

Tara Connolly

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Accomplished high-performing, strategic-thinking professional with more than ten years of experience in the non-profit sector. Highly-skilled at relationship building with constituent groups including boards, committees, volunteers and external audiences. Exceptional writing, presenting, and interpersonal communicational skills. Experienced at creating and managing projects from conception to completion. Detailed oriented and recognized for improving organizational efficiencies through policy and process development. Extensive experience with non-profit management and governance.

HIGHLIGHTED EXPERIENCE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *Des Moines Area Community College Foundation, Ankeny, Iowa* *March 2011 – Present*

- Directs the operations of a non-profit educational foundation with an endowment of \$11 million, reporting to the President of the College and an 18 member Board of Directors. Manages staff of two professionals.
- Provides leadership and vision for all philanthropic initiatives for Des Moines Area Community College.
- Develops and manages annual operating budget of \$400,000, monitors and analyzes performance and productivity and implements necessary corrective plans.
- Created and manages strategic plan for a comprehensive philanthropic development program including the annual and capital fundraising program, major and planned gift giving, corporate and foundation relations, gifts and records processing, donor relations, and special events.
- Secures more than \$1 million in annual donations to support College's scholarship program.
- Oversaw the development on an online Employee Campaign, streamlining administration and increased participation by 20%.
- Implemented donor acknowledgement process in 2011 reducing errors from 42% to less than 3%, and reduced donor acknowledgment time to five business days, a change of 46%.
- Develops, cultivates, and stewards relationships with donors, volunteers, board and committee members, key community leaders, and College departments.
- Designed policy and procedures to control and monitor scholarship disbursements, increasing allocations by 10% annually.
- Manages and executes annual communications plan including print and electronic correspondence, annual report in conjunction with College's Marketing and Public Relations department.
- Developed, implemented and manages the production of all management reports on fundraising efforts for tracking, analysis, and internal/external communications.
- Oversees the marketing and communications of the Foundation.
- Speak to a full range of both internal and external constituencies to promote the Foundation's mission, purpose and need for increased private support.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT *Mercy Foundation, Des Moines, Iowa* *2007 to 2011*

- Wrote, implemented and managed Moves Management program for department.
- Oversaw fundraising staff for mission initiatives; Mercy College of Health Sciences, Bishop Drumm Retirement Center, Mercy Hospice and House of Mercy approximately \$6.3 million in revenue.
- Maintains active portfolio of major donors (100+). Successful solicitation of over \$1.2 million in FY2009.
- Developed and implemented grant administration process increasing grant revenue from \$49,000 (FY 2008) to \$1,085,000 (FY 2009) and securing \$3,700,000 (FY 2010).
- Managed Grants & Communications Manager.
- Managed the development of marketing materials including but not limited to newsletter, annual reports, case statements, web content, and donor communications. Responsible for overall brand and messaging.
- Coordinated House of Mercy's Helping Lives Bloom, A Garden Gala (2007) increased revenue by 16%.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST *Open Arms Inc., dba Bryan's House, Dallas, Texas* 2006-2007

- Managed all aspects of Bryan's House fund raising programs including: developing strategic plan, writing and executing integrated action plans to meet goals.
- Administered donor correspondence, maintained database and provided statistical reports on developmental activities.
- Within 4 months, wrote grants totaling \$340,000 for funding from government and private institutions and secured \$250,000 in funding.
- Coordinate fundraising activities including events, volunteers, and major giving.
- Organized Code Red Caper, a limousine scavenger hunt with attendance of 300 and silent auction which raised \$15,000; total event raising \$90,000 and increasing donations by \$20,000 over previous year.

BRANCH EDUCATION MANAGER *Air Force Education Office, Keflavik, Iceland* 2004-2006

- Managed distribution of \$500,000 in tuition assistance to Air Force members and \$75,000 to spouses of military members.
- Advised over 500 military members on military advancement training, testing and educational programs.
- Directed marketing strategies of educational opportunities and managed office operations.
- Successfully increased enrollments by 20% in 2004.
- Ranked first in total enrollments for United States Air Force Europe Education Offices.

CAMPAIGN DIVISION DIRECTOR *United Way of Ventura County, Camarillo, CA* 2000-2003

- Evaluated nonprofit organizations for inclusion in the Ventura County Combined Federal Campaign.
- Organized and implemented fundraising events with more than 500 attendees.
- Cultivated positive business relationships with 11 local non-profit agencies and 5 local federations.
- Produced strategic market planning to enhance public exposure and maximize campaign growth.
- Managed recruitment, training and evaluations for 25 executives and 300 volunteers.
- Grew Combined Federal Campaign volunteer program from 75 to 250 participants.
- Developed volunteer training program and manuals.
- Oversaw all fundraising aspects in county and federal government including annual reports, marketing and sponsorship.
- Increased donations from fundraising efforts by a total of 22% from \$595,000 to \$729,000 in 2001.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR *Delaware County Domestic Relations, Media, Pennsylvania* 1999-2000

- Managed operations of child and spousal support obligations including establishment and enforcement.
- Managed supervisors of the Establishment, Court and Enforcement Unit Divisions with indirect responsibility for 42 staff.
- Led divisions and staff in processing and management of 15,000 cases annually.
- Facilitated communication with local legislators, Board of Judges, county and state personnel.
- Implemented the Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System.

STAFF ASSISTANT/DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE *Office of the US Representative Curt Weldon* 1997-1999

- Advised the congressman on public policy issues impacting the region including transportation, environment, communications, and veteran affairs.
- Encouraged proactive involvement in community through special projects and events.
- Maintained communication on behalf of congressman for business, political, and community leaders.
- Served as liaison between state, county, and federal offices.

EDUCATION

Master of Nonprofit Management, Regis University
Bachelor of Arts, Villanova University, Major: Political Science

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Association of Fundraising Professionals
Council for Resource Development

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Rotary Club of Des Moines AM
- Program Committee Chair (current)
- Social Committee Chair (2010 – 2011)
- Member since 2008

Girls Scouts of Central Iowa, Troop 968 Waukee
-Troop Leader (current)

Friends of DMACC
– Political Action Committee (2013)

Saint Francis of Assisi Church
- Catechist (2009 – 2012)

Catholic Woman's League
- Member 2008-2011
- Board Secretary (2009)