

# NFPs respond to declines in donations and staffing

**They'll ring in the New Year by cutting costs, collaborating and courting volunteers**

By BERNADETTE STARZEE

Heading into 2010, nonprofit organizations are continuing to be called upon to do more with less. With donations trending down, amid uncertainty about the stock market's ability to rebound and looming state budget cuts, local organizations are cutting costs to stay afloat.

"Over the course of this year, many nonprofits sat down and reworked their budgets," said Patrice Frank, president of the Association of Fundraising Professionals' Long Island Chapter, which is based in Farmingdale, and director of development for the Usdan Center for the Creative and Performing Arts, a nonprofit organization in Wheatley Heights.

Revised budgets reflect a downward trend in giving. In the recently released Sixth Annual Long Island Not-for-Profit Survey spearheaded by the Bohemia accounting firm Cerini & Associates, about 77 percent of organizations reported a decrease in funding.

According to the AFPLI's 2009 State of Fundraising Report, just 46 percent of nonprofits nationally raised more money in 2008 than in 2007, compared with 60 percent for a typical year. While overall giving dipped 2 percent from 2007 to 2008, according to a report by Giving USA that was cited in the AFPLI report, corporate giving dropped 8 percent during that span. This year, Island Harvest, the Mineola-based food charity, said its corporate donations are down 15 percent relative to last year.

Here's a look at how some nonprofits are cutting expenses to carry out their missions more efficiently.

## Events

Next year, Breast Cancer Help Inc. in Bay Shore plans to cut the number of fundraising events it hosts from seven to three. "We have the same base of people that come to all of our events," said Alex Fezza, executive director. "If we have seven, eight or nine events in a year, those people run out of money and can't come to them all. If we can get them to come to three or four, we can charge a little extra and in turn spend less and have a higher profit margin."

Breast Cancer Help plans to continue its walk, golf outing and gala – the events that have the potential to bring in the most revenue. "They're very popular – they're the type of events that people like to come to," Fezza said. "Events are expensive to promote and run, and if they're not bringing in substantial amounts of money, they're wasteful." Breast Cancer Help lost \$1,450 this year on one of the events that it is cutting.

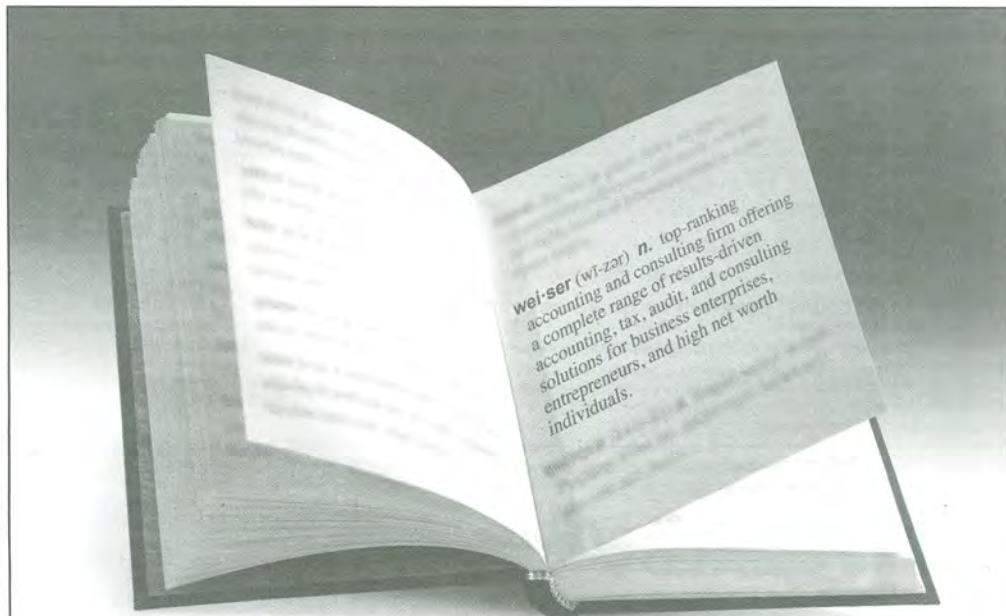
Nonprofits may cut marketing and other costs associated with running a fundraising

event by co-hosting it with another organization. "I think we're going to see more collaboration on events going forward," said Donna Cariello, founder of The Long Island Way, a Melville-based nonprofit group that links nonprofits with businesses.

## Sharing space

Other forms of collaboration are on the rise, with several nonprofits beginning to share administrative functions, according to

See DONATIONS, 29A



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Alex Fezza, executive director of Breast Cancer Help Inc., said his organization is paring the number of events it will hold next year to increase its profit margin.



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# Some NFPs hire interns to fill staffing gaps

## DONATIONS, from 27A

the Long Island Not-for-Profit Survey.

The Coalition Against Child Abuse & Neglect and the Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence are preparing to move in together in Bethpage and, by doing so, will share expenses while increasing the synergy between their organizations to better serve their clients.

"Because we're doing this together, we're able to increase our space, which will provide more appropriate space to service our clients," said Cynthia Scott, executive director of CCAN. "We share many of the same clients, and by putting our combined services under one roof, we can increase the likelihood that referrals will take place. If a child has been abused, and his mother is there with him, she may be a victim, too."

While remaining separate entities, the organizations will share the reception area and reception staffing duties, as well as other common areas such as the library and conference room. The pair's creative plan has captured the attention of potential donors, Scott said. "Fundors look at us as organizations that are thinking outside the box to help our clients," she said.

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For some nonprofits, merging with another organization is the best – or only – alternative. The Long Island Works Coalition in Melville was able to remain in operation by becoming a division of Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey, a deal that was finalized last month. According to the Long Island Not-for-Profit Survey, 25 percent of the respondents said they were currently involved in a merger or would consider merging in the future.

## Staffing

According to the Long Island Not-for-Profit Survey, 44 percent of Long Island-based agencies anticipate serving more people in 2010 than in 2009. However, only 20 percent expect to increase staff to provide the extra service.

Island Harvest, which has seen demand for its services skyrocket this year, has not had the resources to add to its paid staff. However, with the rising unemployment rate, many professionals have knocked on Island Harvest's doors, looking to volunteer their time, with so much of it suddenly on their hands.

"At one point this year, we saw a 70 percent increase in the number of people looking to volunteer for us," said Randi Shubin Dresner, president and chief executive of the organization, which now has more than 3,000 volunteers.

The food charity revamped the way it brings in volunteers, creating task force

structures. "We look at the volunteer's needs, wants and skills, and try to match them to our needs," Shubin Dresner said. "We've had human resources, accounting, information technology, marketing and sales professionals come in and use their professional skills. It helps them keep their skills sharp and make connections while helping us."

For instance, Island Harvest sent experienced salespeople out in the community to bring lapsed food donors back on board. The

charity's vice president of finance needed an assistant, so when an accountant came looking to volunteer, she was able to fill the role.

However, not every nonprofit can count on so much volunteer support. In fact, according to the Not-for-Profit Survey, 22 percent of agencies have experienced a decline in volunteers. Some are turning to interns, said Cheryl Davidson, executive director of LI Works, which co-hosted four seminars in 2009 to teach nonprofits how to set up internship programs.

Breast Cancer Help is participating in the Suffolk Works Employment Program, a Department of Labor program in which individuals on public assistance gain work skills to move toward self sufficiency by working at nonprofit or government agencies. Through the program, Breast Cancer Help has a worker performing administrative duties 30 hours per week, at no cost to the organization. "It helps this young lady gain skills and build her resumé, and it helps us," Fezza said.



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