

# Nonprofit Strategies



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## Drug tests raise tough questions for hiring managers

By Barry VanderKelen

The following is a real situation presented in entirely fictitious circumstances. How would you respond?

Fred Jones works at the bookstore that a local junior high school created in order to generate additional income in response to budget cuts. It wasn't the highest-paying job in town, but in this economy, any job is a good job.

The store is across town from the school. Because entire homerooms occasionally volunteer at the store, Fred was required to go through the same screening and fingerprinting that staff on campus undergoes.

During the hiring process, Fred signed a form that explained that the store and school were

“drug free zones” and all prospective employees are asked — but not required — to be tested for illicit drugs. Fred didn't hesitate and got tested. No illicit drugs were found in his blood. No troubling information was discovered during the check of his background. He was hired.

Fred was promoted to evening shift manager after a few months. This included supervising employees and volunteers. He was involved with interviewing prospective employees, but the store manager made all hiring decisions.

One applicant, Samantha White, stood out from the rest when Fred and the store manager were discussing filling an open position. They mutually agreed that Samantha would undergo the normal screening.

Samantha carefully read all the materials and chose not to be tested. All other background checks suggested she would be an ideal employee.

But Samantha wasn't hired. Fred asked the store manager why. He was told that because Samantha didn't get tested for drugs, she didn't get the job.

Samantha came into the store one evening and asked Fred why she hadn't been hired. If you were Fred, how would you respond?

In the next column, I will discuss how I would handle this situation.

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### Resource Use

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

### Nonprofit Business Column of The Tribune

The San Luis Obispo Tribune publishes a column every other week in the Business section dedicated to the business practices of nonprofit orgs. Barry VanderKelen, Executive Director of the San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation writes the bi-

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