

NPO Success, LLC
Helping Nonprofits Grow

CASE STUDY: Daring Adventures

*The nonprofit lifecycle in action—
a two-year plan from decline to turnaround*

*“Success is to be measured not so much by
the position that one has reached in life as
by the obstacles which he has overcome.”*

—Booker T. Washington

THE CHALLENGE

In September 2013, I was contacted by a 20+ year-old nonprofit organization, Daring Adventures. After being run by the City of Phoenix Parks & Recreation Department, the City had made the decision to shutter its Adaptive Recreation program, thus ending opportunities for individuals with disabilities to improve their lives through the power of outdoor recreation. As Susan Kenney Stevens shares in her book, *Nonprofit Lifecycles: Stage-Based Wisdom for Nonprofit Capacity*, the organization had moved through maturity and into decline stage. The request to NPO Success—help determine how to turn the organization around and get it on the right track.

NEW BEGINNINGS

My initial work began with interviewing Daring Adventures board members, staff, volunteers and participants to create a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). The next step was an all-day board retreat. The following 45 days were spent developing a detailed strategic plan.

NEXT STEPS

Upon presentation to the board of directors, I was asked to serve as interim CEO, which I did for 24 months. While it had taken longer than anticipated to achieve specific objectives and revisions to the plan were made along the way, the organization has accomplished great things in just two short years.

“Alisa knows what it takes to lead a nonprofit to success. She has been a lifesaver for Daring Adventures.”

—Mark Stodola
Daring Adventures
Board Chair

“Since working with Alisa for the past two years, I have recommended her to other organizations. She is passionate about vulnerable populations. Alisa follows both her passion and nonprofit best practice to help organizations grow.”

—April Jones
Daring Adventures
Board Vice Chair

GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Name change from River of Dreams to Daring Adventures to better reflect the services provided



Special event netting \$45K – previous fundraising activities had not raised more than \$5000

4X increase in funding from diverse sources including—

- ✓ Tribal entities 12 percent set-aside funds
- ✓ Foundation grants
- ✓ Individual donations
- ✓ Special event

4X

increase in program participation



Hiring of first Program Director to develop policies and procedures, outreach to new partners and development of new revenue streams



Development of database from 0 to 1500+ records



Website rewrite and redesign



Distribution of monthly e-newsletters from 0 to 1000+ records



Social media campaigns—

Facebook

Twitter

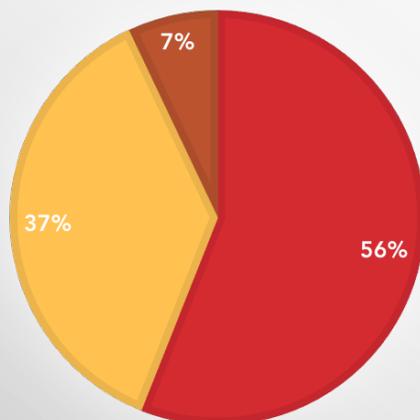
Instagram



Arizona Gives Day increase from less than 10 gifts totaling \$1000 to 189 gifts totaling more than \$30,000 plus \$10K prize!

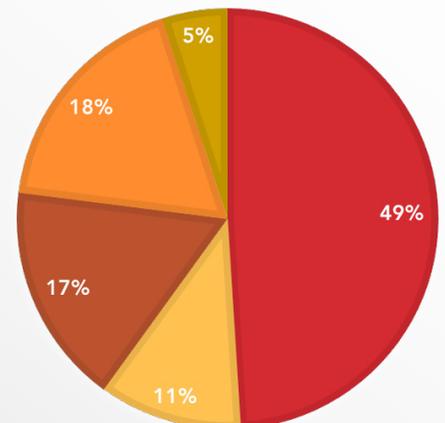
2013 FUNDING: \$133,000

- one source grant
- one source individual
- other grants and individuals



2015 FUNDING: \$481,030

- grants=7 funders
- individual donations
- special event
- earned income
- other



FAST-FORWARD TO 2016—

- **NPO Success** has assisted with the permanent Executive Director search and selection process as well as on-boarding the new ED
- **Three-year, capacity-building funds** to help sustain it during the transition
- **Movement from a managing board** to a governing board of directors
- **New, engaged, members on-boarded** to replace uninvolved board members
- **Strategic social media plan** to meet Arizona Gives Day goals
- **Development of a major special event** tied to increasing awareness of the organization's mission

“Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort.”

— Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Alisa B. Chatinsky | Consultant

NPOSuccess.org

alisa@NPOSuccess.org

928.925.8050