insisting that you should be involved, Aswad said, “People will say hurtful things. You have to thicken your skin and rise above the ignorance, and yet do it in a responsible, kind, and educational way. Once you are included, you have to be on time to meetings and acknowledge the Board when it supports you.” PIRA gives training and support to its members in mastering the intricacies and etiquette of effective participation.

PIRA teaches leadership and helps members learn to facilitate and take part in meetings. Older, more experienced members serve as mentors to newer members. PIRA also has a Speakers’ Bureau to train members to speak and participate effectively at meetings.

The result of all these activities, Aswad said, is that PIRA is changing the conversation in Contra Costa County. “Members of the Board of Supervisors now use our language. When they mirror what we have said to them, we know we are having an impact. We now have a place at the table, and we are changing the stigma.”

The experiences Aswad described demonstrate that the grassroots can make itself heard. These signs of acceptance by the County Substance Abuse Advisory Board and the County Board of Supervisors, Aswad believes, suggest that there will be a continuing involvement of the recovery community in making decisions affecting consumers.

The Ahas!

- ▶ “You just have to remember that all the people on all those boards are just people like us. And you have to stay in their face, and let them know you are not going away.”
- ▶ “I now see how important it is to provide training for members in effective group participation.”
- ▶ “Showing the people who have power over affairs related to the recovery community that you can help them is one of many keys to sustainability. When you can report to members that these bodies are listening to you, it helps build membership.”

■ SpeakOUT—

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING IS HARD WORK,
BUT IT IS HAVING AN EFFECT IN ALBANY

Tom Hill

John Magisano

SpeakOUT! LGBT Voices for Recovery

New York, New York

The Ahas!

- ▶ “There is power in sharing our stories.”

- ▶ “An activity like this enables members to acquire and develop new skills.”

- ▶ “The transgender issues are so great. It must be difficult to articulate them.” (Hill and Magisano agreed that it is difficult, and must be part of the educational process. SpeakOUT suggests that always saying LGBT, rather than gay, makes it easier and more inclusive. SpeakOUT has also been fortunate in having transgender folks on its Steering Committee to lead others in this regard.)

- ▶ “I think it was very wise to set aside time for training before making presentations, and probably very important to your success.”

- ▶ “Combining organization-building activities with a specific agenda action can help build the foundation for sustainability.”

Grassroots community organizing throughout New York State by SpeakOUT culminated in a powerful presentation of personal stories that captured the full attention of legislative staff and substance abuse directors in Albany. These presentations were made in connection with a SpeakOUT Statewide Gathering and Policy Conference last October.

“It took a full year of planning and basic community organizing work,” Tom Hill said, “but we left Albany with something powerful under our belt.” That “something” was not only visiting the power players, but also the cohesiveness that developed among members from various parts of New York who met each other for the first time at the Conference.

SpeakOUT began the process by first recruiting participants after holding focus groups (which it called gatherings and speakouts) around the State with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in recovery. At these gatherings, people were encouraged to tell their personal stories with addiction and treatment. “From these stories, we began to distill issues. From story to issue became a theme of our work. Our stories describe the extra barriers we encounter, because we have come out not only as people in recovery, but also as LGBT people, often as people of color, and often as people with HIV infection or AIDS.”

People who had participated in these gatherings were then invited to come to Albany for three days, to participate in three activities: 1) continuing to tell stories and distill issues from them, 2) preparing to make educational visits to New York State Legislators’ staff and staff of the Single State Agency, and 3) making the visits.

The first day was spent with a series of community-building and storytelling activities. Participants needed some interactive exercises to forge bonds and form group identity in a relatively short period of time. Much of the time of the second day was spent providing information about the educational visits SpeakOUT staff had arranged, with exercises in storytelling and advocacy and related role plays.

“Many people at the Statewide Gathering had never told their stories in this context before,” John Magisano said. “We had coaches to help them improve their

skills at telling stories about the huge barriers they experienced in attempting to gain access to treatment, for example. People's excitement grew as they practiced new storytelling skills."

The third day, people took packets, issue lists, and their stories to the SSA staff and Legislators to share their stories of recovery. They were prepared to ask OASAS (The New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services) to form an LGBT Advisory Group to help the agency understand the barriers to service routinely encountered by the LGBT persons in need of services. "They were able to stand up before their audiences in this completely new atmosphere. The listeners had never heard any LGBT people tell their stories before. This was a powerful experience, for listeners and storytellers alike," Hill noted.

Hill believes that SpeakOUT has gained some access to the SSA with potential for future support. A follow-up meeting between SpeakOUT and OASAS has proved fruitful in moving the process forward. He hopes that the group that came together for the Statewide Gathering will form the nucleus of a statewide organization, with potential affiliates in Buffalo, Rochester, Ithaca, Syracuse, Albany, Long Island, and Westchester. "Perhaps most important, those who attended had the opportunity to get to know each other and take part in community building."

■ AWARE—

DEVELOPING VOICE AMONG TREATMENT CLIENTS

Chris Wade

Always Working Towards Advocating Recovery Environments

Sacramento, California

The Ahas!

▶ “We can learn from your information-gathering model. You are networked with agencies and clients, getting consumer information from the source and driving programs.”

▶ “Because you are in contact with clients, you know what the needs of people in treatment really are.”

▶ “You have built around clients as opposed to building around staff in the system.”

▶ “You could do a workshop to help other RCSP projects build on your approach.”

▶ “I like your idea of giving information back to the treatment centers. We’ve been struggling with how to get information to them. Maybe we can learn from your experience.”

▶ “Finding a way to directly access clients in treatment and providing information from them to treatment providers can increase the likelihood that the clients will see an advocacy role for themselves in a recovery community group when they graduate.”

One avenue to AWARE’s sustainability may be marketing a technique the group perfected while surveying clients in treatment on issues and their satisfaction with services. “We believe we can help sustain ourselves by providing technical assistance on how to conduct surveys among consumer groups,” Chris Wade noted.

Because its host agency, CAADPE, had long-standing relationships with treatment providers, AWARE was able to gain access into treatment programs to conduct confidential surveys among clients. Findings are disseminated to the program staff, thereby giving them information they can use to make treatment more “user friendly” and better matched with client needs. In addition, the findings are a source for information on recovery issues that AWARE disseminates widely.

AWARE also has established Advocacy Councils within the treatment centers, comprised of clients receiving treatment. “We provide guidance to these Councils, which have been designed to enable people to share experiences and help clients with low literacy develop group participation skills,” Wade said.

Some of the Advocacy Councils have evolved into client-centered activity groups, conducting such events as car washes and bake sales to support their activities. They are guided by Liaisons, staff identified by the Executive Directors of the programs as people who have earned the respect of clients. The Liaisons’ chief roles are to get information out about the survey results and other items of interest and to facilitate communication among the programs, clients, and AWARE.

Alumni of the treatment programs and their families and others in the recovery community often become AWARE members, participating on steering committees and task forces throughout California. They also select topics for AWARE surveys.

“Our overall aims are to generate information about recovery and disseminate it,” Wade said. “For example, we put out nonpartisan information about Proposition 36 and held educational forums on the issues surrounding it. We translate our surveys into Spanish, and circulate them as widely as possible. CAADPE members serve as volunteers in community efforts.”

AWARE, with offices in Southern and Northern California, holds an annual conference in each area of the State. “These have been real successes, with 400

people participating this year, double last year's number. One conference this year was taped by the Jim Lehrer News Hour, which presented highlights of our dialogue. The conferences give members the opportunity to interface with policymakers."

AWARE members emphasize relationships, with each other and with many target groups, including the Single State Agency, the Los Angeles Unified School District, Cub Scouts, and Rand Corporation. "County administrators have helped with advertising and getting media coverage. We have found that networking pays off," Wade said.

■ MOAR—
BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY
BY CAPITALIZING ON RECOVERY MONTH

Maryanne Frangules

Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery

Boston, Massachusetts

The Ahas!

► “You took advantage of something that had already been planned by CSAT, saving you from having to do all the hard work.”

► “Having a strategy with activities in different locations enabled you to accomplish more outcomes than you would have had with just one event.”

► “I appreciate that you pointed out that the recovery community is now participating alongside others who’ve been concerned about treatment issues for a long time. You gave the recovery movement a place within processes that have been going on for many years.”

► “MOAR is doing a good job using one event to serve multiple purposes: here you had anti-stigma, community mobilization, and alliance-building goals, and you strengthened the organizational relationship among affiliates. Raising the group’s profile with the SSA is a hopeful sign in terms of sustainability.”

Before MOAR became a NEAAR grantee affiliate, its members had taken part in numerous activities to focus attention on the need for improved treatment and access to it, such as a statehouse rally with William Cope Moyers as speaker. Before the grant, MOAR had been the lead agency conducting Recovery Month Events, when the annual September event was called “Treatment Works Month.”

Becoming a CSAT RCSP Grantee made Recovery Month even more meaningful. The MOAR Project Coordinator had been a CSAT National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month Planning Partner for a couple years. MOAR’s national participation in helping to create Recovery Month products and activities could be used in mobilizing members and building alliances. MOAR realized it could use these as avenues to reach and educate policymakers on issues of addiction, treatment, and recovery.

This year, for example, MOAR hosted a Recovery Month Statehouse Rally, with CSAT’s Director, Dr. H. Westley Clark, as the featured speaker. Dr. Clark conveyed an important anti-stigma message to policymakers by speaking on the theme that addiction crosses all cultural lines. “This was truly important, because the recovery community participants crossed cultural lines and were validated,” said Maryanne Frangules.

The event paid off in many other ways, including networking. “People became involved with us when we invited them to help us prepare for the Recovery Month Celebration. We got help from many sources, ranging from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Substance Abuse Services to a high school student who won a contest we sponsored to become the designer of the Rally program. The fact that many Legislators speak at this event, and validate the meaning of Recovery Month, is a powerful message to our membership and the Bureau,” Frangules noted.

MOAR’s regional affiliates became involved in Recovery Month activities of their own. Western Massachusetts MOAR devoted Recovery Month efforts to helping get a recovery house for youth and got a Legislator to come and speak at an event; Lowell MOAR presented four workshops on issues pertinent to adolescents and treatment. Government officials from various divisions participated in a town meeting.

MOAR created sustainability by building partnerships with providers and policy-makers, and by enhancing visibility within the recovery community. The project also focused on reaching out to cultures of varying ethnicities, increasing family participation, presenting awards, and contacting intergovernment agencies. “All of these are forms of sustaining growth by relationship building,” Frangules said. “Our Recovery Month brochure, pens, pins, and slides serve as sustaining memorabilia. Outside donations help provide financial sustainability.” And all the sustainability activities conducted through Recovery Month are ways of reducing the stigma which has permeated the recovery process.

“We’ve already started planning for next year’s Recovery Month, with five groups planning different activities,” Frangules commented. “The theme is straight from the Planning Partners’ design: ‘We Recover Together: Family, Friends, and Community.’”

(The April 2000 Grantee Meeting Highlights describes how MOAR planned and delivered the successful Recovery Month Statehouse Rally.)

■ CCAR—
BECOMING RECOGNIZED FOR WHO WE ARE

Bob Savage

*Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery
Wethersfield, Connecticut*

The Ahas!

- ▶ “Hearing you talk makes me think that historical tracking of events may be important. We need to be able to look at our accomplishments.”
- ▶ “I see how many steps have to be taken to reach a credibility level where people come to you.”
- ▶ “The drug court connection is brilliant. You gave us a good idea for something we could do in New York.”
- ▶ “Each successful activity leads to opportunities to undertake other activities, and before you know it, you are perceived by others as important. At that point, attracting funding is much easier.”

One of the challenges that a newly forming RCSP must face, while building the organization, is to plan, organize, and implement high-profile events that members can participate in and that help your organization to become known.

“It has taken *many* activities to bring a recovery organization to the level where people recognize who you are,” Bob Savage observed. “You have to be patient and put your credibility on the line so people will begin to see you as an organization they will commit to. And you have to work with many organizations.”

Some of these include the Single State Agency. “Developing a partnership with the SSA enables its leaders to see how important you are to them,” Savage said. “As a result of our work with our SSA, for example, we applied for and received a Federal grant to participate in developing a Latino HIV Integration Planning Project to empower Latino persons to advocate for the services they need. We are also working together to organize a Recovery Conference next November.”

Establishing allies among community organizations is another means to achieve results. “We partnered with Advocacy Unlimited, a mental health advocacy group, to develop ‘Basic Principles and Core Values’ for use in either mental health or addiction treatment programs,” Savage said. “The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services has endorsed these principles and core values, and they have invited CCAR to partner with them in providing training for the treatment providers that they fund.”

Also important is making contacts with policymakers to educate them about addiction, treatment, and recovery. “When we held our first membership-driven Legislative Day, we didn’t even know if anyone would come. But they did.” Now CCAR has had two successful days with Legislators. Each year that they conduct these events, they become more powerful.

Currently, CCAR is planning to work with other State agencies and treatment providers to help organize a Drug Court Alumni Association, to develop a youth drug court mentoring program, to conduct focus groups that will enable providers to hear clients’ views of how their respective programs are working, to provide advocacy for recovery support services, and to provide addiction treatment via the Internet.

All of these possibilities came about as CCAR’s reputation developed as a result of their successful high profile events. “You have to keep cultivating new ideas and activities,” Savage said.

■ CCAR—

MARCHING TOGETHER FOR RECOVERY

Phil Valentine

Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery

Wethersfield, Connecticut

Phil Valentine showed an engaging video that captured both the success and the spirit of the Recovery Walk CCAR sponsored in Recovery Month. “It was quite an experience to be there that day and see 700 people marching for recovery,” he commented. “Watching the video today, I couldn’t help thinking about how CCAR members had taken responsibility for the tasks and jobs connected with organizing the event. I realized how many agencies donated time or helped sponsor the walk.”

Valentine noted that CCAR gained 127 new members at the Walk. He told about tearful reunions as counselors saw former clients, still in recovery, happily participating. “These are old clients of mine,” they said. Before showing the video of the Walk, he said, “When you do something like this, you really get focused on the event. Vision and mission are involved, and it is wonderful to see how things fall into place.”

Teams, with a captain structure, were set up, with the teams competing to see who could win the most contributions as they went out and looked for people and organizations willing to contribute to the event as sponsors. Many members really got into this, as well as the countless other tasks involved, and had full ownership of the successful outcomes. CCAR was very careful, Valentine added, to share praise and thanks with all involved.

This was CCAR’s first fundraising venture of this sort, and it raised \$17,000. “The money is great,” said Valentine, “but the intangibles were just as good.” For example, the Walk put CCAR and its anti-stigma message in the public eye, motivated and inspired CCAR members, strengthened CCAR’s alliances within the treatment community, and provided energy for moving forward.

The Ahas!

▶ “My group has used events celebrating recovery to build a sense of community. CCAR is showing me how to take this to the next level, using celebration of recovery as a vehicle to reduce stigma and to invite others to contribute to the effort.”

▶ “That CCAR’s members did so much of the work shows that they cared, that they thought the march was worth something, that they think CCAR is worth something. It means they can be a driving force for sustainability.”

▶ “The members of our organization are not yet as committed as it seems the members of CCAR are. But you are giving me ideas of how to use events to strengthen that commitment.”

▶ “It is dawning on me that all of an RCSP project’s activities have implications for sustainability, and the problem may be that we do not always recognize this or capitalize on it.”

■ White Bison—

ALWAYS TALK TO THE ELDERS FIRST

Don Coyhis

Circles of Recovery Support Program

Colorado Springs, Colorado

The Ahas!

▶ “Keep it simple, and let it flow.”

▶ “What a great blend of traditional belief and modern technology.”

▶ “You acknowledge that you stole someone’s idea. We all have to do that.”

▶ “You really use every way there is to communicate. You help me see that communication, regular and in every direction, is part of the cement that builds a sustainable community.”

Regarding sustainability, Don Coyhis said, “Go and talk to the elders first. We did, and they told us that if we modeled our project after nature, we could create a system that is self-sustaining. For a tree to live, human beings and animals have to exhale. The tree takes our breath and then gives it back to us. Think about nature, and you will understand sustainability. And remember that everything travels in circles or cycles.”

Coyhis described how White Bison made two journeys with the Sacred Hoop, visiting 57 communities and holding 10 conferences. Then, 172 Firestarters were recruited across the country and trained to facilitate 12-Step programs modified for Indian members. “Fifty-two active circles have been created by the Firestarters, and broken into other circles. We plan to train 100 more,” Coyhis said. Materials on recovery were distributed to Native libraries; people can copy them and hand them on, and White Bison staff and members don’t have to be involved everywhere.

For sustainability, White Bison knew it had to have a website, which now is receiving 34,000 hits a week. “We knew that our people in dispersed locations could benefit from communicating with each other, so we created a listserv. This started virtual talking circles on the web, and enables Firestarters to talk to each other and to elders,” he said.

White Bison also started Wellbriety Magazine. “We are tracking how many hits it gets. If there are enough, we will sell advertising,” Coyhis said.

The magazine was conceived as the Firestarters’ magazine. They are the writers, making the magazine self-sustaining. White Bison refers to sending e-mails as “pulsing.” White Bison pulses the Firestarters every Friday, and they have come to expect regular messages from White Bison. Busy people are pulsed, so contact can be made with them quickly. Nearly 40,000 people receive information from White Bison, via pulsing. “The power behind what we are doing is spiritual. When you log on, you have immediate harmony with thousands of other people.”

Coyhis closed by saying that White Bison even steals ideas. To prove his point, he showed a graphic of the Wellbriety Tree, with little white bison on it for ornaments. People are asked to put their name on a little bison if they are in recovery. “This enables us to put a face on recovery, and helps us illustrate that when you are in recovery, you can hold your head high.”

■ MEETING REPORT NO. 2

Coaching Sessions

GRANTEE MEETING AND COACHING SESSIONS

■ RAISING QUESTIONS AND SHARING TIPS ON SUSTAINABILITY

The Coaching Sessions were designed to give representatives from each grant the opportunity to raise issues and concerns in specific topic areas related to sustainability, and to share tips and advice with others in small groups. In these sessions, CCI facilitators skillfully tapped into the experiences of all members of the groups, provided tips from their own experiences, and pointed group members toward resources that would help them develop and implement their ideas when they returned home. Many of these resources were available as handouts, enabling grantees to mail home enough valuable materials to fill a large binder.

The Coaching Sessions design reflected the consensus view that sustaining a recovery community organization is about much more than funding—although funding is, of course, an important component. The RCSP is about building recovery community capacity to have a voice in policies, systems, and services dealing with addiction, treatment and recovery. Therefore, sustainability is, most fundamentally, all the action taken to sustain that voice.

Coaching Sessions focused on four aspects of sustaining the voice of the recovery community:

- *Leadership and Partnership Development:* Is the RCSP project developing leaders with the commitment and skills to participate in the public dialogue about addiction, treatment, and recovery? Is the project cultivating its relationships with partners who have a stake in having that voice heard? How can we improve on both fronts?
- *Organizational Development and Program Redevelopment:* Is the recovery community group developing an organizational structure that “fits” its mission and is consistent with its stage in the developmental process? Is it time to look at the RCSP project and consider alternative organizational arrangements?
- *Media and Promotion:* Has the organization developed message skills that make its voice heard? Are these skills being deployed to promote sustaining the voice over time?
- *Resource Development:* How does the RCSP project take all of this—its leadership, its partners, its organizational processes and its message skills—and develop funding and other resources needed to continue after Federal funding ends?

■ LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

“The servant leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. This conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of an unusual drive for power or the need to acquire material possessions.”

Robert Greenleaf
Servant Leadership

These Coaching Sessions focused on internal stakeholders (leaders) and external stakeholders (potential partners).

TIPS ON LEADER DEVELOPMENT

- The first step in developing leaders is answering two questions: What are the functions we need to have performed? How do these functions match the passions of particular members?
- Don't assume you know what motivates your members. Ask. Let *their* motivations determine actions and directions of the group.

- Make sure your group’s vision—“a world where every addict and alcoholic can get the help they need to find and keep recovery”—is big enough to reflect what motivates your members and inspires them. Many RCSP projects have found that focusing exclusively on treatment issues leaves many members cold, and that broadening the focus to include recovery in all its dimensions is very powerful.
- Strive for transparency in the organization’s decision-making processes. If members feel powerless over decision-making, they will not invest energy or take on responsibilities.
- Make sure members have roles available to them where they can lead, not just implement or report.
- Leadership roles can be “transitioned” to members through mentoring or shadowing. In mentoring, a more experienced member (or staff person) helps a less experienced member prepare to carry out a role. In shadowing, the less experienced person works collaboratively with a more experienced person, who gradually phases out of the responsibility.
- Encourage leaders to develop, not stagnate. A person may have provided one type of leadership to date, but now may be ready to move on to other challenges in the RCSP project.
- Be strategic and go looking for talent. If you need a member with particular attributes—a specific skill set, for example—go looking for this type of person. The recovery community has all the talent you will ever need.
- Be creative. Do you need to provide childcare during meetings to enable young mothers to attend? Do you have a potential leader who is housebound, but could manage your membership list at home on a computer?
- Look at the roles of paid staff. Sometimes staff are reluctant to delegate responsibility.
- Look at member dynamics. Sometimes one member gets so enthusiastic that he or she will want to take everything on. Is that creating resentment and turning off other potential leaders?
- Develop ways of continually taking the organization’s temperature. For example, routinely asking members to critique meetings—how involved they felt, how productive the meeting was—can be a way to identify problems before they turn into bigger ones.
- When things aren’t going right, consider intervention possibilities: e.g., observing and reworking processes, making structural realignments, doing conceptual rethinking, and developing conflict resolution strategies.

TIPS ON PARTNERS

- Think about the categories of people who want the voices of recovering people to be heard in the public dialogue about addiction, treatment, and recovery. For example:
 - People in the treatment world
 - People who provide recovery support services
 - People in other grassroots groups.
- Your recovery community organization may not be in agreement with all of these people all of the time, but if people in these groups can see how your organization can help them achieve their mission, and you can see how they can help your recovery community group achieve its mission, you have the makings of a relationship.
- Peter Drucker, the management guru, has set forth five definitional steps that you must take to define your organization to others (and yourself). When you know the answers to these questions, you know your organization well enough to be confident in entering relationships with others:
 - What is our mission?
 - Who is our primary customer?
 - What do our customers value?
 - What is our plan?
 - What are the results we hope to achieve?
- If your RCSP project is still developing its sense of identity and mission, look for relationships that respect your stage of development and honor your need to be building your constituency.
- Remember, there are many different kinds of relationships, with different levels of trust and accountability. Most relationships start with becoming acquainted, and it is never too soon to begin building the network of relationships that your project has at its current stage.
- As a recovery community group builds a network of relationships, opportunities will arise to deepen some of them. Some of these relationships will turn out, over time, to have funding and other sustainability implications. There is nothing wrong with thinking strategically about this potential from the beginning.

■ ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRAM REDEVELOPMENT

The questions raised by participants in these Coaching Sessions revealed that many grantees are seriously considering, and in many cases implementing, significant organizational changes as they work toward mapping their futures.

“We are in the process of spinning off from our host agency. The host agency is supportive of this, but it is a very difficult process and we are worried about maintaining momentum.”

“It may make sense to stay with our host agency for lots of reasons, but how do we assure that the recovery community is not just viewed as foot soldiers in the host agency’s army?”

“How can we take what we have learned about building a recovery community organization and build affiliates at other sites?”

“Now that we are establishing affiliates, how should we define our relationship to them?”

“We have six projects under one host agency. Once the grant ends, how will the six projects relate to one another?”

“Trying to deal with sustainability issues on top of everything else is straining staff to the limit. There is just too much to do.”

“During the CSAT grant, we have had money for staff. If we have no money, we will have no staff, and our existing organizational model will have to be substantially revamped. What should we be doing about this?”

These questions lent themselves to more in-depth technical assistance than the Coaching Sessions were designed to accomplish. Nevertheless, they generated much spirited discussion among participants, and a lot of project-specific discussion. Many general tips emerged.

TIPS ON STRUCTURE REDESIGN

- Do not lose track of your vision, mission, and goals as you consider whether and how to modify your organizational structures. They will keep you rooted during modification.
- This does not mean that your vision, mission, and goals are set in concrete. On the contrary, they may need some adjustment. Some things may seem more important than others. In some cases, you may need different strategies to achieve the same ends.
- If participatory processes have served you well to date, they will serve you well as you consider redesign issues.

- As you consider organizational issues, remember both your leaders and your partners. Times of transition in organizational structure and effort are an opportunity for members to grow in responsibility, and for partners who have benefited from their relationship with the project to contribute to its future.

■ MEDIA AND PROMOTION

These Coaching Sessions focused on Message Development, Media Relations and Skills, and Promotional Products and Events.

TIPS ON MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Remember everything you know about how to build an effective organizing message. Building an effective fundraising message requires exactly the same skills.
- Target your audience. Know what your audience already knows, is interested in, and is looking for.
- Don't forget your SOCO—single overriding communication objective (see *Meeting Highlights*, December 1999). Clarity is persuasive.

TIPS ON MEDIA RELATIONS AND SKILLS

- Making a promotional video can be a very expensive proposition. You can save money by negotiating with an art college or film school to have students do the promo as a field activity for credit. Professionals and students alike often enjoy working with and learning about the recovery community. One professional who developed a website for an RCSP became so interested in the group that he offered pro bono classes in web development and design to interested members. In the process, they acquired the skills to handle the website in a professional way.
- It is important to “look official” and have an image. People contribute to organizations that are “up and running.” The look and image come from your materials—from letterhead to logo to brochure.
- Whenever you draft a promotional piece, get feedback on it before you print it. Ask people to read it and tell you what they learned from it.

Did they get the message you wanted them to get? If not, go back to the drawing boards.

- The key to successful promotional efforts is to articulate a problem and offer a solution to it.
- To attract attention, it is important to use color effectively.
- Size is important too. Smaller, larger, or unusually sized pieces attract attention.
- Develop a look or a logo and think of it as a brand. Use it on every piece you produce, and it will help establish identity as soon as someone sees one of your new pieces of literature.
- Learn to do press releases—short, one-page stories, identified with a logo.
- You can do a “photo op.” Tell TV and newspaper staff what kinds of shots they can get at your recovery walk.

TIPS ON HOLDING SPECIAL EVENTS

- Don't hold special events to brainstorm or solve problems.
- Special events are mechanisms that provide a way of being present to the community and that enable people to share in the group's accomplishments.
- People learn from being in contact with each other at special events. They hear new ideas that enable them to shift their thinking or understand the organization better. Invite people whom you want to influence.
- Holding special events successfully requires a great deal of attention to detail. Volunteer workers are required, but they must be supported.
- Don't use the same volunteers for every special event. Rotate people in a volunteer succession plan.
- You have to do things right. If the event is at a Holiday Inn and there are five Holiday Inns, be sure you get the right address on the invitations.
- You have to figure out how much it is going to cost.
- You can use a special event to help members learn fiscal responsibility. It's their money.

- You can ask people to make donations that cover the cost of the event so you don't have to go into your budget.
- Special events are more likely to fail if you have not answered these two questions: 1) Why do you want to do it? 2) Who are you doing it for?
- You have to have a plan for the event. For every activity you choose to include, you have to exclude something else. Plan carefully.
- What are your financial targets for the event? Don't just spend until the money's gone. That's not the way to make good budget decisions.
- Always remember that anything can happen.
- In the end, you have to ask: Was holding this event more taxing or more liberating?
- Special event planning is a chance to help members experience shared leadership. But somebody has to watch the independent "wild stallions" who get carried away with a big idea.
- You also have to have a balance among events. Sometimes people get fixated on a certain kind of event. It is possible to have too many candlelight vigils.
- Remember that you are doing more than having an event. You are also developing leaders, mobilizing the community, showcasing the RCSP, reducing stigma, etc.
- Evaluation of the event is really important to find out if it was worthwhile. That will help you make decisions about future events. But be sure to evaluate the costs, not just the benefits.

■ RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

RCSP projects can learn from the practices in use by organizations that have good records at fundraising. Here are some tips.

TIPS ON FUNDRAISING INFRASTRUCTURE: METHODS AND MIX

- Focus your planning for fundraising on the “tripod” of development, seeking funds from three categories to support the organization:
 - *Annual fund drives*, which raise funds to support the operating budget.
 - *Donations*, which contribute to the operating budget and special funds; these can range from small donations by members to planned and deferred giving. Members who know the most about the organization and are most “bought-in” to it may increase the size of their contributions over time. Donors tend to be loyal when you keep them informed, and may give major gifts. Deferred gifts (endowments) are the ultimate gift. Planned gifts may be death bequests, etc.
 - *Capital fundraising*, which obtains larger quantities of dollars targeted for specific projects.
- Remember the “Five I’s” of successful fundraising:
 - *Identify* potential donors.
 - *Inform* them of your mission and efforts.
 - *Interest* them in what you are doing.
 - *Involve* them and get a “buy-in.”
 - *Investment* by donor in your organization.
- Members of your board can help plan fundraising activities. Relevant terms to remember are affluence, influence, and passion. These are the three most important criteria for board membership. Each board member must have at least one of these characteristics, preferably two. If they have affluence or influence, ask them to help create the RCSP’s fundraising plans.
- People can get over their lack of interest in fundraising and reluctance to take part in it; provide training, and some will find they like it. Help participating members overcome their fears of rejection, embarrassment,

or the feeling that they have to give something in return. Seeking funds is not begging. It gives people the opportunity to do a good thing for the community.

- It is important to have a fundraising plan, which has several components:
 - Seeking gifts through solicitation, which can be face to face or by phone, direct mail, or the Internet. Personal solicitation is the most effective way of raising funds.
 - Making a step-by-step approach to a foundation.
 - Seeking corporate sponsorship for special activities.
 - Holding fundraising events.
- You may be able to find a person in recovery who has a lot of money and a philanthropic bent. You may be able to find more than one. You won't know until you ask.
- The case for support is very important. It needs to be clear and direct. Too many people try to raise funds without developing a case for support. (See *Meeting Highlights*, December 1999.)

TIPS ON BUILDING AN INDIVIDUAL DONOR BASE

- Make presentations about the work of your recovery organization to groups of recovering people like Lawyers Helping Lawyers. Capture names and addresses. Remember, many people in the recovery community may not be in a position to give time and energy to your endeavor, but would be happy to support it financially, or to use their influence in ways that can be helpful to your fundraising efforts.
- Ask for members' help in developing an individual donor base. Members have personal recovery networks and can give very good leads to potential contributors.
- Hold a special event, and capture names and addresses of people who attend and demonstrate an interest in your organization.
- Have a booth at conferences and local events. Capture names and addresses of people who stop to talk.
- Try to establish a foothold with the Chamber of Commerce as an avenue to people representing organizations with funds to give.
- Don't forget, individual donors can make in-kind contributions. For example, ask a recovering person with name recognition to lend his or her name to supporting the work of your group. Or to make a 3-minute video about your organization that you can use with multiple audiences.

TIPS ON USING YOUR MEMBERS FOR FUNDRAISING

- It is a mistake to think members should not be involved in fundraising. Many of them will enjoy it, and be very effective. It will deepen their ownership of the RCSP projects and increase their sense of commitment.
- Fundraising also builds member skills, which will empower them and increase their value to the organization. Fundraising can be a means for moving people up the leadership ladder.
- Connect “The Ask” to the issues that concern members; help members develop skills in articulating the issues in an engaging way.
- Don’t overlook your members’ recovery networks. Many members have information and contacts that can be useful in any fundraising effort.
- Help members see that telling the RCSP story to potential donors is a way to promote the project’s goals, putting the recovery community’s messages into circulation whether they raise any funds or not.

TIPS ON USING YOUR PARTNERS FOR FUNDRAISING

- As part of developing a Sustainability Plan, review all of your organization’s relationships with partners. What can each of them do to help?
- Some may be willing to share their fundraising experience with you, even introduce you to some of their funding contacts, especially if they do not see you as a competitor for the same funds.
- Others may be willing to write strong letters of support, documenting your project’s contributions to the community and explaining how your efforts have strengthened their own capacities.
- Some partners will be able to make in-kind contributions. One such contribution might be grant-writing assistance.
- Some may be in a position to purchase products or services from your group.
- Some may be willing to partner with your recovery community group in a common fundraising effort.

Meeting Conclusion

As the Grantee Meeting and Coaching Sessions drew to a close, participants agreed that they had gained many fruitful ideas for steps they could take to contribute to the future sustainability of their organizations. They left with great enthusiasm for their remaining work ahead.

