



The Association of Wish Granting Organizations, Inc.

September 2011

In This Issue:

- New AWGO Directors Elected at AGM
- 2012 Conference Information
- Board Development: *What Are The Responsibilities?*
- Featured Wish
- Wish Granter Tip
- Volunteer Handbook: *Do We Really Need One?*

Useful Links

AWGO Homepage
(www.awgo.org)

IRS: Charities & Non Profits
(www.irs.gov/charities)

Canada Revenue Agency:
Charities Directorate
(www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/menu-eng.html)

Charity Commission for
England & Wales
(www.charity-commission.gov.uk)

New Orleans Tourism
(www.neworleansonline.com)

Royal Sonesta Hotel
(www.sonesta.com/royalneworleans)

New AWGO Directors Elected at AGM

A new President and Board of Directors were elected at the 20th anniversary Annual General Meeting held in Orlando, Florida on June 17, 2011. The new Board is comprised of:

- President: Roxanne Rosenberg (The Rainbow Society of Alberta; Edmonton, AB Canada)
- Vice President: Rayann Vasko (Dream Come True of PA; Lehigh Valley, PA USA)
- Secretary: Cyndi Morrow (Wishes Can Happen Inc; Canton OH USA)
- Treasurer: Dave Ferrell (Wishes Can Happen Inc; Canton, OH USA)
- Director: Kathleen Breaux (A Child's Wish of Greater New Orleans; Metairie, LA USA)
- Director: Elaine Tozer (Cystic Fibrosis Dreams Holidays; Bonchurch, Isle of Wright UK)
- Director: Rosie Wilder (New Hope for Kids; Fern Park, FL USA)
- Affiliate Director: Dianne Dekker (Tender Wishes Foundation; Niagara Falls, ON Canada)
- Appointed Director: Pat Metheny (The Wishing Well; Sherman, TX USA)

In addition, new committee members are:

- Conference: Kathleen Breaux (Chair), Pat Metheny, Rayann Vasko, Kristie Perry
- Newsletter: Pat Metheny (Chair), Craig Hawkins
- Scholarship: Rosie Wilder (Chair), Dianne Dekker
- Nominating: Dave Ferrell (Chair), Roxanne Rosenberg
- Membership: Rayann Vasko (Chair), Dave Ferrell, Roxanne Rosenberg
- Finance: Cyndi Morrow (Chair), Elaine Tozer

As always, we would very much appreciate member participation on the committees, particularly Finance and Newsletter. If you're interested, please get in touch with the committee Chairs. The success of these committees is directly attributed to the participation and sharing of information. That's what AWGO is all about – sharing and helping each other!

Updated contact information for all members and their organizations will soon be posted on the AWGO website. The AWGO mailing address is: Roxanne Rosenberg (roxanner@rainbowsociety.ab.ca), President, 6604-82 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6B 0E7. Phone 780 469-3306.

Our **2012 conference** will be held in beautiful New Orleans LA, June 21-22 at the Royal Sonesta Hotel located in the French Quarter. Be sure to leave these dates open on your calendar so you don't miss out! In the meantime, check out the many interesting things New Orleans has to offer, just in case you're lucky enough to be able to stay a day or two before or after the meetings. Our thanks to Kathleen Breaux of *A Child's Wish of Greater New Orleans* who will be hosting the conference.



Do You Have Newsletter Ideas, Submissions or Comments?

Contact **Pat Metheny**
(pmetheny@netcommander.com)

In each newsletter we'd like to feature a different AWGO member. If you'd like to be included, please send Pat an email with a link to your website and Facebook page (if you have one).

Overheard at the World Volunteer Conference :

In response to the observation that volunteers are too often seen as amateurs, "Just remember: Noah's Ark was built by amateurs. The Titanic was built by professionals."

Board Development: *What are the responsibilities?*

An efficient board, committed to a purpose and skilled in resource development, is perhaps the greatest asset of a non-profit or charitable organization. While dedicated and talented staff and/or frontline volunteers are also a critical part of the team, their time and energy would be wasted without the focus, direction, commitment and resources that a board provides. The Board is responsible for the highest level of decision-making and legal authority in the society. By law, it is ultimately accountable for, and has authority over, the society's resources and activities. The Board articulates and communicates the society's vision to the membership and the community.

Governing boards have the ultimate responsibility for the organizations:

- **Purpose**, by establishing and implementing the society's mission and vision
- **Continuity**, by providing continuity for managing and implementing the society's affairs
- **Progress**, by setting the rate of progress that the society takes in reaching its mission and vision
- **Identity**, by securing the community support and appreciation for the society's objectives, beliefs, vision, mission and long-term direction



The role of the Board, in general, is to:

- Ensure the organization is carrying out its mission in a manner that is ethical, effective and fiscally accountable
- Be responsible for the process of policy, including establishing, developing, implementing and evaluating policies
- Set the rate of progress which the organization will undertake in achieving its purpose or mission through programs

The Board is also responsible for:

- Working to achieve the stated purpose and objectives of the organization
- Making policies and plans
- Raising and managing funds
- Employing staff (the Executive Director)
- Appointing committees
- Leadership development
- Advocacy in the community
- Orienting their replacement on the board
- Approving budgets
- Participating in the development of the organizational plan and annual review

The mission, goals and functions identified by the Board are carried out by the Executive Director and his staff.

Below is a typical job description for a Director:

- Have a clear understanding of the mission of the organization
- Attend monthly board meetings
- Attend the annual general meeting each year
- Work in conjunction with the Executive Director on yearly Fundraising, Wish and Communication goals
- Take an active role as a volunteer in regional fundraisers

If you don't have any charity in your heart you have the worst kind of heart trouble.
(Bob Hope)

No one cares what you know, unless they know that you care.

- In conjunction with the Executive Director, develop a 3 to 5 year strategic plan
- Promote the organization to contacts within the community including business partners, foundations and other funding agencies, with an emphasis on corporate relationships
- Form a working committee if necessary

Featured Wish

When 16-year-old Kamrey Ross got to the Pawsibilities Unleashed headquarters on Nov. 28, 2010 in Frankfort, KY., she was tired from the long drive, but full of hope. Kamrey was there to change her life for the better, and within minutes of entering the building, she knew it had.

In sixth grade, Kamrey was diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome. The disease brought on frequent, severe seizures, as well as other health issues, resulting in constant hospital and doctor visits. The devastating disease was taking its toll on the active, outgoing girl.



Her visit to Pawsibilities, a group providing service dogs to persons with medical conditions, was to meet Nike, the canine who would become her best friend and constant companion. The chemistry between the two was instantaneous.

"Within 10 minutes of us getting there, Nike alerted me (of a potential seizure)," says Kamrey, softly patting the furry head of Nike, a seven-month-old golden Labrador retriever. "I was really nervous, which brings on the seizures, and she (Nike) spotted it right away!"

After a week of training, Kamrey and Nike returned to Denison where Nike accompanies her new, human friend everywhere.

"The only place Nike can't go is the Oval Office of the White House and a hospital surgery room," says Kamrey, a student at Denison High School.

Nike is trained to sense any changes in Kamrey that can trigger the seizures. She is able to do this through her acute sense of smell.

"Last week, I had a sinus infection and Nike was running around acting all crazy," says Kamrey with a grin. "At first, we wondered what was going on with her until we realized that she was alerting us because I was sick."

The idea for a service dog was all Kamrey's, thanks to her long-time friendship with another Denison student, Katie Jane Brashier. Katie Jane, a diabetic, got her own service dog about three years ago, a black Labrador retriever named Shots. Her success with her canine companion has been so profound that she encouraged Kamrey to look into getting a service dog of her own.

Kamrey approached her mother with the notion, and her mother agreed to help once

I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody.
(Lily Tomlin)

Kamrey researched the possibilities thoroughly. After a year of research, Kamrey applied to Pawsibilities for a service dog. The cost would be a whopping \$7,500.

She and her family began raising money by selling candy and other projects, but the goal seemed a long way off. Unexpectedly, in September Kamrey received an application from the local Wishing Well program funded by the WNJ Community Foundation. She immediately filled out the application, and in October the application was approved. The much-needed funds were being donated. She and her family traveled to Kentucky and she was united with Nike on Nov. 28.

Kamrey and her family credit not only the help from the foundation and Wishing Well, but the continued prayers from their church family at Parkside Baptist Church, and the support of many others.

Though Nike is already alerting Kamrey to possible medical conditions, her training is far from over. At less than one year old, Nike is still a puppy in many ways. Kamrey is also getting a good lesson in responsibility, caring for her four-legged, juvenile friend.

"It's like having a child only 10 times worse," says Kamrey with a big grin. "She'll pretty much be in training the rest of her life. Right now, we're working on her jumping up, and she chews on everything."

The trade-off is well worth the extra work. Thus far, Nike has saved Kamrey from numerous life-threatening seizures, including two just this week. Not only does Nike sense negative health changes in Kamrey via scents, but senses dangerous agitation and anxiety in her owner. When Nike senses Kamrey is too anxious or distressed, she goes into her comfort mode, placing herself squarely in Kamrey's lap. The determined dog refuses to move or let Kamrey up until her breathing has returned to normal and she is calm enough to avert a seizure.

On Thursday, Kamrey and Nike, along with Kamrey's family members and friends, were treated to a special gathering at the high school. Attending were members of the local Wishing Well program and the WNJ Community Foundation who helped make Nike a reality for Kamrey. Also joining the cookie-laden party were Katie Jane and Shots.

Kamrey expressed her thanks to the many people who helped make her dream come true. Though Nike said nothing, the big doggy smile on her friendly face and the look of adoration in her eyes as she watched Kamrey spoke volumes. Kamrey is now just as important to Nike as Nike is to Kamrey. It has indeed been a life-changing experience for both.

The above wish story was submitted by Pat Metheny of *The Wishing Well*, Sherman, TX.

Wish Grantor Tip

We'd like to share wish granting tips from our members. If you've discovered a better way of ensuring your wish is delivered, please let us know and we'll post it in the next newsletter.

Many of you have asked for detailed information regarding specific aspects of the wish granting process. We hope to have more discussion on these topics at next

If you can't be a good example, then you'll just have to be a horrible warning.

Discover why some of the richest people in the world are not millionaires, they are volunteers.

year's conference rather than try to address them here. Many of our member organizations have wish grantors with many years of experience. We hope that you will join us for featured breakout sessions and share your invaluable experience with your colleagues.

Volunteer Handbook:

Do we really need one?

We all need volunteers in order to make our charities work efficiently and effectively, but once you've found them, how do you manage them?

Every organization that relies on volunteers should have some guidelines to protect them as well as the charity.

Here is some information that should be included in your Volunteer Handbook:

- Your organization's mission or mandate
- Details on your wish-granting program (how it works and what you've accomplished)
- Your organization's history
- Information on donations and how you handle tax receipts
- Is there a minimum age to volunteer?
- Who manages the volunteer program and how can they be reached?
- How are volunteer expenses handled?
- What information does the charity require from the volunteer? This could include an application containing personal information along with any special skills, employment and volunteer history and areas of expertise
- Special screening, waivers and/or police checks depending on the volunteer assignment

As well, you should always explain to volunteers what their rights and responsibilities are.

As a volunteer, it is my right:

- To be informed and have an understanding of the charity's program, history, mission and structure;
- To receive, as appropriate, adequate information, preparation, orientation, training or resources to meet the responsibilities of the position;
- To be given a suitable assignment with only as much responsibility as I can handle;
- To be recognized for my service;
- To receive reviews and/or feedback on my performance and to have the right to respond.

As a volunteer, it is my responsibility:

- To carry out my volunteer responsibilities with professionalism, dignity and integrity;
- To decline work that is not acceptable to me;
- To respect confidences of the charity and those of the recipients of my services;
- To be considerate, respect competencies and work as a team with all staff and other volunteers;
- To accept the guidance and decisions of my supervisor;
- To follow guidelines established by the organization; code of dress, decorum,



etc.;

- Fulfill my commitment or notify my supervisor early enough that a suitable substitute can be found;
- To provide feedback, suggestions and recommendations to the supervisor and staff, if these might increase the effectiveness of the program;
- To refuse gifts or tips, except when the recipient makes or offers something of nominal value as a way of saying 'thank you'.