

# Strategic Thinking

*A Boards MTO workshop designed expressly for*

# Tioga County Conservation District

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## **Boards Made to Order**

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## Dream Bigger Dreams

*"The greatest tragedy in life is people who have sight but no vision."*

-Helen Keller

*"The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."*

-Michelangelo

*"If one is forever cautious, can one remain a human being?"*

-Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

*"It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare, it is because we do not dare that they are difficult."*

-Marcus Annaeus Seneca

*"I can teach anybody to get what they want out of life. The problem is that I can't find anybody who can tell me what they want."*

-Mark Twain

## Dream Bigger Dreams

*"If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live a life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."*

-Henry David Thoreau

*"Never measure the height of a mountain until you have reached the top. Then you will see how low it was."*

-Dag Hammarskjold

*"Some people see things as they are and say, 'Why?' I dream of things that never were and say, 'Why not?'"*

-George Bernard Shaw

# Vision Statement

*“A leader's job is to look into the future and see the organization, not as it is, but as it should be.” -Jack Welch*

Community based

*Usually* one sentence (“fits on a tee-shirt”)

A destination...a snapshot of success

Bold language that appeals to the head and the heart

Memorable

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## Sample Vision Statements

*What will our community look like when (not if) we are 100% successful?*

**A national association dedicated to seniors:** *By 2020 no senior will go to bed hungry.*

**A regional organization dedicated to outdoor recreation:** *By 11/11/11 enthusiasts will enjoy a continuous physical trail from the Potomac Tidewater to the Forks of the Ohio.*

**A social services agency:** *No one on our community is cold, hungry or alone.*

**A behavioral care agency:** *Our community is sober and healthy for all its residents.*

**A community development agency:** *Downtown Pittsburgh is one of America's great urban centers.*

# Mission Statement

Agency based

One brief sentence (“fits on a tee-shirt”)

Statement of Purpose

Answers the question: how will we realize our Vision?

Bold language that appeals to the head and the heart

Memorable

Unique to the agency

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## Sample Nonprofit Mission Statements

**American Heart Association** – *To reduce death, disability and risk from cardiovascular disease and stroke.*

**Beaver County Humane Society** – *To provide shelter for unwanted stray animals.*

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pgh** – *To make positive differences in the lives of children by providing one-to-one mentoring programs.*

**Parental Stress Center** – *To prevent child abuse by providing education, counseling and support to parents and caregivers in context of the family.*

**Rainbow Kitchen Community Services** – *To improve the quality of life for low-income individuals and families through programs that address hunger, child nutrition, and supportive services.*

**Rebuilding Together Pittsburgh** - *Rebuilding Homes, Improving Lives*

# Values Statement

*Adopted from Hildy Gottlieb*

A Values Statement will not only tell the world outside and inside the organization what talk you want to walk, but it can give you the tools for measuring whether or not you are indeed walking that talk.

Boards face values-based dilemmas at the board table all the time:

- Are there groups from whom it is not ok to accept donations?
- What kind of employee benefits package should we offer?
- When a board member betrays a confidential matter, what should we do?
- When we've outgrown our rental space, should we buy a building and potentially go into debt, or just lease more space?

Any discussion that focuses on the question, "What's more important - this, or that?" is a discussion of values. And without prior discussion of what values will guide decisions, each of these discussions has no context for the decision.

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# Values Statement

## Diaper Bank Working Credo

- The best decision will be the decision that provides the best end result for the highest number of our partners, the clients they serve, the issues they address, and the future of our community.
- The core reason the Diaper Bank exists is to lessen the current effects of poverty and crisis, while working simultaneously to eliminate the root causes of poverty and crisis in the future. Today's decisions will therefore be made in the context of both today and tomorrow, asking the question, "How will this decision affect the future of our organization AND the future of our community?"
- All parties to any decision will be treated with respect, dignity, compassion, grace, integrity, honesty and humanity.
- Our message must be positive, that we CAN make change. With a passionate optimistic message, we can change minds and move mountains.
- We can accomplish significant change if the whole community works together, focusing ALL the community's varied resources towards improving our community's quality of life. All the community must share ownership of our problems and our solutions.

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## Values Questions

- The most important thing we should be doing for our community is \_\_\_\_\_?
- Is that what we're doing now?
- If our organization survives for year-to-year, but the community is no different, is that OK? Why or why not?
- If our organization experienced tight budget times, would we sacrifice: program quality; number of programs; none of the above?
- When is it OK to cut corners?
- What behaviors do we want the board and staff to model for the community?
- What do we want the community to say about us?
- We know that we made a right decision because \_\_\_\_\_?