In Memory of a Good Friend

On March 15, Sierra Health Foundation lost a good friend — founding Board Member, Dr. James J. Schubert, who passed away after a long illness. Jim's leadership on the Board and sincere dedication to the mission of the Foundation was greatly admired by his fellow Board Members, the staff and others affiliated with the Foundation over the years. He was a great advisor and had a wit that will be greatly missed.

Most recently, Dr. Schubert was President of Schubert Associates, Inc., a managed care consulting firm in Sacramento. His contributions in the Sacramento region, however, extended well into other areas of health. A true pioneer in the Sacramento medical community, Dr. Schubert served as Vice President of Health Affairs for Foundation Health Corporation, where he was also Chairman of the Board and Medical Director. Jim was a faculty member and clinical professor of Orthopedic Surgery for the University of California, Davis. Early in his medical career, he served as a consultant to the U.S. Army at Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco and held a private practice in Orthopedic Surgery in Sacramento.

Dr. Schubert was an important force in the development and success of Sierra Health Foundation and will long be remembered as a proponent of quality health services and philanthropy.

Childhood Memories Stir Passion for Medicine — the Sierra Health Foundation MD/MBA Scholars Program

The Sierra Health Foundation MD/MBA Scholars Program at the University of California, Davis, is a program of promise. It is designed to develop in physician leaders excellent medical skills as well as the management skills and business background necessary to function in a managed care environment. When you connect the goals of the MD/MBA Scholars Program with the Foundation's long-standing commitment to supporting medically underserved communities, you inevitably meet people with the same goals; someone like Thomas Thanh Bui, the most recent recipient of a MD/MBA scholarship.

Thomas Thanh Bui was eight months old when his family left Vietnam in the wake of the Vietnam War. He has firsthand experience with the difficulties of finding healthcare, “My family struggled to seek healthcare,” Thomas says, “I remember the long lines and the waiting. I identify with the immigrant experience of having neither accessible healthcare nor healthcare continuity.”

Beginning his third year at the UC Davis School of Medicine this fall, Thomas says he discovered the satisfaction of helping others as he grew up and helped take care of his nine siblings. This desire to help others was further manifested during his years in the seminary studying to become a priest. However, his sense of service-as-ministry developed into a calling to medicine. “I view my pursuit of a career in medicine as my vocation and ministry. A long time ago I recognized the symbolism of waiting in those long lines: the lack of medical care for low-income families,” Thomas says. “I’ve made a commitment to serve those less fortunate and medically underserved communities with whom I identify.”

His ability to meet the challenges of the MD/MBA Scholars Program is not doubted by those who know him. His desire to serve the medically underserved is demonstrated through his work as co-director of the Paul Hom Asian Clinic, the student-run clinic at the UC Davis School of Medicine, which cares for 150 low-income patients each month. He is also President of the UC Davis chapter of the American Medical Student Association and co-founder of the UC Davis Medical School Inter-Clinic Council, a coalition of the four student-run medical clinics at UC Davis, designed to better manage the resources of the University and community dedicated to operating them.

Even Thomas’ free time is devoted to helping others. A group of 20 people from UC Davis are riding bicycles from San Francisco to Washington DC this summer. “We’ll ride during the day and sleep in YMCA’s or church basements at night. We plan to stop for a day or two every four or five days in towns across the country to do community service — like painting over graffiti or helping build or remodel low-income housing,” Thomas continued with a laugh, “The first few days of riding will probably be tough, but after that it should be a lot of fun.” It is clear he is already enjoying his journey toward becoming a doctor.

The Sierra Health Foundation MD/MBA Scholar Program granted full scholarships to distinguished medical students who will provide clinical and business leadership within managed care systems in northern California, particularly among underserved populations. Scholars have been chosen based on academic excellence, a demonstrated interest in health care economics, a commitment to northern California, and a focus on providing health care to the underserved. In addition to four years obtaining a MD degree, they will invest two years in a rigorous MBA program with an emphasis on finance and management.

“...I’ve made a commitment to serve those less fortunate and medically underserved communities with whom I identify.”

Thomas Thanh Bui
Sierra Health Foundation
MD/MBA Scholar
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

“This is surely an exciting time for all — as we continue to mobilize to both shape and secure the future of the initiative, the sustainability of the collaboratives, and the health and well-being of the children in the region.”

Sierra Health Foundation Welcomes Former Central Valley Mayor to Board of Directors

Sierra Health Foundation is pleased to announce the appointment of Carol G. Whiteside to its Board of Directors.

Currently President of The Great Valley Center in Modesto, Carol has dedicated over 25 years to public service in community and governmental organizations. Ms. Whiteside served Governor Pete Wilson as Director of Intergovernmental Affairs from 1993 to 1997. She served as Mayor of Modesto from 1987 to 1991. Prior to becoming Mayor, she was a member of the Modesto City Council from 1983 to 1987. She also served her community as a School Board Trustee from 1979 to 1983 and as School Board President from 1981 to 1983.

Carol Whiteside used her expertise in government and knowledge to found the Great Valley Center, a non-profit corporation created to support activities and organizations that promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of California’s Central Valley. It is the first nongovernment organization to approach the Central Valley as a region, supporting the integration of economic, social and environmental goals.

The Board of Directors looks forward to the unique insights and perspectives Carol will bring to the Foundation as it looks forward in its grantmaking opportunities and involvement in the growth and prosperity of its region. Carol received her B.A. in psychology from the University of California, Davis, and resides in Modesto with her husband, Superior Court Judge John G. Whiteside. The Whitesides have two sons, Brian and Derek. Her appointment to the Board of Directors was effective January 1, 2000.
What’s Going on in Philanthropy?

By its nature philanthropy is not immutable; like the people and programs it supports, philanthropy changes with the times, sometimes dramatically.
— Dorothy Meehan

In case you haven’t heard, the 1990s saw some dramatic changes on the face of philanthropy, from new foundations being created by newly wealthy “dot com” millionaires to wealth produced by nonprofit to for-profit conversions. This extraordinary “growth in giving” is worthy of considerable discussion.

For several years now, I have used this column as a way to teach grant writers and prospective grantees how to turn ideas into funded efforts. From the selection of the column’s title to its content, every tip, suggestion, and recommendation is designed to facilitate the tedious job of “getting the money.”

Every funder knows, and eventually every grant writer figures out, that quality proposals — the major challenge for grant writers — make “getting the money” a lot easier. But philanthropists have their challenges too, and, I think it’s important for you, the grantee, to know what trends and changes are influencing those holding the purse strings.

By its nature philanthropy is not immutable; like the people and programs it supports, philanthropy changes with the times, sometimes dramatically. As I said earlier, the 1990s saw sweeping changes — shifts in thought and policy that seem to be creating a new type of philanthropy.

Typically in spring, foundations hold a number of educational meetings and conferences, and over the past few months, I’ve had the good fortune to attend several. One by-product of these sessions is the opportunity to meet with colleagues across the nation to extract information and exchange ideas. This year’s meetings were particularly dynamic. The ground swell of change within the world of philanthropy was apparent. For those of us engaged in its work, the changes are both exhilarating and intimidating, and a few of them even contradictory.

Following is a recap of some of the recent trends I’ve observed.

Leadership

As we have learned time and again, an effort will only be as good as the person(s) leading it. More and more, foundations are recognizing the importance of developing and sustaining qualified leaders within their organizations and in the communities they fund. Some foundations are “leading” the way by adding leadership development support to their funding strategies.

General Operating Support, Overhead and Capacity

Have you ever tried to boil water without a pan? Well, many nonprofits find they can’t achieve their goals if they don’t have the requisite overhead (pans, if you will) to support their efforts. Fortunately, many funders are now thinking the same way.

Funders now realize upkeep and maintenance support is fundamental to developing strong and stable organizations. Furthermore, funders are keenly aware that sustaining a program depends on the strength and capacity of the organizations they fund. Today, more foundations are investing funds into board and staff development and management information systems, and providing general operating support grants.

Nonprofit vs. For-Profit

Interestingly enough, the lines are beginning to blur between the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. More and more foundations now consider the for-profit sector as potential grantees. This is an important and fundamental shift in philanthropy. The underpinning for this shift is the realization that a job gets done can be more valuable than who does the work, regardless of tax-exempt status. Funders are always looking for the biggest “bang” for their bucks. They do not discriminate and see both sectors as fair play. In fact, the administration of funds to the for-profit sector usually creates additional work for foundations, but statistics show funders are willing to take on this extra workload to achieve notable results.

Evaluation

Mark my words! Funders today are placing increased emphasis on the importance of evaluation in the grantmaking process. Trends show funders are looking hard and strategically at how well potential grantees are able to articulate their “theories of change,” or how the activities the applicant proposes will cause change in an individual, organization or system. Funders also want reinsurance the applicant has the necessary tools in place to evaluate those theories.

Communication

Foundations, through leadership, grantmaking, and long-term targeted initiatives have the potential of touching millions of people throughout the world. The cornerstone of this outreach is communication — a contemporary and critical component for all philanthropic endeavors. The mission of every foundation is to match compelling ideas with congruent funds and become a disciple of change by supporting innovative strategies. Communication is the right tool to complete the mission. As Paul O’Neill, the Chairman, and CEO of Alcoa Corporation, recently shared: “A great idea without communication is no idea.” Foundations and their grantees should take a page out of this book and regularly integrate communication activities into their program and evaluation efforts.

Size of Grants

Foundations traditionally focus on both ends of the grant-awards spectrum. Larger foundations tend to award fewer but substantial grants to minimize their overhead per grant ratio; smaller foundations, on the other hand, award most of their endowment in support of a large number of very modest grants.

Convening

A number of foundations are taking on the innovative role of a neutral convener. As many of you know, for the past five years, Sierra Health Foundation has been offering meeting space, on an in-kind basis, to nonprofits located in its funding region. Many foundations are following suit, and like Sierra Health Foundation, other funders see convening as an extension of their grantmaking activities and a way to champion their philosophy. Because independent foundations are not governed by donors, voters, or...
A Visit to Butte County
Leveraging a Diverse Combination of Resources

It would be easy for everyone to go their own separate ways in Butte County, for the choices are many. That was true even 150 years ago when Oroville was the rip-roaring venue for energetic gold miners. Butte was the largest county in the state, and the fertile earth all but begged to be tilled and planted. Today, even after the defection of territories to form five other counties, Butte remains one of the larger counties in California. Sometimes it doesn’t seem large enough to contain all the diverse strands of life that have taken root there. Butte County is:

• A large agricultural base that joins the timber/lumber industry in giving the county's employment picture up-and-down swings in tune with the seasons, nature's disobedience and government regulations.
• A small but strong intellectual faction that centers around California State University, Chico, that gives the otherwise conservative county a liberal bent.
• A retirement community which comes for the lifestyle and rich foothill beauty.
• A removal and displaced community which enjoys the seasons, nature's disobedience and government regulations.
• A worried group of civic leaders and activists who want to find some way to embrace and capture a share of the state's booming economy without uprooting the many advantages of life in a rural, largely undeveloped paradise.

Lessons learned in collaboration.

These diverse interests can take people in different directions when issues arise and problems need to be solved. That’s one reason that Jana Wilson, coordinator of the Community Health Alliance of Oroville, has found the tenets of Sierra Health Foundation’s collaborative process so attractive.

“The lessons we have learned about collaboration will be long lasting and tangible,” Wilson says.

Maureen Pierce echoes Wilson’s sentiments. As Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Chico, she sees how a funding seed planted by Sierra Health Foundation can quickly sprout through leveraging. In June 1999, the Foundation gave $250,000 to the Boys and Girls Club of Chico to jumpstart funding for the purchase and refurbishing of a warehouse for a teen center.

“This was the first commitment of significant dollars to the Boys and Girls Club project,” says Pierce. “With that money in hand, we were able to convince the S.H. Cowell Foundation to give us $300,000 and the city to commit to $200,000 in community development block grant funds. With another $100,000 from the business community and other organizations’ support, we were able to purchase the warehouse and begin the necessary renovations.”

The club has been in operation since 1995, but in recent times has been trying to serve about 100 children a day in the original facility which was designed for 65. When the warehouse across the street lost its tenant, it seemed like the perfect opportunity — and with Sierra Health Foundation's help, the Boys and Girls Club was able to lease the warehouse until enough funds could be raised to purchase it. Today, teens have already scrubbed, painted and furnished the facility. And although the retrofitting that will provide heat and air conditioning is still in the future, the teens have settled in and made the place their own. The site is limited to 50 kids now while repairs are still underway, but eventually it should serve up to 200 youths a day and provide the city with a much-needed gymnasium.

“We're a good fit for Sierra Health Foundation because we are very collaborative and community oriented,” Pierce says. “We collaborate with other programs that don’t have a facility, like the local recreation departments, schools, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and scouting groups. We make an effort to link with and become partners with other organizations in the community to make sure that children get the broad range of services they need.”
More than anything, Pierce says she appreciates the “domino effect” that Sierra Health Foundation funds provides. “With their support in hand, it is easier to get others to look at our plans, think about the needs and then pitch in and help,” she says. “And it sets an example for the kids who sometimes don’t feel connected to anything in their lives. Here, we are all connected and they see what a community can do when it works together.”

Beyond collaboration and leveraging, Butte County Supervisor Mary Anne Houx identifies one other concept as a hallmark of Sierra Health Foundation: practicality. From teacher to school board member to city council and now to county government, Houx has had enough experience to know that solutions are not always obvious — and what’s important is what works.

For instance, the barriers that keep families from doing what they should sometimes have little to do with the immediate issue. Perhaps medical care is out of reach, not because of lack of insurance or money but because transportation isn’t available. Sometimes a family is on welfare, not because there is no job but because there is no affordable childcare. In Butte County, Houx says she believes in looking beyond the immediate problem to long-term, practical solutions. “How can money be used to do the most good in the community, to promote healthy children and families?”

The Foundation has taken this approach in its involvement in Butte County. In 1987 in one of its first grants in the county, the Foundation gave $6,332 to the Butte Community College Foundation to support a program that improved the skills of rural nurses — a tangential but effective way to enhance health care. Through the following 13 years, Sierra Health Foundation has given almost $1 million to different organizations in Butte County, some in small, strategically targeted amounts and others in large, broad-based grants. The small amounts are often to give a boost to a specific project or tide over an organization until other sustainable funding comes into play. The larger grants often provide the keystone for a program or objective that can then be leveraged with other resources.

Houx, who sat on an advisory board for the Foundation remembers the thoroughness of the grant review process. “Sometimes it seems like government just throws money at issues,” she says. “The Foundation’s approach is to not just give you everything, but to come in and support what you are trying to accomplish with help that makes sense.”
Health Grants

The Health Grants Program aims to expand the delivery of health care services, expand the use of health care resources, and positively impact the health of underserved populations. It is a $1–2 million annual grantmaking effort.

Mini Grants

Grants for $10,000 and under are accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Community Partnerships for Healthy Children Grants

Grantswise

Continued from page three stockholders, they are able to convene disparate parties around critical issues. Oftentimes funders will use convening as a way to marry their mission with the goals and objectives of the communities they support, creating multiple benefits for all concerned. Indeed, as you approach foundations for support, step outside of the grant arena and consider the other ways a foundation can assist your program outside of direct grants. You might be surprised at what’s available to you.

This column isn’t big enough to tell you about all of the changes and trends occurring in philanthropy at the beginning of this new millennium — time and space do not permit. The information I’ve presented is not the result of a scientific survey but reflects what foundation staffs nationwide are seeing and hearing from their peers. If you’re scratching your head at this point and wondering what it all means, I suggest you write to me at Sierra Health Foundation, or e-mail your questions to info@sierrahealth.org.
Sacramento-El Dorado Medical Society Recognizes Sierra Health Foundation

Each year the Sacramento-El Dorado Medical Society (SEDMS) presents a Medical Community Service Award to a non-physician member, leader, or community organization in the Sacramento and El Dorado county area who has made a significant contribution to a medical or public health problem. Sierra Health Foundation is the 2000 award recipient.

The Foundation was honored for its support and contributions to the Sacramento AIDS Foundation, UC Davis Medical School, the Sacramento Red Cross, the Sacramento La Familia Counseling Centers, the Boys and Girls Club and other community organizations in Sacramento and El Dorado counties. Other work for which the Foundation was recognized includes the Community Partnerships for Healthy Children initiative and the brightSMILES dental health program.

The Sacramento-El Dorado Medical Society is dedicated to upholding the authority and autonomy of physicians in the delivery of professional and ethical medical care. Members of SEDMS also belong to the California Medical Association and many members are part of the American Medical Association. Through membership in SEDMS and participation in its committees and public health activities, physicians promote the art and science of medicine and defend the public health.

SEDMS is the largest voluntary, nonprofit physician association in northern California with nearly 1,600 physician members. SEDMS was incorporated as the Sacramento Society for Medical Improvement on March 17, 1868, and has roots dating back to May 1850, six months before California achieved statehood.

Len McCandlis, President of Sierra Health Foundation, said, “The Foundation feels particularly privileged to be recognized by the Sacramento-El Dorado Medical Society for its contributions in the area of community service.” McCandlis further said, “As a northern California grantmaker, the benefits of the endowment are spread across a larger region, but the Foundation has worked closely with the local medical community over the years on a number of important projects and initiatives. The greater Sacramento area is extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated and skilled group of medical professionals.”

We Did It Ourselves
Foundation Releases Guide Books on Community Collaboration

Sierra Health Foundation is pleased to announce the release of We Did It Ourselves: Guidelines for Successful Community Collaboration. This comprehensive new resource is a three-volume set of Guide Books written by Sierra Health Foundation, the Center for Collaborative Planning, and SRI International. Each Guide Book illustrates the step-by-step approaches CPHC communities took to develop a vision for children’s health, identify and mobilize local assets, engage communities to reach their goals, and learn from their successes and challenges.

These Guide Books were written with the help of people in the communities who, with their hard work, are effecting change at the local level.

Book One, written by the Center for Collaborative Planning, is entitled We Did It Ourselves: A Guide Book to Improve the Well-Being of Children Through Community Development. It walks the reader through an asset-based approach to community engagement, planning, and action for the health and well-being of children, families, and communities.

Book Two, titled We Did It Ourselves, An Evaluation Guide Book, by SRI International, is a lay person’s guide to the complex methodology of evaluating community building and development efforts. This guide book takes the reader through the stages of assessing and measuring community-based efforts.

Book Three, If We Speak They Will Listen, The Importance of Communication Activities in Collaborative Building and Planning, by Sierra Health Foundation, is a guide for successful communication. It focuses on a menu of communication tools and methods a community collaborative can use to get its message to the people who need to hear it.

Each set of We Did It Ourselves: Guidelines for Successful Community Collaboration is available for $50. Copies can be ordered by completing the form below.

You can also order with your Visa or MasterCard by calling 1-800-617-7433, or by faxing the form complete with credit card information, to (916) 783-0640. An order form can also be downloaded from the Foundation Web site at www.sierrahealth.org.
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