

## **A Seismic Shift Underway in Board Service**

*By: Sharon Danosky*



In early March, Anne Wallestad, President and CEO of BoardSource published an article in the Stanford Social Innovation Review titled, The Four Principles of Purpose-Driven Boards. While the title is unassuming, the content is not. The principles are:

1. Purpose Before Organization
2. Respect for Ecosystem
3. An Equity Mindset
4. Authorized Voice and Power

What she is forecasting is a ripple effect leading to a sea change – one that has been in motion long before COVID-19 hit. COVID-19, the murder of George Floyd, the vast economic and social disparities on display during the pandemic, and the devaluation of essential workers has collectively exacerbated, accelerated and amplified inequities in our systems and shone a spotlight on the work we all need to do.

The traditional view of nonprofits and board service – an emphasis on fundraising; organizational rather than community perspective; focus on size and market share, or counting people served instead of impact as a measure of success – is out of sync with the lived realities of many of the communities we are meant to serve. Instead, a community-based approach to service, more participatory and equitable philanthropy, greater representation and collaboration rather than competition are not just new models of service, they represent how our society and sector is changing. While nonprofits are shifting their framework, the question is whether boards are keeping pace with this shift or still functioning in a model which is fast becoming antiquated.

- Do board members have the knowledge and been provided a lens through which they can evaluate the services their nonprofit provides?
- Is the board comprised of community members and are the voices of people with lived experiences being heard at every meeting and with every decision made?
- What is the board's role in fundraising, and is it aligned with objectives around community inclusion or fall back to the give, get, or get off model which sidesteps community participation?
- Does the board engage in meaningful discussions, such as who does the nonprofit serve and who is falling through the cracks? Do they have the data and demographics to make good decisions and the context in which to make them?

These represent significant shifts in how we will be experiencing board service moving forward. They especially come into play as new board members are being recruited, and the composition and structure of the board is being considered.

I had the privilege of moderating a [webinar](#) a couple of week ago for the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and the Valley Community Foundation, with a panel comprised of younger men and women of color, from local communities, sharing their experiences on various boards. I couldn't help but notice that the

conversation didn't discuss radical changes, but important nuanced changes in terms of how we look at the board experience. For example, the importance of the board chair applying a racial equity framework, recruiting practices that don't rely on a matrix but encourage a good dialogue about the nonprofit's purpose and values, an agenda that is not about Robert's Rules of Order but instead promotes relevant discussion around strategy.

Navigating these changes will not be easy, but it is essential. The issues and problems in our society – from childhood poverty, to housing, food insecurity, inequitable pay, domestic violence, climate change, environmental justice and more – will not stand still. It will require that we bring our best, most representative and inclusive selves together to address them. Boards should not shy away from difficult conversations, but create space at every board meeting where they can be held.

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## How One Donor is Rethinking Her Philanthropy in 2021

Isa Catto Shaw is Executive Director of her family's foundation, the Catto Shaw Foundation. During the pandemic, she was also diagnosed with breast cancer (which is now thankfully in remission). These two events gave her pause and time to reflect on where philanthropy is going. I highly recommend reading [this article](#) – as it points to changes that we are or should take into consideration as we move beyond the pandemic.

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## Spring has Sprung!

*By: Atka Danosky*

*\*Director of Goodwill (DOG)\**



I love playing in the snow, but oh how I've missed sunbathing! This is my favorite time of the year. It makes me so happy to be able to play in the yard and sit by my mom's feet while she's out on the deck reading a book. I'm always much happier when my mom is happy, and I can feel that she, and all the visitors that come to our home, are much lighter and more positive.

I've been overhearing my mom and co-workers talking about a pandemic since last year. But lately, I've been hearing more about something called a "vaccine" that is making things better. I don't like needles or the vet, but my mom seemed so relieved when she came home after her second visit to the doctor. I'm just recovering from Lyme Disease and had to go to the vet once, and that was more than enough for me...two times in one month seems like my worst nightmare, but I'm glad it made my mom feel better!

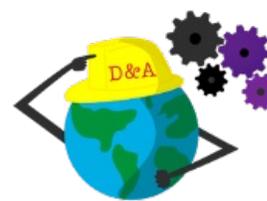
My mom still has lots of meetings in our home office, but she has gone out to meet with clients in-person a few times. She used to leave home to go to work and meet clients, and I hate being home alone. This past year has been so great because she has been home with me every day! I am glad that people are happier and that the "vaccine" keeps people healthy, but I selfishly don't want my mom to go back to working the way she was before last year. Now that it is warmer and my mom and I can play outside together, I want her to stay home with me!

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## SCAFFOLDING FOR THE FUTURE: Our D&A Webinar Series

Thursday, May 20th, 8:30 - 9:30 AM:  
Governance with an Equity Lens  
*Hosted by Sharon Danosky*

Much of the work we are doing is appropriately being filtered through a racial equity lens. This is difficult work and must be purpose-driven. What does this mean for our boards and how board govern today? There are many shifts taking place in the nonprofit sector, especially as it relates to governance and the board's role in leading their nonprofits. In fact, it often seems as if the nonprofits are leading many of their boards today. During this webinar, Sharon will discuss some of the changes we are seeing, whether these will be longer-term trends and how nonprofits and their boards must evolve to meet the changing dynamics and needs in our society.

\$29 for non-members, and FREE for D&A members. Click [HERE](#) to register!

## Remembering Simone Joyaux

The nonprofit sector lost one of its best this past week – **Simone Joyaux**. An advocate and champion for many organizations, her passion for fundraising was ever-present as was her desire to mentor and teach so many in the field. One of her greatest legacies was as the founding chair of CFRE International, leading the CFRE certification program – a true testament in her belief that really good fundraising was about understanding and executing the principles of fundraising really, really well. I had met Simone years ago when I served on the Board of the AFP Rhode Island Chapter and she was President. Her energy and tireless commitment was always remarkable. She will be remembered for not only what she has left behind, but for all she has paid forward.



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