

Running a Not-for-Profit Organization

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Alpha Beta Gamma (ABG) International Business Honor Society

On March 19, ABG hosted three guest speakers who helped us understand what it takes to run a not-for-profit. It was fascinating to hear our first speaker Terry McDonald, executive director of Roberson Museum & Science Center, discuss the skills needed, including communication, collaboration and teamwork. As Henry Ford said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." To be a successful organization, we have to work together to help accomplish our goals. It helped us better understand the value of teamwork and collaboration.

Our second guest speaker was Jen O'Brien, executive director of the Magic Paint Brush Project, which provides family and community engagement programs that serve individuals of all ages with special needs. It helps empower children with disabilities and teach them that they can achieve their dreams, too. She talked about how they have four part-time workers and they run the program mostly by themselves. That is impressive and shows how much they care. To run a nonprofit organization, you have to be driven to make a change. You have to have a dream and the quote she gave us was: "You can't steer a boat from behind." It is an organization that helps people with real needs and changes people's lives. This helps motivate their workers because it shows how much they can change a life.

Our final speaker was Karen Matson, executive director of the Humane Society, which is a place for people to adopt dogs and cats. They have four full-time and 13 part-time workers. They work hard and I have volunteered personally at the Animal Care Council, which is a place that takes in cats as well. The Humane Society depends on volunteers to help keep their business running and it is through fundraising and donations that they are able to provide the animals with all the necessities. They also investigate animal cruelty. Matson said what you need for running a nonprofit is communication — being able to confront people with different opinions and being able to handle them in a civilized manner. To run a nonprofit, you must have the dream to establish it, and then communicate with others to see if they have the same passion for it as you do; then, you need to work together to make that dream into a reality.

Thanks to these three amazing speakers we are able to know what it takes to run a nonprofit; it isn't easy!

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