

TO: Members of OLLI group 185
FROM: Joe Belden belden1419@gmail.com
DATE: 30 August 2021
RE: OLLI Study Group 185 on “Making a Difference? The Role of Nonprofit Organizations”

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This OLLI study group intentionally poses a question about nonprofits: Do they make a difference? If so, what? Our method here is to engage in a dialogue with experienced nonprofit leaders, both staff and board leaders. The dialogue will we hope include the whole group. So please be thinking about your questions.

We will try to cover a range of nonprofits specializing in such issues as the environment, women’s issues, human rights, poverty, and affordable housing. We will be looking at our veteran experts’ backgrounds, their first interest in nonprofit work and first jobs, and the work of their current or most recent organizations, including mission, history, accomplishments, partnerships, budgets, challenges, and other details. We will also look at such issues as the roles of boards of directors, funders, government, media, the public, and organizational members (if applicable). Some of our experts have been nonprofit founders and long-time leaders. Some have been board leaders, and many have been both. Some are now or have been funders. We will ask about both success and failure. Nonprofits have sometimes been criticized for a lack of diversity. We will ask about how organizations have met that challenge and how the sector overall can improve there. We also will hear from two expert veterans who have published interesting research into the nonprofit world.

For the first session, on Sept. 21, you will be stuck with me for an overview and introduction. Then our general topics and impressive guests are set out below. (More complete bios will be available at the start of class.)

If you have any questions or comments, or if there are certain issues you would like to see covered, please feel free to write me at the email above. Stay safe and talk to you in September.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES AND CLASS TOPICS

SEPT. 28 – PARTNERSHIPS

Peter Carey from 1990 to 2014 was president and CEO of Self-Help Enterprises, a nonprofit that has built more than 12,000 affordable homes in central California. Peter also was Mayor and a city council member in Visalia, CA, and has served on a number of nonprofit and public boards.

Moises Loza was Executive Director of the Housing Assistance Council from 1989 to 2017 and a senior appointee at the US Department of Agriculture in the Carter administration. He has been board chair, officer, and board member of several major national nonprofits.

OCT. 5 -- FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND NONPROFIT NETWORKS

Eileen Fitzgerald is head of housing affordability philanthropy with Wells Fargo. She joined Wells Fargo in 2019 after a 25-year career in the community development, nonprofit and housing industry. She also was Assoc. Administrator of the USDA Rural Housing Service in the Clinton Administration.

Jim King has served as President of the Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises (Fahe) since 1990. Fahe is a regional network of more than 50 affordable housing nonprofits serving the Appalachian areas of KY, TN, WV, AL, and MD. He also was board chair of the Opportunity Finance Network and serves on other boards.

OCT. 12 -- ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Ferd Hoefner is a D.C.-based consultant on federal farm, food, and environmental policy. For 34 years prior to 2021 Ferd worked for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), including 30 years as its policy director and lead Washington representative.

Gerald Torres is Professor of Environmental Justice at the Yale School of the Environment and Professor of Law at the Yale Law School. He is board chair of Earth Day and serves on other nonprofit boards; is a former president of the Assoc. of American Law Schools; and was a Deputy Asst. Attorney General in the Clinton administration.

OCT. 19 – WOMENS’ ISSUES

Marcia Greenberger, founder and Co-President Emerita of the National Women’s Law Center, is a recognized expert on women and the law, particularly in the areas of education and employment, health and reproductive rights, and family economic security. Among her many awards, USA Today recently named Marcia one of the 100 Women of the Century who changed America.

Judith Lichtman, president of the National Partnership for Women & Families from 1974 to 2004, is presently senior advisor at the National Partnership. It was originally the Women's Legal Defense Fund (WLDF), with Judy as the first paid staffer, and became the National Partnership in 1998.

OCT. 26 -- HUMAN RIGHTS

Nancy Belden is a principal of Belden Russonello Strategies, a polling firm. She is board chair of the Washington Office on Latin America, has also served on other nonprofit boards, and was president of the American Assoc. for Public Opinion Research.

Joe Eldridge was the founding Executive Director of the Washington Office on Latin America and for nearly 20 years was University Chaplain at American University. He also taught at AU’s School of International Service and was founding Ex. Dir. of the Wash. Office of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

NOV. 2 -- FUND RAISING

OLLI members **Sue Rolnick** and **Joe Belden** spent much of their careers as fundraisers for nonprofits.

NOV. 9 -- RESEARCH ON NONPROFITS

Jeff Mosley, currently with Capital Impact Partners, also has worked for the Montgomery Co. Coalition for the Homeless, the Housing Assistance Council, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. Working with nonprofits and government in New Zealand in 2018-19, he provided guidance on the country’s affordable housing crisis.

Robert (Bob) Zdenek served as president of the National Congress for Community Economic Development, has been a consultant to over forty organizations, and has researched and written extensively on nonprofits, including the recent book,

Navigating Community Development: Harnessing Comparative Advantages to Create Strategic Partnerships.