

Self-Helper

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Marketing with Social Media



Have you thought about creating a Twitter or Facebook account to help market and recruit prospective self-help participants?? Why not try it?!

Nonprofits have limited budgets for marketing and only so many hours in the day. Social media, unlike mass media, is inexpensive, accessible and immediate. There is no need for a printing press, a license to distribute, special software, or any other qualifications. This is not to say that it doesn't take some thought to implement.

Two self-help organizations in NCALL's region have recently set up accounts on Facebook. They posted pictures of homes and homeowners working, with brief comments about the mutual self-help program. They are currently inviting past homeowners and partners to become their friends. The hope/plan is that friends of their friends will see the homes and homeowners at work, read the comments, and contact the organization with interest in self-help.

By creating and updating these social media sites frequently you can stay in touch with funders, donors, supporters, current or past clients and participants, activists, like-organizations and any other interested parties. Interested parties can view photos and understand the mission of your organization and programs offered in the security and safety of their own home. Supporters want to know how they can help you, so answering that question on a regular basis helps them understand how they can get involved, promote, spread the word, volunteer, or give. Organizations can connect with these supporters by keeping them informed on the agency's mission and progress, providing photos of projects and local statistics on the issues.

Instead of assuming that everyone is familiar with these sites, here is a quick *(Continued on Page 2)*



Using Preconstruction Meetings for Group Unity



Locating credit worthy applicants has become the number one challenge

that many grantees face. When this is coupled with a depressed housing market, where many potential self-help applicants would rather purchase an existing home or simply wait and see what might happen rather than invest the time and effort into a self-help home, many grantees are struggling to find groups of participants and hold them together. Out of necessity,

some grantees have taken a reactive stance, focusing their efforts simply on finding enough applicants to form a group, then quickly rushing into construction before they have a chance to change their mind. The need to quickly assemble a group has become the rule. This practice often leads to problems during construction.

The ability to develop the group's dynamic over time by using weekly preconstruction meetings to form a team has been reduced or not incorporated at all. Grantees that realize the value of these meetings and put that into their practice, experience a

much smoother construction process.

Community Concepts, Inc. (CCI) in South Paris, Maine has been operating a Mutual Self-Help Housing program since 1992. They take preconstruction meetings seriously; holding twelve meetings with each group prior to the start of construction. In addition to teaching them about the 502 loan program and construction tactics, they stress a different team value at each meeting. They cover and discuss the concepts of friendliness, safety, understanding, trustworthiness, sacrifice, opportunity,

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Social Media *(Continued from Page 1)*

description.

Facebook is a social networking site. It can be used by individuals or companies to promote a cause or idea, create friendships and disseminate information. Facebook users create a profile page that shows their friends and networks information about themselves. The choice to include a profile in a network means that everyone within that network can view the profile. The profile typically includes the following: Information, Status, Friends, Friends in Other Networks, Photos, Notes, Groups, and The Wall. Users are able to search for friends and acquaintances by e-mail address, school, university, or just by typing in a name or location for search. When people become friends, they are able to see all of each others' profiles including contact information. E-mail notifications let users know when new friends have cho-

sen to add them to their list or when someone has sent a message to them within the system.

The basic premise of Twitter is to serve as a site to find out what anyone is doing at any given moment. It is considered a form of micro-blogging, where users can update the world as to their actions and location without posting a full blog entry. A Twitter update consists of only 140 characters. This micro-blog is called a "tweet" and the people who follow your tweets are called your "tweeple." Users can also follow other users, so that those users' updates are added to a list in their account. Users can choose to be notified of updates in a number of ways, including email, text message, or RSS feed, which is a format for delivering regularly changing web content.

There are other social media plat-

forms as well, such as LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, FriendFeed, Reddit, Digg, Mixx and others with more popping up frequently.

If you don't want to jump in with both feet, start by creating a personal Facebook page and join Twitter to see what it's all about. Once you see how big the network is and how easy it can be, you may want to try it for your organization.

For more information, search the web for guides and tips on using these sites to help nonprofits. There are many free webinars and articles that can help provide a start in the right direction. Some ideas of places to start are: <http://www.wildapricot.com/blogs/newsblog/archive/2007/05/23/put-your-non-profit-on-facebook.aspx> and johnhaydon.com and his "How Nonprofits can use Twitter" guidebook. Good luck!

Megan Scheunemann: A Self-Help Superstar!



Megan's Day at their Clinton, WI home. That's because the children watched their 35-year-old mom fight breast cancer twice, and helped her through two bone-marrow transplants. Megan built her home through Southeastern Wisconsin Housing

see now that it was not as intimidating as I thought. It was hard work, but we successfully completed each task, under the guidance of Lanny." SEWHC's Construction Manager, Lanny Esch, is adamant about quality construction, and teaching home-building skills as they go along. Megan was one of the best home-builders SEWHC has seen. She worked hard and helped her group remain a team.

Megan's illness has had positive side affects. "We are a lot closer than a lot of families," Megan says. "We don't take any days for granted. It is one of the perverse benefits of living with cancer. You see things differently." Alex, Brody and Rorick offer a lot of emotional support," Megan says. "They take good care of me."

NCALL would like to continue to highlight self-help participants that can help inspire us all! Please send any profiles to jlordan@ncall.org.

Sometimes 12-year-old Rorick brings breakfast to his mom on a tray, complete with a picture of a cutout flower in a vase. No, it's not her birthday. Not even a holiday. The sixth-grader just wants to do something special for her. Rorick, his 13-year-old brother Brody, and his 16-year-old sister Alex, hardly ever take their mom, Megan Scheunemann, for granted. They do laundry, cook meals and clean the house without complaining.

Corporation's (SEWHC) Mutual Self-Help Housing Program. Having been recently diagnosed with cancer, she began undergoing treatment during the construction process. She wanted a decent and safe home for her family. Megan "loves the mutual self-help program. It was a blast, and I learned a lot."

She heard about the program by seeing a flyer in the local library. What is the most fun? Megan says "many of the steps have been fun---like completing the framing. Also, I

You could say that some days are

Preconstruction Meetings

self-discipline, self-worth, honesty, respect for others, positive attitude and mutual support. Before CCI incorporated this practice into their program and devoted time and effort into forming the group dynamics, they too had issues where groups fell apart and stopped working together. CCI now believes these sessions really benefit their groups during the construction process. No matter what issues arise, the group has a basic understanding of how

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they should be relating to each other and what is expected of them.

With the current trends and changing market, grantees need to be able to adapt to change while continuing to remain true to the process, goals and mission of the self-help housing program. Preconstruction meetings, while time consuming and labor intensive, are a critical part of a successful program.

A sample meeting outline can be found on Page 6.

NCALL Publishes New Marketing PowerPoint

NCALL has released a new PowerPoint training resource entitled "Recruitment and Marketing Best Practices Guide." This can be accessed by visiting NCALL's newly revamped website at www.ncall.org. We hope you find it very helpful!

Welcome to New State Directors

Since the change of administration, the following new State Directors have been announced. We welcome all of you and look forward to meeting and working with you in the future.

DELAWARE/MARYLAND - Jack Tarburton: Tarburton was the Owner of Tarburton Consulting, which is a liaison between Perdue Farms and State government officials in Delaware; he also served as the Secretary of the Delaware Department of Agriculture from 1993 - 2001.

ILLINOIS - Colleen Callahan: Callahan was the President of Chicago Farmers and ran Colleen Callahan Communications, where she provided communications services to a variety of organizations, including the USDA.

INDIANA - Philip Lehmkuhler: Lehmkuhler has worked as the Manager of Economic Development and Member Service for the Indiana Municipal Power Agency since 2005, where he coordinated economic development opportunities throughout 52 rural cities and towns in Indiana.

IOWA - William Menner: Menner was the Executive Director for Poweshiek Iowa Development, where he managed, raised funds and developed strategies for a county-wide non-profit economic development organization.

MAINE - Virginia Manuel: Manuel is the founder of Manuel and Associates, which provides strategic planning and development services to connect Maine organizations with

international business, government, academic, and civic leaders.

MASSACHUSETTS, CONNECTICUT AND RHODE ISLAND - Jay Healy: As a legislator, Healy worked with others to create the first in the nation Agricultural Preservation Program. While at the Department of Agricultural Resources, he developed a series of programs that received national recognition for their innovation in bringing economic development to farmers across the Commonwealth.

MICHIGAN - James Turner: Since 2004 Turner has worked as State Advisor on Renewable and Alternative Energy for U.S. Senator Carl Levin, where he monitored renewable energy and alternative energy development in Michigan.

MINNESOTA - Colleen Landkamer: Landkamer has been the County Commissioner for Blue Earth County, Minnesota, since 1988.

NEW JERSEY - Howard Henderson: Henderson has served as Vineland Area Director for the New Jersey Department of Agriculture since 1998.

NEW YORK - Jill Harvey: Harvey has directed Senator Schumer's effort in the 10-county central region of New York for the last decade.

PENNSYLVANIA - Thomas Williams: Williams was the District Projects Director for Congressman Paul Kanjorski. He worked with local government agencies to help communities and businesses throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania obtain access

to funding for development projects.

VIRGINIA - Ellen Matthews Davis: Davis formerly served as the State Director of USDA Rural Development in Virginia; she was appointed in 2006.

WEST VIRGINIA - Robert Lewis: Lewis has most recently served as the Director of Community Development for the West Virginia Development Office.

WISCONSIN - Stan Gruszynski: Gruszynski was the director of Rural Leadership and Community Development for the Global Environmental Management Center at the University of Wisconsin's Stevens Point College of Natural Resources.

Welcome Grantee

Congratulations go out to the following grantee that received refunding of their 523 Mutual Self-Help Housing Grant!!

- **Three Rivers Housing Corporation, Inc.**, 7 units in Athens County, Ohio

NCALL looks forward to continuing our partnership. Congratulations!!

Best Practice – Construction Planning!

YouthBuild McLean County took the SHARES Construction Task Matrix and developed a spreadsheet they use as a management tool in scheduling tasks with the homeowners. The following is a sample spreadsheet, with names changed. They enter the dates in which upcoming tasks are to be completed and then discuss the chart with the homeowners on site. The homeowners can see the immediate tasks, and can see the end if they work productively.

Construction Type: Basement								
Item	Const Task	Points	Hammer Jack	Baseboard Becky	Header Harry	Nailer Sara	Jehanneh Jaki	Drip-edge Davy
1	Excavation	6	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09
2	Footing, foundations, columns	11	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09
3	Floor slab or framing	4	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09
4	Subflooring	1	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09
5	Wall framing sheathing	6	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09	Sep-09
6	Roof and ceiling framing, sheathing	5	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09
7	Roofing	4	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09
8	Siding, ext trim, prchs	6	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09
9	Windows & ext doors	8	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09
10	Plumbing - roughed in	3	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09
11	Sewage disposal	1	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09	Oct-09
12	Heating - roughed in	1	Nov-09	Nov-09	Nov-09	Nov-09	Nov-09	Nov-09
13	Electrical - roughed in	2	Nov-09	Nov-09	Nov-09	Nov-09	Nov-09	Nov-09
14	Insulation	2	Dec-09	Dec-09	Dec-09	Dec-09	Dec-09	Dec-09
15	Dry wall	7	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10
16	Basement or porch floor, steps	6	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10
17	Heating - Finished	3	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10
18	Flooring covering	5	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10	Jan-10
19	Inter.carp., trim, doors	5	Feb-10	Feb-10	Feb-10	Feb-10	Feb-10	Feb-10
20	Cabinets & counters	1	Feb-10	Feb-10	Feb-10	Feb-10	Feb-10	Feb-10
21	Interior painting	3	Mar-10	Mar-10	Mar-10	Mar-10	Mar-10	Mar-10
22	Exterior painting	1	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10
23	Plumbing - complete	3	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10
24	Electrical - complete	1	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10	Apr-10
25	Finish hardware	1	May-10	May-10	May-10	May-10	May-10	May-10
26	Gutters & downspouts	1	Jun-10	Jun-10	Jun-10	Jun-10	Jun-10	Jun-10
27	Landscaping	3	Jun-10	Jun-10	Jun-10	Jun-10	Jun-10	Jun-10

Credit Repair

NCALL's self-help team has been discussing "credit repair" for some time and see the need for a Self-Help Credit Repair Best Practices Guide. As you know first hand, applicants just don't come into your office anymore without extensive marketing and recruiting. When they do make contact, many have credit or debt-load issues and need help, if they really wish to become homeowners.

The #1 reason self-help organizations get behind, is not due to construction, but getting eligible applicants formed into groups quickly enough to meet the self-help grant production schedule.

Has your organization developed any credit repair guides or checklists? Do you have any special tips that could be shared with NCALL? If so, please email them to dpierce@ncall.org. When we put together a comprehensive product, NCALL will share this Credit Repair Best Practices Guide with organizations in our region.

Bridge Contracts

NCALL has recently learned that the newly announced 5 year T&MA Contracts are under protest. The National Office of Rural Development has reinstated bridge contracts for the former regional contractors. We expect no interruption of service.

NCALL will continue to serve the 21 state area known as Region III. We will keep you posted as more information develops.

Sample Preconstruction Meeting Schedule (Is Your Agency Doing All It Can to Prepare Your Self-Help Participants?)

<p>Meeting 1 <u>Friendliness</u></p> <p>Getting to Know Everyone Self-Help Video Overview of Self-Help Membership Agreement Where Are We Building? Questions & Answers</p>	<p>Meeting 2 <u>Positive Attitude</u></p> <p>502 Mortgage Loan Program Soft Second Money Settlement Statement Equity Appraisal Review Membership Agreement</p>	<p>Meeting 3 <u>Mutual Support</u></p> <p>Team Building Sign Membership Agreement Land Information</p>	<p>Meeting 4 <u>Self-Discipline</u></p> <p>Budgeting—Spending Styles Household Finances Credit Reports Using Credit Wisely Long-Term Debt Management Foreclosure</p>
<p>Meeting 5 <u>Respect for Others</u></p> <p>House Plan Review Name the Association Election of Officers Dues Work Night</p>	<p>Meeting 6 <u>Honesty</u></p> <p>Construction Procedures Basic Layout Terms Tape Measure</p>	<p>Meeting 7 <u>Self-Worth</u></p> <p>Homeowners Insurance Land Options Team Building</p>	<p>Meeting 8 <u>Safety</u></p> <p>Pre-Construction Hand Tool Power Tool Air Tool Basic Safety</p>
<p>Meeting 9 <u>Understanding</u></p> <p>Contractors & Suppliers Sign Contracts Material List</p>	<p>Meeting 10 <u>Trustworthiness</u></p> <p>Plot Plans Time Sheets Emergency Sheets Maintenance & Repair</p>	<p>Meeting 11 <u>Sacrifice</u></p> <p>House Plans & Specs Loan Docket Signing</p>	<p>Meeting 12 <u>Opportunity</u></p> <p>Practical Construction Review Wrap Up GRADUATION PARTY!!</p>

Are Your Internal Controls in Place?

It is critically important that non-profits have secure internal controls. Here are some suggestions to segregate duties and to prevent fraud.

Cash Receipts

1. The mail should be opened by someone other than the bookkeeper. If there isn't enough staff, a Board member could be involved with this task.
2. Have the person opening the mail stamp the checks For Deposit Only.
3. One person should include a calculator tape on checks received and give them to someone other

than the bookkeeper. The bookkeeper should prepare the deposit slip.

4. Have someone other than the person who prepared the deposit slip make the deposit.
5. Copies of the checks should be forwarded to the bookkeeper.
6. The checks should be entered into the accounting system.
7. Once the deposit is made, the calculator tape should be compared to the deposit. The staff person comparing these should initial the calculator tape.
8. When bank statements are rec-

onced, the deposits should be compared to the calculator tape.

9. Acknowledgements to donors should not be prepared by the person who opens the mail or by the bookkeeper. Generally this is done by the Executive Director.

Cash Disbursements

1. Incoming vendor invoices should be forwarded to the bookkeeper who checks for accuracy and then forwarded to the Executive Director or other authorized staff for approval.
2. Approval of the invoice should be docu-

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More Guidelines for Protecting Sensitive Information



As promised in the last edition of the Self-Helper, here are more tips for keeping your computers safe.

Firewall

Protecting your organization's sensitive information is critical in maintaining productivity and ensuring a trustworthy reputation with your clients. Every time we browse the Internet or open e-mails, our computers are at risk of being invaded by malicious programs. As a preventative measure, the firewall software on your PC should be turned on. This prevents unauthorized access to your computer. For PC users, check the status of your Windows Firewall to ensure this additional security measure is being utilized. Keep in mind that personal firewalls are only effective on the machine on which it is activated.

For XP users: select **Start**, select **Control Panel**, select **Security Center**, which will display whether or not your Firewall is enabled. If it is disabled, select **Firewall** and select **On**.

For Vista users: select **Start**, select **Control Panel**, select **Security**, under **Security Center** locate **Check**

firewall status. Verify that **On** is selected and, for additional security, check the **Block all incoming connection** option. Select **Apply**, then **OK**.

Many anti-virus software programs, which are usually included with the full version, offer firewall protection as well. If you are unable to locate this setting from the anti-virus's menu, contact your system administrator.

Remote Access

While on the subject of preventing unauthorized access to your computer, ensure that you are not allowing remote access. Although there may be special circumstances when technical support may need to access your computer remotely, normally it should not be allowed.

For XP users: Select **Start**, select **Control Panel**, select **Performance and Maintenance**, select **System**, select **Remote** tab, and verify that "**Allow users to connect remotely to this computer**" is NOT checked. If it is selected, then deselect to disable it.

For Vista users: Select **Start**, select **Control Panel**, select **System and Maintenance**, under **System** select **Allow Remote Access**. The remote

tab of the system preferences will appear; verify that "**Allow users to connect remotely to this computer**" is NOT checked. If it is selected, then deselect to disable it.

Keep Passwords Secret

You should NEVER post your passwords on your monitor or under your keyboard. It is best to memorize your passwords so that you are the only person granted access to your computer, accounts, etc. If you are unable to memorize your passwords, or if you use several passwords for different domains or websites, then here is an easy solution for you. Create a Word document and type your passwords. Change the font color to white and save the document something vague and misleading like "Recipes." When you need to access your passwords, simply open the document, change the color of the font back to black to view, and close the document without saving.

Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day; teach that person to use the Internet and they won't bother you for weeks.

- Author Unknown

The purpose of life is not to be happy - but to matter, to be productive, to be useful, to have it make some difference that you have lived at all.

~Leo Rosten

Internal Controls *(Continued from Page 6)*

- mented to reflect the account to be charged, date it was paid and check number.
- 3. The request for payment should be returned to the bookkeeper for payment.
- 4. The person responsible for approving invoices should review them in detail to confirm the charges are legitimate and sign for payment approval.
- 5. The bookkeeper should prepare checks and return them and the supporting documentation to the two authorized check signers.
- 6. Check signers should review the checks, compare them to invoices, and sign.
- 7. Someone other than the person who prepares the checks should

- mail them to vendors.
- 8. Any expense report of the Executive Director should be approved by the Board of Directors.
- 9. Payments should be made based on original invoices.

Petty Cash

- 1. Petty cash should only be used when payment cannot be made by check.
- 2. Keep petty cash payments to a minimum
- 3. All disbursements must be supported by invoices or receipts.
- 4. Access to petty cash should be limited so that accountability is clear.
- 5. Petty cash reimbursements must

include invoices and receipts and be attached to the check to be signed. Persons who signs the checks should review the back up documentation.

Effective internal controls should always be built into a system by proper design. No one person should have complete control of transactions. Internal control policies and procedures are vital to the health of organizations. By creating a culture that discourages fraud and is reinforced by rules, makes fraudulent acts less likely to occur.

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