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Nonprofit Strategies



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Forum focused on solving problems using teamwork

By Barry VanderKelen

The annual Collaboration Forum will be held on Oct. 28th in San Luis Obispo. Now in its 18th year, the forum gathers all non-profit board members and staff to learn from one another (www.collaborationslo.org).

Scheduled to speak at the event are local authors Delia Horwitz and Paula Vigneault, who will present their new book, "Collaboration Soup." Horwitz and Vigneault wrote this book as an outcome of the forum a couple of years ago.

"We observed that well-intentioned people formed groups to explore avenues for collaboration," Horwitz says, "but they didn't have the skills to sustain the groups or the money to hire a professional facilitator.

"We searched our professional networks and couldn't find a simple guide on how to facilitate groups," she states. In response, Horwitz and Vigneault wrote this book.

"Collaboration Soup" builds upon the parable of cooking stone soup. In the parable, everyone contributes something that combines into a delicious soup. "Collaboration Soup" holds that innovation comes from everyone contributing something meaningful and constructive to the process of problem solving.

"Collaboration begins with a need or desire, such as sharing expenses or centralizing common functions," Horwitz explains. "The next step is to engage others and align everyone's objectives. People then tap into the collective

wisdom of the group, and this leads to solutions no one considered before."

People seeking solutions must overcome their attachments to the status quo. "People need to care more about the possibilities than they do their tightly held positions and perspectives," says Horwitz.

Other presentations will focus on emerging uses of social media and mobile communication devices, and recruiting and celebrating volunteers. The real benefit to the forum is the networking. The cost of attending is \$35, if registered before Oct. 25th, and includes lunch.

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Resource Use:

- Support nonprofit leadership
- Board development/training
- Strategic planning

Nonprofit Business Column of *The Tribune*

Barry VanderKelen, Executive Director of the San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation writes a bi-weekly column to help strengthen nonprofit organizations in the community.

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Each column is reprinted as a one-page handout for use by local organizations. Barry can be reached at 543-2323 or by e-mail at barry@slcocc.org.