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In 2007, Tim Schultz of Boettcher Foundation gave the inaugural Steve Graham Award for Building Nonprofit Capacity to Steve Graham's widow, Cindy, in honor of Steve's great work. See "A Quarter-Century Retrospective" above for more memorable moments.

A Quarter-Century Retrospective

Compiled by Erin K. Spletzer, Communications Coordinator, Colorado Nonprofit Association

For 25 years the collective voice of Colorado's nonprofit community has been amplified through the megaphone of Colorado Nonprofit Association. The organization marks its silver anniversary this year as the 'voice' of the nonprofit sector in Colorado, by influencing public policy decisions effecting nonprofits and increasing the impact of nonprofits throughout the state.

Originally called Colorado Association of Nonprofit Organizations, CANPO as it was known, it formed in 1984 to give voice to the under appreciated, and often silent, nonprofit sector and obtained its 501(c)3 status during the summer of 1986.

CANPO was one of only a few such state nonprofit associations in the United States at the time and was formed initially to coordinate charity poker and other gaming type of fundraisers, according to founding executive director Daniel Wallach.

In addition to sorting through the legal waters of a change in fundraising tactics, CANPO also was a clearinghouse where nonprofits could better learn to, and actually, utilize their limited resources according to founding board member Richard Male.

"The nonprofit community needed to be 'at the table' when decisions were made that impacted our organizations," said Male. "In addition, we needed to have a variety of shared services, such as health insurance, D and O, office supplies, etc., that were purchased in a group setting to reduce costs so nonprofits could use

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Attitude & Behavior Motivate Coloradans to Donate – or Not?

Renny Fagan, President and CEO, Colorado Nonprofit Association

Colorado Nonprofit Association initiated the **Colorado Generosity Project** in 2007 to increase charitable giving in Colorado. With support from numerous community partners, the first phase of the project included several research studies and *Principles and Practices for Nonprofit Excellence in Colorado*.

To begin the second phase of the Colorado Generosity Project, we initiated in-depth research of attitudes and behaviors that motivate people to make (or not make) donations. The research consists of a review of national surveys regarding generosity, a statewide telephone survey, and focus groups in six communities across the state. We will publish a comprehensive final

research report this summer highlighting the information gathered.

In March, SE2 and Corona Insights conducted the statewide telephone survey. Here are a few of the interesting preliminary results.

Similar to the findings in our 2008 publication *Generous Colorado: Why Donors Give*, the majority of the 2011 respondents expressed favorable views of the nonprofit sector:

- 96 percent of respondents agreed that charitable organizations play a major role in making our communities better places to live.

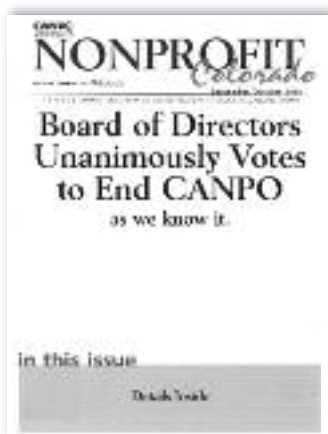
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these resources better for their mission. CANPO was probably the third such organization in the country so this concept was fairly new.”

As Colorado Nonprofit Association’s membership grew, almost 300 percent over the 25 years to more than 1,500 total members today, the mission solidified and the organization continued to evolve to better serve the sector. Working on aggressive strategic plan efforts, the board and staff recognized that CANPO had to enhance its own brand image to improve how the organization communicated its values and services to the sector according to Jeanine Spellman, former board member.

“To be re-branded in order to more clearly represent what their organization stood for,” Spellman said. “This led to a name change for clarity, graphic alignment of materials and expanded ways of communicating and engaging the community, which strengthened its presence and its leadership as the voice of the sector.”

“It was very clear that many people, even those who had been members for years, did not know what CANPO stood for,” said Rachel



Colorado Nonprofit Association rolled out its new brand beginning with Nonprofit Colorado and a new website.



Colorado Nonprofit Association completed the remodel/expansion of its current 455 Sherman St office suite simultaneous with the rebranding, to enhance the professional appearance of the office and to accommodate staff growth. Lew Bakkeemo (left), receptionist, and Charley Shimanski, president & CEO at the time, tour the office demolition in the photo below.

Setzke, former Colorado Nonprofit Association membership and communications director. “Some even thought it was CAMPO. More than one said it made them think of dog food. So, in order to clarify who we are, who we represent and what we do, we shortened the name to Colorado Nonprofit Association – NOT CNA, which was already claimed by Colorado Nurses Association.”

Becoming Colorado Nonprofit Association in September 2005 was more than a name change. It was a deliberate shift to put nonprofits front and center among partners, policymakers and the public. Like many nonprofits, CANPO was not widely recognized despite its numerous successes. The acronym essentially concealed the organization’s identity and hid the critical role nonprofits play across Colorado. “The name change helped clarify what the organization offered and to whom. Moreover, it gave presence to Colorado’s hidden ‘third-sector,’” said Ellen Brilliant.

One could argue which Colorado Nonprofit Association moment of the 25-year history shines brightest but most agree that a few have been game changers for the nonprofit sector as a whole.

25 Voices from 25 Years

Rebecca Arno, Board Vice Chair; Vice President of Communications, The Denver Foundation

“Helping nonprofits to become the strongest organizations they can be – and sharing the message of the sector with those who can help through donations, legislations and other kinds of support. I believe in the power of this sector to change lives ... and I believe that our collective voice is a powerful force in building a better Colorado.” – on messaging

Bruce Atchison, Board Member; Director, Colorado Early Learning Partnership

“This occurs as the people, the nonprofits, advocate on behalf of their own constituency and their beliefs to ensure their voice is heard and that government listens. When advocating for a cause people must be fearless, bold, true, unwavering and genuine backed with data and proven outcomes that work!” – on how nonprofits influence government

Juan Botello, Board Chair; Director of Finance and Operations, Graland Country Day School

“I think it is just as difficult for nonprofits today as it was 25 years ago. The only difference is that the challenges have changed. One challenge is that donors are more informed and thus require more accountability of nonprofits. The positive aspect of donor engagement is that once they believe in you their passion will only help to strengthen your nonprofit.” – on nonprofits now versus 25 years ago

Cynthia Evans, Former Board Member; Retired

“I am a student of governance and I’d have to say my favorite Colorado Nonprofit Association thing is its excellent leadership. The board and its leaders have taken very seriously the need to model best practices, so not only was publishing Principles and Practices terrific, the board set out to follow its own advice. There is an attitude of continuous improvement at the organization.” – on favorite aspects

Renny Fagan, President and CEO

“Ironically, Colorado’s economy 25 years ago was also in a recession and trailed the nation in recovery. Just like today, I am sure that nonprofits in 1986 faced an

increased demand for services amidst limited financial resources. However, the internet, email and social media all provide nonprofits with a terrific advantage in communicating their message inexpensively to their constituents and the public” – on nonprofits now versus 25 years ago

William Funk, 1991 recipient of the first Building Community Statewide award, established as an annual award in honor of Bill Funk himself – William Funk Award for Building Stronger Communities “Naturally, receiving the first award many years ago was a very proud moment. I am also very moved every year when so many outstanding persons are nominated to receive the award and at the luncheon when those leaders are officially recognized.” – on favorite moments

Jane Hansberry, Former Board Member; Managing Director, Think 360 Arts Complete Education

“I was honored to serve on the Colorado Nonprofit Association Board for three years. For me, it was an opportunity to be at the very nexus within the sector of smart

practices, policy and people! There are, as we all know, so many ‘tides’ of nonprofit reform. Colorado Nonprofit Association is the place where those ‘tides’ can be sorted through.” – on being involved

Mary Anne Harvey, Former Board Member and Chair; Executive Director, The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People

“The organization was progressive and somewhat ‘scrappy.’ I think the members and the board felt that they were making an important contribution to the nonprofit community by participating in developing the role of nonprofits and highlighting their contributions. At board meetings there was always thoughtful and energetic debate about values and philosophy, which shaped our policies and positions.” – on being involved

Betsy Jansen, Former CEO, Nonprofit Resources; Retired

“Originally to establish CANPO ASI as a trusted vendor for the member nonprofits. And, to find insurance companies that were willing to work with a new and developing organization to provide a stable



In 2007, Colorado Nonprofit Association initiated Principles & Practices for Nonprofit Excellence in Colorado, the first-ever standards program to help Colorado nonprofits assess and strengthen their work to further demonstrate accountability.

“The defeat of Amendment II,” said David Henninger, CEO Bayaud Enterprises of the 1996 measure that would have taken away the tax exempt provisions of the Colorado tax code i.e. property tax exemption.

“Everyone in the office worked very hard to achieve the resounding defeat of the amendment. Nonprofits of all types worked together to achieve a common goal and Colorado Nonprofit Association led the charge,” said Betsy Jansen, recently retired CEO of Nonprofit Resources.

Another milestone occurred in December 2008. Colorado Nonprofit Association launched – as part of the Colorado Generosity Project – the Generous Colorado campaign. This included publishing *The State of Giving* (second edition), *Generous Colorado: Why Donors Give*, and the Generous Colorado website simultaneous with extensive media outreach. This was a comprehensive effort to educate the public about the the nonprofit sector and motivate them to increase their philanthropic support. “This work paved



Sharon Knight at the Generous Colorado media event.

the way for numerous successful giving campaigns across Colorado and continues to act as a foundation for nonprofit fundraising programs today,” said Sharon Knight, CEO of Warren Village and former Colorado Nonprofit Association vice president and COO.

A milestone moment which solidified one of the original goals of CANPO, to create affordable tools for nonprofits, was realized with the establishment of CANPO ASI, now Nonprofit Resources, according to Mary Anne Harvey, former board member and executive director, The Legal Center for People With Disabilities and Older

People. “This helped nonprofits purchase board liability insurance, workers compensation insurance and unemployment insurance at lower rates as well as purchase office supplies and other products at discounted prices,” she said.

Another special moment in Colorado Nonprofit Association’s history is remembered by Mark Turner, current manager of public policy, when Referendum C passed 52 percent–48 percent in 2006. “The campaign spent millions of dollars,

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insurance market for nonprofits of all sizes that is competitively priced and able to insure the unique risks of a nonprofit.” – on establishing Nonprofit Resources

Dennis Kennedy, Former Board Member and Chair; Director of Communication, Mount Saint Vincent Home
 “There may be less cohesiveness today among nonprofits, so it’s probably harder today to feel part of a larger sector with common interests. I still believe collaboration and openness among nonprofits is of great value – ‘becoming more business-like’ may have pushed us more into a competitive mode, holding our cards closer more and sharing information and a common agenda less.” – on how the sector has changed in 25 years

Carolyn Love, Board Member; Principal, Kebaya Coaching ~ Consulting
 “What would happen if every nonprofit in the state of Colorado would cease to do business for just one hour? How many lives would be impacted because the ‘taken for granted’ services would no longer be available. The government may shut down – which would create havoc. Would a

shutdown of nonprofit organizations create anything less?” – on nonprofits’ impact

Rita McCoy, Board Chair 2004; Executive Director, Sense of Security
 “Years ago as the board president of CANPO, I would tell audiences, ‘There are 16,000 nonprofits in Colorado,’ and the audience would marvel at such a number. Today that number has increased tremendously causing more and more nonprofits to compete for the same funding dollars. Many nonprofits may not be able to sustain their programs unless new funding sources emerge.” – on nonprofits ability to thrive in today’s economic climate

Carrie Nolan, Former Board Member; President, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Colorado Chapter
 “I am proud of the creation of the Leadership Advisory Committee. Its formation allowed Colorado Nonprofit Association to engage many more community leaders and solicit their ideas and feedback to help set the organization’s direction. Listening and responding to our members’ needs is a strong part of our mission and complementing that input with other leadership insures Colorado

Nonprofit Association is relevant and doing the right actions.” – on proudest moments

Katherine Peck, Former Board Member; Senior Vice President of Programs, Gill Foundation
 “I think there is always room for nonprofits to ask themselves if consolidation would enable them to deliver services or engage in advocacy or education or whatever else it is that they do in a more efficient and effective way. However, I think it is easy to say this and harder to identify specific cases where a nonprofit should go out of business or merge. Generally speaking, nonprofits are in business to serve the community and their constituencies. It is hard to argue with that.” – on are nonprofits doing similar work

Eileen Prosser, Director of Development and Marketing
 “I wanted to be a part of Colorado Nonprofit Association because of the great reputation it has within the nonprofit community and the high quality of work it produces. I first realized when I received assistance from the Nonprofit Help Desk and it made a difference to the small nonprofit where I was

employed at the time. After that I used the Help Desk frequently!” – on being involved

Gerry Rasel, Manager of Membership Services
 “I love meeting my members and I get to meet a number of them when I host the member benefit reviews. After each review someone always tells me it’s obvious I’m passionate about Colorado Nonprofit Association and my work. And it’s true – because it is a true HONOR for me to work with and serve the best nonprofits in the state.” – on making a difference

Mandy M. Rigg, Former editor of *Nonprofit Colorado*; Principal, Mandy M. Rigg Consulting
 “The internet has leveled the playing field significantly in terms of getting out the message, organizing constituencies and raising funds. The work we do in the nonprofit sector is still hard, and these political times are particularly challenging, but I can’t imagine a more rewarding life.” – on thriving in today’s economic climate

Hundreds of supporters including members of Blue Knights Drum and Bugle Corp marched to the State Capitol for the C&D rally.



mostly on media, and signed on 1,100 supporters,” Turner said. “After the election, a quote from a Colorado political consultant suggested it was the nonprofits that made the difference by winning over that last 2 percent. Amid all the hard work on this campaign, our work really mattered.”

As the climate – economic and otherwise – continues to evolve and change, it's always

tough for nonprofits to thrive whether it's 1986 or 2011. “I think the single most understood thing that Colorado nonprofits will face going forward is the further shrinking of government resources that provide significant financial support to so many nonprofits,” said Henninger.

Since then Colorado Nonprofit Association has grown in staff, board and influence, providing resources, tools and information for the nonprofit community through annual conferences. The first conference nearly 20 years ago has evolved into a two-day information sharing ‘must be’ event attracting more than 750 attendees.

Colorado Nonprofit Association also recognizes special individuals in the sector through the Colorado Nonprofit Week Awards. Established in 1991, the William Funk Award for Building Stronger Communities, with the help of generous funding from Boettcher Foundation, recognizes leaders in the nonprofit community. A few years later,

For more on Colorado Nonprofit Association's quarter-century milestone and quotes from other influential individuals, check out ColoradoNonprofits.org/25years.

Colorado Nonprofit Association established the Legislator of the Year Award and the Public Service Lifetime Achievement Award, followed by the Steve Graham Award for Building Nonprofit Capacity (also sponsored by Boettcher Foundation) in 2008, and the latest Excellence in Media Award, funded by The Denver Foundation.

“The moment that made me most proud was when Jackie Norris was the recipient of the Steve Graham Award for Building Nonprofit Capacity,” said Charley Shimanski, currently senior vice president of disaster services at American Red Cross, shared his special moment



William Funk at the 2005 Colorado Nonprofit Week Awards Luncheon with Susan Lander (left), Music in the Mountains and Susan France, vice president of programs, Bonfils-Stanton Foundation.

as the former Colorado Nonprofit Association president and CEO. “This was truly recognition of two incredible leaders, Steve and Jackie. Both have their fingerprints all over much of the success of nonprofits in Colorado.”

Regardless of the mission of Colorado's more than 18,000 nonprofits, each can rest assured Colorado

Nonprofit Association advocates for the benefit of all nonprofits according to President and CEO Renny Fagan.

“We will continue this work by raising public awareness – statewide – of the sector's positive impact on communities and by actively engaging public policy makers on issues of importance to the sector and the constituents we serve,” said Fagan. “We do all of this while providing capacity building and money saving services to our members.”

Ruth Ann Russell, Former Board Member and Chair; Retired
“I have been especially pleased at the increased recognition nonprofit agencies have received from key decision makers. I believe that the leadership of Colorado Nonprofit Association has led this initiative and now more than ever elected officials turn to the organization and to local agencies to ask for input about the impact of legislative and policy issues.”
– on favorite moments

Barbara Shaw, Former President; Manager of Fundraising, Mental Health Center of Denver
“The reason there are so many nonprofits is that people are passionate about things; whenever they see an issue not being properly addressed, they want to help address it. I see this as a very positive thing. What Colorado Nonprofit Association, CRC, Metro Volunteers and CNDC did (and still do) is help assure that people are aware if there are existing organizations providing services and helping connect people together.” – on what she learned early on that is still true today

Jeanine Spellman, Former Board Member; Director of Communications, elli Creative
“I wanted to be part of an organization that was making a difference and leading the sector statewide. The education, resources and advocacy that Colorado Nonprofit Association provides helps nonprofit organizations – large and small – advance their missions, which in turn enhances the quality of lives of Coloradans in many diverse ways. This was very rewarding.” – on being involved

Erin Spletzer, Communications Coordinator
“One of my proudest and most memorable moments was our rebranding that began shortly after I started here in early 2005. It was an exciting experience to take part in the process with our branding consultants. As communications coordinator/graphic designer and one of only a few staff members still here who experienced our rebranding, I am very close to our rebranding and have the responsibility and privilege to uphold our brand and keep the flame. Rebranding was a key element

in providing a strong platform for all of our work.” – on memorable moments

Sarah Stockton, Manager of Education and Leadership Development
“I love it when those attending our education programs have an ‘ah ha!’ moment. It's very rewarding to know that our trainings offer skills needed and space to come up with creative ideas to move organizations forward.”
– on favorite moments

Daniel Wallach, Founding Executive Director; Director, Greensburg Greentown
“Originally, the organization was established to help coordinate the charity poker nights that were happening at the time. It went dormant when the legislature stopped the gaming. The economies of scale of bringing hundreds of organizations together for economic, educational and political benefit made great sense. It was all about synergy. Our hope was to both increase the impact of the sector while simultaneously holding organizations to a common goal of the highest public good and healthy communities.” – on how it all started

Richard Westfall, Former Board Member; Partner, Hale Westfall
“(It's) Harder (now) given budget issues and overall number of nonprofits competing for fewer dollars. Easier given the political climate has never been better. People are much more sensitive to nonprofit missions and nonprofits' role in the community.”
– on nonprofits today versus 25 years ago

Debbie Wilde, Former Board Member; Executive Director, YouthZone
“Providing a central place for the nonprofit voice and issues. We benefit from the annual salary survey, the Principles and Practices for nonprofits guide, the Help Desk, the legislative liaison work, the insurance programs, and the friendly staff. Serving on the principles and practices guide original and revision committees was very rewarding. It was one of the perfect opportunities to experience the value of many voices coming together for the good of all. Colorado Nonprofit Association leads that effort, and we all benefit.” – on important purposes