

Question and Answer:

TNP

Creating spaces where nonprofits can learn, grow, convene, and look towards their future.



An Interview with
Linda Alexander
TNP Executive Director

ABOUT THE NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIP

The Nonprofit Partnership (TNP/Partnership) was formed in 1993 by community leaders, nonprofit professionals and funders who identified a need for support of nonprofit organizations in the regional area. Today, the Partnership serves thousands of nonprofit professionals a year, offering services from management support and human resources to fund development and opportunities where nonprofits can learn, grow, convene, and work towards their future. We had the opportunity to sit down with Executive Director Linda Alexander, and talk about their most recent partnership, the “Tesoro Foundation Nonprofit Partnership Leadership Institute,” as well as the significant benefits this opportunity brings the community.

Q When did the partnership with Tesoro begin?

A Our partnership with Tesoro began in the fall of 2014. Tesoro reached out to us about hosting a board leadership training that could be coordinated at all of their sites throughout the country. We began with a half-day workshop for 275 people, rolling out the new giving structure for the Tesoro Foundation and providing an interactive workshop on governance and fundraising. It was a great success, which motivated us to determine plans for 2015 and beyond. Our first year as partners was all about building and strengthening our relationship, exploring shared values, and brainstorming ways that we could better serve the community together. While great things can happen in the community, it is only through great collaborative partnerships that exceptional things can happen - and that is the Tesoro Foundation Nonprofit Partnership Leadership Institute.

Q What are the objectives of the Tesoro Foundation Nonprofit Leadership Institute?

A The Institute has two components - the Emerging Leaders Program and the Board Leadership Series. Separately, they build and strengthen the nonprofit sector, and together they will help to transform the future of the nonprofit sectors.

The Emerging Leaders Program is designed for a select group of new leaders in the nonprofit sector to come together and develop their strengths and skills. Through a collaborative process, we fashioned this program to address one of the greatest needs of the nonprofit sector - how to build the next generation of executive leadership. While we designed the program to help build skills necessary today to transition into executive leadership in future years, we have already had a number of graduates go on to become Executive Directors and CEOs.

The Board Leadership Series focuses on another key aspect of great nonprofit leadership – board leadership. This program was designed as a series of leadership development components that can be accessed individually to meet the specific needs of today’s nonprofit boards: Board Governance; The ABC’s of High Functioning Boards; Board Chair Leadership Develop; and Board Leadership as a team approach. The team approach is a day-long intensive course designed to build the capacity of an organization in a key area. Recognizing the importance of strengthening communication, vision and execution, the course provides group building for 20-25 nonprofit “teams” of board leaders and executive directors to not only learn a new skill, but also deepen their relationship with the board and their executive director.

Q What benefits have you seen in the community since the creation of your partnership with Tesoro?

A We are still receiving wonderful feedback from the community about the impact of our first event in the fall of 2014, as well as the launch of the Board Leadership Series in November. In the nonprofit sector today there is a real hunger and understanding for leadership development. With our support and partnership with Tesoro, nonprofit organizations can have access to affordable high quality education and strengthen their programs. This is particularly important to smaller nonprofits that desire to achieve more, but do not have the budget to do so. We are thrilled to already see the rippling effects of leadership development and ensure more leaders are prepared to take the next step for their organization.

Q What effects have you seen in the community through Tesoro’s investments?

A Tesoro is a great partner. Not only do they have a history of giving locally to organizations that provide good services to the community, but they also have the foresight to see the big picture that has a long lasting impact. There is great need for this type of collaboration and a variety of organizations now serving the community - many of which would not exist without Tesoro’s generous support and partnership. As Tesoro refines their giving around STEM, safety and environmental impacts, I think we will see a deeper impact in our communities. Math and science are critical skills that should be further developed to ensure success for the next generation. With Tesoro’s long history of giving, their Foundation has an opportunity to make a lasting impact in this field.

Q Any final thoughts you would like to share?

A I admire Tesoro and their Foundation’s understanding that true, meaningful change takes time. Tesoro is working towards the future to create long-term sustainable growth and we are working with their partnerships to make these visions a reality. They know that through building and strengthening the foundation of community organizations, communities can begin to see permanent changes. As both Tesoro and the Partnership look towards the same future of thriving communities supported by strong organizations I know that, together, we will be closer to making our vision a reality.