The NPT Power & Influence Top 50 turns 15 this year so it is time to look back at and forward to some of the sector’s remarkable people. It seems the sector is always concerned about the next generation of leaders. Well, 15 years is a good milestone for assessment and it appears the sector is in great hands.

Unlike government, which is heaping more and more responsibility on the sector as it abandons its responsibilities, these executives have balanced budgets. At the same time, nonprofits continue to answer the call in times of crisis, such as when heavy storms knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of homes earlier this summer. It was Vicki Escarra’s Feeding America affiliate food banks that coordinated delivery of vital supplies to places like West Virginia, Ohio and New Jersey.

When Kansas tweaked language in its human services contracts that potentially could limit nonprofits’ speech rights, it was Tim Delaney’s National Council of Nonprofits that sounded the alarm. Nonprofits, such as the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations, led by Ann Silverberg Williamson, continue to be involved in the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast region, years after the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina. Before the Trayvon Martin shooting gained widespread attention, it was Ben Rattray’s Change.org that helped organize people at a grassroots level to finally get noticed.

These leaders have nurtured their core truths, found a few more and are working to improve life across the globe. Former NPT Power & Influence honorees like Florence Green, Judy O’Connor and Peter Goldberg are gone now but their ideas are foundational in leadership, board management and entrepreneurship.

The push a decade and one-half ago was for institutionalization, getting bigger and strong. Flexibility is the key today. Many of the leaders at the largest organizations were late to realize the transition from all work and no play for the staff was eroding to a more balanced lifestyle. That is true, too, for volunteers. And, of course, technology was going to save us all.

While technology has facilitated the ability to not be in the office, it has ushered in the 24-hour work cycle. There is little time for the big idea to germinate and grow to scale, which would frustrate the leaders 15 years ago. Some of this year’s honorees were just getting their feet wet in the sector some 15 years ago, while others were knee deep, proving that it’s an eclectic mix of young and old -- not unlike what the sector must continue to do to nurture talent as the Baby Boomers approach retirement.

Today’s leaders have found the way to innovate and manage through these evolving structures. Many of the challenges of 15 years ago have re-emerged – homelessness, unemployment, healthcare – and nonprofits will prove to be right in the thick of these areas as is typical. The executives on the following pages are addressing these issues head-on and are making a difference. They will be feted next month at an event at The National Press Club.

Here’s the Power & Influence Top 50, class of 2012.
Sage gives you the knowledge you need to build strong relationships and boost success.

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A Sage institution knows how to turn a little digging into a lot of giving.
Robert F. Ashcraft, Ph.D.
Founding Executive Director
Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation
Phoenix, Ariz.
Ashcraft is turning the academic setting at Arizona State University into a community hub for all things infrastructure and has reached across the border into Mexico to address regional issues regarding philanthropy and capacity building. He is a leader and incubator among his nonprofit academic center peers.

Diana Aviv
President & CEO
Independent Sector
Washington, D.C.
It isn’t easy balancing opposing views in a broad sector, but somehow Aviv pulls it off. The organization is again an important convener of the sector’s power brokers, even if that muscle isn’t used as often as it should be.

Diana Campoamor
President
Hispanics in Philanthropy
San Francisco, Calif.
Campoamor leads capacity building and support of community-level organizations in the Hispanic community. More than $30 million has been targeted to Latino nonprofits and leaders under her watch. She also is an active and influential participant on the boards of the sector’s infrastructure organizations.

Emmett Carson
President & CEO
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Mountain View, Calif.
He predicted that Walmart and Target stores eventually will be selling donor-advised funds and because of the low cost of those funds community foundations will be a thing of the past. Of course, his isn’t going anywhere soon with more than $1 billion in the bank. But it’s the provocative thinking that has kept him ahead of everyone else.

Ray Chambers
Founder
MCJ Amelior Foundation
Morristown, N.J.
Chambers’ funding national service and international health projects can all be directly tied to the human connection of community and the impact social good can have on the world. It might sound pretty bubblegum regarding a world-class financier; but if there is an opportunity for understanding, he’ll help to fund it.

Anna Maria Chávez
Chief Executive Officer
Girl Scouts of the USA
New York, N.Y.
She’s been a Girl Scout since age 10 and reflects how the organization has changed during the past three decades. It’s about providing girls with skills for business, technology, social entrepreneurs and creating a gender-balanced leadership model that other leaders need to study.

Serena del Rio
President
Hispanic Leadership Institute
Washington, D.C.
Del Rio has turned the Hispanic Leadership Institute into a community hub for all things infrastructure and has reached across the border into Mexico to address regional issues regarding philanthropy and capacity building. She is a leader and incubator among her nonprofit academic center peers.

Bob Edgar
President & CEO
Common Cause
Washington, D.C.
He’s here for many reasons, including “Middle Church,” a book that calls to progressive people of faith to take back the moral high ground from the extremists and make America a better and less divided country. And, it’s all about holding the powerful accountable for their actions.

Bill Drayton
CEO & Chairman
Ashoka: Innovators for the Public
Arlington, Va.
Drayton is the father of social entrepreneurs. He believes the answer to almost every problem is individuals with innovative solutions. It’s the power of the single idea that can change everything. Life is about changing systems and finding a way to convince people he is correct, or that they are. It doesn’t matter so long as there is change for the better.

Marion Wright Edelman
Founder & President
Children’s Defense Fund
Washington, D.C.
The first black woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar, she directed the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund office in Jackson, Miss. A prolific author, she has been a leading voice in defense of children and families via the Children’s Defense Fund.

Escarra’s will of steel and partnership building has established programs getting nutrition to where it is needed is remarkable. Capacity for the structure that has evolved. The food sourcing and America’s system is a phenomenal number but nowhere near capacity for the structure that has evolved. The food sourcing and programs getting nutrition to where it is needed is remarkable. Escarra’s will of steel and partnership building has established a nutrition infrastructure.

James Flaherty
President & CEO
American Public Health Association
Washington, D.C.
He transformed NCoA from a membership organization to a true council of entities that share a common vision for older adults. It’s part think tank, part advocacy force, part incubator of innovation. His might be the only organization in the sector with an employee with specific Good to Great accountabilities.

Mike L. Fuhr
President & CEO
Generations United
Washington, D.C.
In one form or another, the nation’s religious community still pulls in the majority of American giving. While there have been some high-profile bankruptcies, the policies Busby has put in place and enforces have staved off the financial scandals that used to come on a regular basis.

Donna Butts
Executive Director
Generations United
Washington, D.C.
Butts runs a small organization that has earned an unique niche in studying and advancing work across generations. She’s a champion of the shared site model for youth development and the engagement of an aging population where everyone wins. She never says “no” when asked for help. Go ahead. Try it.

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Tim Delaney
President & CEO
National Council of Nonprofits
Washington, D.C.
Delaney has been able to mobilize state associations to handle battles on many fronts and the coordination often wins the day. While ready for national fights, the state-by-state skirmishes are where the rapid response is needed. Delaney has ably coordinated national response to local issues.

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Joseph E. Slater, wrote the original blueprint for the Peace Corps. His survey of investment performance and practice of more than 2,000 association executives and industry partners representing nearly 11,000 organizations. Graham has made it OK to be a trade association and gets them the respect they deserve with official Washington.

John H. Graham IV
President & CEO
ASAE/The Center for Association Leadership
Washington, D.C.

Do you think there is anything happening regarding nonprofits on K Street NW in D.C., he doesn’t know about? Graham leads more than 22,000 association executives and industry partners representing nearly 11,000 organizations. Graham has made it OK to be a trade association and gets them the respect they deserve with official Washington.

John Griswold
Executive Director
Commonfund Institute
Wilton, Conn.

Griswold is an endowment expert who comes armed with data. His survey of investment performance and practice of more than 1,400 nonprofits is an unmatched benchmark. He also runs the annual Endowment Institute, Commonfund Forum, Trustee Roundtables and nonprofit and investment industry conferences in the U.S., Europe and Canada.

Wendy Harman
Social Media Manager
American Red Cross
Washington, D.C.

There is no doubt that the Red Cross leads the sector in social media use for literally saving lives and Harman is at the epicenter of it. The new social media command center is unlike anything in media use for literally saving lives and Harman is at the epicenter of it. The new social media command center is unlike anything in how we use media for literally saving lives and Harman is at the epicenter of it. The new social media command center is unlike anything in the sector and no secrets are kept. Harman obviously was listening during the lectures on sharing. She has a history of collaboration via technology.

Melanie L. Herman
Executive Director
Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Leesburg, Va.

When you drink coffee that is dangerously hot, you know all about risk. The problem is, the broader sector is just waking up to the issue and it is because of Herman. It’s not only her evangelizing from the center that’s effective, but also her work with the Not-for-Profit Advisory Committee of the Financial Accounting Standards Board.

Aaron Hurst
President & Founder
Taproot Foundation
New York, N.Y.

Changing the sector status quo is in his DNA. His grandfather, Joseph E. Slater, wrote the original blueprint for the Peace Corps. Hurst is a social entrepreneur who isn’t a dreamer. He’s a leader in engaging business professionals for service that builds the infrastructure for the nonprofit sector.

Bill Gates
Co-Founder
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Seattle, Wash.

No real explanation is needed here, given the $55 billion the foundation has at its disposal. For-profits can learn from the nimble way the foundation moves to address an issue, such as when it dumped support of the American Legislative Exchange Council and its support of Stand Your Ground laws.

Brian Gallagher
President & CEO
United Way Worldwide
Alexandria, Va.

His words “There is no economic success, without long-term, enduring human success. People must be the priority.” He has transformed United Way into a vital community convener that also happens to raise billions of dollars. It’s about community collaboration where UWW is an information distribution channel.

Alberto Ibargüen
President & CEO
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
Miami, Fla.

Ibargüen funds nonprofit micro-news sites and information delivery in communities. He should also fund animal training since the family dog soon won’t have a paper to fetch. Micro-sites probably are not the answer to local info as AOL is finding out with Patch.com. They are the next step for communities starving for governmental sunlight.

Irving Katz
President & CEO
National Human Services Assembly
Washington, D.C.

Katz has always thought about the sector’s “Plan B.” He’s working with the University of Notre Dame in a specific program for human services executives. Now he’s talking about alternative revenue streams and watching the sector’s “tectonic plates,” preparing ideas for if and when they settle.

Sr. Georgette Lehmuth
President & CEO
National Catholic Development Conference
Hempstead, N.Y.

Sr. Georgette likes to talk about a theology and practice for fundraising, pointing out that giving allows people to participate in mission. She is also a key convener or collaborator on regulatory and tax issues, especially regarding the U.S. Postal Service.

Valerie Lies
President & CEO
Donors Forum of Chicago
Chicago, Ill.

Lies has always focused on quality of life and the sector’s imprint on it. She has brought together every element of that city for public/private/philanthropic partnerships that have had and will continue to have a positive impact on Chicago and across Illinois. The partnerships are models that must be duplicated nationally.

Michael L. Lomax
President & CEO
UNCF
Fairfax, Va.

A champion of historically black colleges and universities and doing whatever it takes to boost enrollments and graduation rates, the most controversial he’s stirred up recently was regarding gay rights. He pretty much told the ambassador to the U.S. from Uganda he wasn’t welcome because of potential anti-gay legislation in that country.

Nancy Lublin
Chief Executive Officer
Do Something
New York, N.Y.

Smart mouth, well, smart everything. Do Something is innovating in the youth involvement and advocacy space as the thousands of unique visitors to its website show. Lublin doesn’t pull her punches when she’s expressing herself and that has allowed her to share novel concepts. Three important words: Crisis Text Hotline.

Robert Lynch
President & CEO
Americans for the Arts
Washington, D.C.

He oversees the merger of the Arts and Business Council into Americans for the Arts while creating the Americans for the Arts Action Fund and its political action committee to engage citizens in advocating for the arts and arts education and arts-friendly public policies. Americans for the Arts has grown to more than 50 times its original 1985 size.
and the country forward and putting the more than 2,600 YMCAs at the center of that community evolution. He’s a problem causer, in the best sense of the concept, for finding answers to vexing issues.

Risa Lavizzo-Mourey
President & CEO
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Princeton, N.J.

From the suites to the streets, this doctor has street cred. She is a leader helping shape national policy on the most pressing health and health care issues threatening our society, like childhood obesity and the rising cost of health care. Most important, she hasn’t lost touch with the people being served. Until recently she was still seeing patients at a local clinic.

Michelle Nunn
Chief Executive Officer
Points of Light Institute
Atlanta, Ga.

The concept of national service keeps getting stronger and Pot is making the needle move. The behind-the-scenes work that few see is the mark of an influencer and Nunn is the human tie to so many groups. There once was a “decider.” She’s the “influencer.”

Lisa Paulsen
President & CEO
Entertainment Industry Foundation
Los Angeles, Calif.

Paulsen has taken global the art of mega-fundraising in a night. The organization is also holding to the fire the feet of researchers who get the cash. The organization is initiating collaborations and pushing for answers. It is changing the expectations charities have of those they fund.

Ben Rattray
Founder and CEO
Change.org
San Francisco, Calif.

George Zimmerman is awaiting trial for killing Trayvon Martin because 2.2 million people signed a change.org petition. Rattray co-founded Change.org and evolved it from a social network to a blogging platform to its current petition mobilization. The idea has gone global and he is showing how regular people can shift the balance of power.

Holly Ross
Executive Director
NTEN
Portland, Ore.

Nobody puts more nonprofit tech brains in one room at one time than Ross. She runs an organization that has nurtured these change-makers, who are reshaping the way every aspect of a charity is operated. It’s one of the few umbrella organizations with buzz right now, which is much better than a blue screen, of course.

David Saltzman
Executive Director
Robin Hood Foundation
New York, N.Y.

Mission-related investments are what make Saltzman tick. Almost 100 percent of the time funding is based on unique outcome models and projection. The difference is they get their hands dirty in operations, about which some grantees might not be thrilled. Robin Hood is often a lead investor that brings others to the inner city.

Rebecca W. Rimel
President
The Rockefeller Foundation
New York, N.Y.

You can’t sit in a tower and claim to understand the streets. Big answers start with communities and this powerful CEO knows that change starts with education and information. The data coming from Pew is startling. Using that knowledge to bolster the risk of innovation – and then funding it – is the model of next generation foundations.

Judith Rodin
President
The Rockefeller Foundation
New York, N.Y.

Better outcomes are a by-product of process innovation and she is the champion of it around the globe. She believes that competition breeds secrecy when collaboration – and social finance – can make things happen faster. She puts her funding where her thoughts are taking her.

Cecile Richards
President & CEO
Planned Parenthood of America
New York, N.Y.

Does this pick really need an explanation? Planned Parenthood was the big winner in the fight with Susan G. Komen for the Cure. It took guts and nerves of steel to make it work. She doesn’t blink when she believes she is correct.
Paul Shoemaker  
Executive Connector  
Social Venture Partners, Seattle  
Seattle, Wash.

Here’s a guy who connects people who have money to other people with good ideas but he thinks charity rating agencies that examine ratios could be the worst things to ever happen to the sector. How’s that for swimming upstream? No one financial model fits the sector, but he’s working to change that illusion that there is one.

Judy Vredenburgh  
President & CEO  
Girls Inc.  
New York, N.Y.

A lifelong commitment to at-risk kids has twice put Vredenburgh at the helm of a major organization that was desperate for a fresh voice and vision. She transformed organizations every time she wasn’t the boss. To her, it’s always been about the next generation.

John R. Seffrin  
CEO  
American Cancer Society  
Atlanta, Ga.

The dean of the healthcare CEOs, he’s been around long enough to know the sector’s history and guide it away from previous shortcomings in judgment. His opinion is sought after by those who shape the sector’s broader opinions, and not just by those in healthcare.

Jeff Skoll  
Founder & Chairman  
Skoll Foundation  
Palo Alto, Calif.

Skoll fuels the international juggernaut of social entrepreneurship. He is correct when saying that innovation and change that come from cutting the world’s problems. He’s walking the border between service provision and teaching traditionally laid-back sector management that does doors open without money.

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Ann Silverberg Williamson  
President & CEO  
Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations  
Baton Rouge, La.

Williamson is advocating for new revenue models in the recession’s wake and “Katrina Fatigue” of those not dealing with issues that remain six years after that catastrophe. She’s walking the border between service provision and teaching traditionally laid-back sector management that does doors open without money.

Samuel Worthington  
President & CEO  
InterAction  
Washington, D.C.

He has taken on the CIA regarding fake immunization programs in Pakistan and is mapping a civil society plan accommodating private resources that are replacing governmental and NGO dominance in international development. Stakeholders in international development are evolving and Worthington is leading the transition.

Laysha Ward  
President  
Community Relations & Target Foundation  
Minneapolis, Minn.

Her words: “Align your words with your actions. Be authentic, be humble, and always act with integrity.” Ward is integral to national service and community not because of Targert’s millions of dollars given away but through coalition buildings and ideas. It will be fun watching her chair the Corporation for National and Community Service.
Crowdsourced fundraising campaigns are not just for individuals doing walkathons. Nonprofits can leverage staff and supporters to create peer-to-peer campaigns. But, to reach maximum engagement, you’ll need a campaign coordinator to make it easy and fun for fundraisers.

“This is a new opportunity to add to your arsenal of fundraising strategies,” said Andrea Berry, director of partnerships and learning at the Portland, Maine-based Idealware. Berry ran a session called Turning Your Supporters Into Fundraisers during the 2012 National Conference on Volunteering and Service in Chicago, sponsored by Points of Light.

Crowdfunding, friend-to-friend fundraising, peer-to-peer fundraising, distributed fundraising and group fundraising are names for the same tactic. “It’s an online pledgeathon, empowering your supporters to fundraise on your behalf,” said Berry. It takes fundraising out of development offices and puts it in the hands of supporters to utilize their physical and online social networks.

But, it’s not as simple as telling fundraisers to go out and solicit friends for donations. There has to be a coordinator who’s able to help them set up their fundraising pages, encourage them, help them set goals and tell their stories, and make the process fun for supporters.

Utilizing real-world examples, Berry took the audience through launching, maintaining and finishing a crowdfunding campaign, illustrated technology tools to help, and described the ingredients for success.

“Being conservative and realistic when starting is very important,” said Berry, because the people doing the fundraising will most likely not be professional fundraisers. They might be anxious and reticent about asking their friends for money and might be unwilling to set up their fundraising web pages. “The biggest barrier is not getting supporters or coordinating, it’s getting people to do what they said they’d do.”

To combat this, come up with incentives and prizes for the first person to set up their fundraising page, the first to send an email, the first to get a donation, etc. Gift certificates work well, but make prizes relevant. If your staff is young, try a gift certificate to a local bar. For people with families, Berry suggested a toy store gift card. “It sets you up as the coordinator to push people forward,” she said.

Guiding your fundraisers in setting up their pages is key. Designate a time to train supporters how to set up their pages en masse. In her case study, Berry found that, of the people who didn’t set up their pages at the group session, most never did. Above all, they need to make their pages personal. “It’s not a numbers game, it’s about passion,” said Berry. “Get people talking about why they care.”

Traffic Control
Coordination the key to people-centered fundraising

Recognize that staff might be uncomfortable with writing, and offer templates for everything from the fundraising page to a solicitation email to a post-campaign thank you note for donors. And, don’t neglect physical letters, either; some supporters, especially older fundraisers, might rather write letters because they are not as conversant with online media as younger fundraisers.

There are a number of websites you can use for the fundraising pages. Some are standalone, and others can be integrated with your organization’s website or Facebook page via widgets and add-ons. Some of the most popular tools are detailed below.

- **WhatGives?!**: This is widget-based, easy to use, and good for when you’re not looking for a whole page. It processes payments via PayPal, with a 2.4 percent charge on each donation.
- **Razoo**: The least expensive non-PayPal option at a 2.9 percent commission, it has a minimum donation of $10, which encourages people to give more. It does not provide a public list of donors, which might lead to “empty dance floor syndrome,” where people do not wish to be the first to give.
- **Causes**: Allows anyone on Facebook to create or donate to a fundraising campaign. The charge is 4.75 percent per donation. But, if your fundraisers are not on Facebook, they cannot use Causes.
- **FirstGiving**: This is feature-rich with no upfront fee. The charge per donation is significantly greater than the previously-mentioned tools, at 7.5 percent. Your own donor database might offer a crowdfunding feature, and it carries the advantage of not having to import the donors into the database.