


THE NONPROFIT TIMES™

The Leading Business Publication For Nonprofit Management • www.thenonproffitimes.com • \$6.00 U.S.

April 1, 2016

Team Rubicon arrives in the Philippines within days of Typhoon Haiyan, Nov. 12, 2013. It took top honors in the study.
Photo by Kirk Jackson.



2016 NPT Best Nonprofits To Work

It's Fun, Games, Benefits And Serious Business At The Best Nonprofits

It's Fun, Games, Benefits And Serious Business At Top Nonprofits To Work

By MARK HRYWNA

There was a significant reduction in force (RIF) at BoardSource three years ago, in addition to the departure of its chief executive officer. The Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that aims to strengthen nonprofit board leadership, has been working hard ever since on its organizational culture.

"We had a very short timeframe to get staff together. It was traumatizing, for staff that was kept, too. Creating a good working environment and culture was the number one priority for us," said Marci Sunderland, vice president of human resources. Two-thirds of the staff members were with the organization before the 2013 reorganization.

"We created an internal task force that looked at where we were as an organization, where we wanted to be, and how we get there," Sunderland said. They used an internal survey to get feedback from staff members and then hosted brown bag lunches to drill down deeper and eventually put together an organizational culture statement.

It must have worked because BoardSource was among the first-time organizations to grace *The NonProfit Times' Best Nonprofits To Work* 2016. With 30 employees, BoardSource ranked 12th among 18 nonprofits in the small category and 23rd out of 50 overall.

"One of the things we were aiming for was to be able to go through this process as a base year, and what feedback we got going through this process to see how we can make BoardSource better," Sunderland said.

Among the many returning organizations from 2015 is Team Rubicon, which ranked second overall last year but this year took the top spot. The nonprofit has 44 employees, including 31 at its Los Angeles-area headquarters, to qualify in the small organization category.

The sixth annual report is compiled with the help of Best Companies Group, Inc., (BCG). The Harrisburg, Pa.-based firm conducts a thorough organizational assessment. It's a multi-part process designed to gather detailed data about each participating nonprofit. The organization completes a questionnaire and then employees complete a confidential survey. Sources outside the organization also are contacted.

Collected information is combined to produce a detailed set of data enabling analysts to determine the strengths and opportunities of participating organizations. Workplaces are ranked based on this data and then the Employer Benchmark Summary is returned to each participating organization.

Managers at each nonprofit must complete the Employer Benefits & Policies Questionnaire (EQ), collecting information about policies, practices and demographics. The Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey consists of approximately 78 statements that employees respond to on a five-point agreement scale.

Results are analyzed and categorized according to eight core focus areas:

- Leadership and planning;
- Corporate culture and communications;

- Role satisfaction;
- Work environment;
- Relationship with supervisor;
- Training, development and resources;
- Pay and benefits; and,
- Overall engagement.

Nonprofits on the list scored on average 90 percent on the survey compared with 76 percent by all nonprofits not on the list. The percentage indicates respondents who answered "Agree Somewhat" and "Agree Strongly" to the 78 statements, such as "I would recommend working here to a friend," or "I like the people I work with at this organization."

The biggest disparities were found within the categories of leadership and planning (90 percent for nonprofits on the list compared to 71 percent for those not on the list) and corporate culture and communications (88 percent versus 71 percent). Nonprofits on the list did not score

less than 85 percent in any of the eight focus areas. For those that did not make the list, the highest score was 84 percent.

There were 10 key drivers identified by BCG that were common among the 50 organizations:

- I feel I am valued in this organization;
- I have confidence in the leadership of this organization;
- I like the type of work that I do;
- Most days, I feel I have made progress at work;
- This organization treats me like a person, not a number;
- I like the people I work with at this organization;
- There is room for me to advance at this organization;
- I can trust what this organization tells me;
- My job makes good use of my skills and abilities; and,

• This organization provides the technology, equipment and resources I need to do my job well.

A good salary and benefits package will always be a good draw for a nonprofit, and the *Best Nonprofits To Work* are no exception. The overall average exempt salary was \$74,351 among this year's 50 nonprofits. Five organizations boasted an average exempt salary of more than \$100,000:

- Birthright Israel Foundation, \$133,328
- Century Housing Corp, \$113,749
- Cinnaire, \$113,675
- National Communication Association, \$106,700
- National office of Communities In Schools, \$105,338

Beyond a good paycheck, a common thread among this year's Best Nonprofits To Work For was employee appreciation. Sometimes that included a monetary prize or bonus. Some 44 organizations have a formal program to recognize staff.

Top-ranked Team Rubicon last year instituted a quarterly award for staff called "The Teddy." That's on top of the existing, less formal and more casually named "Get Sh*t Done" award. The formerly quarterly accolade is now awarded monthly and includes a big mug and glass plate – "A cheers to you" – with nominations submitted by directors to human resources each month.

"The Teddy" was inspired by a famous quote in Teddy Roosevelt's 1910 speech, "The Man In The Arena" delivered in Paris. It embodies the concept of daring to be great, which sometimes might lead to failure, but daring with the best intentions always will have support.

Nominations can be submitted quarterly by staff members at TeamRubicon.org. Anyone is eligible for nominations, which go directly to CEO Jake Wood. The winner receives a golden teddy bear, certificate presented by Wood, a profile on the organization's career page, and a cool \$100 in cash. Correctly answering some Team Rubicon trivia questions from the CEO could yield additional cash.

Team Rubicon revamped its employee recognition program to align with cultural principles that were codified earlier in 2015, according to Candice Schmitt, director of human resources. Putting it in writing was important after making 23 new hires, having almost one-third of its 44 employees working remotely and opening another office in Dallas for operations staff.

"We're expanding a lot and have built up some support functions and added some capacity to HR," she said. The bulk of it has been in full-time regional administrators that are remote positions and used to be all-volunteer.

The organization also transitioned to a new human resources system that has entirely paperless on-boarding, making the process of time cards and other benefits documentation much easier, according to Schmitt. "The more we can automate, the better we can support our growing remote staff and allow employees to focus on the mission and supporting our volunteers," she said.

Continued on page 4

2016 NPT's Best Nonprofits To Work Top 50

Rank	Organization Listing	City	State
1	Team Rubicon	El Segundo	CA
2	OSU Foundation	Stillwater	OK
3	Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands	Omaha	NE
4	The Center for Trauma & Resilience	Denver	CO
5	Brighton Center	San Antonio	TX
6	National Communication Association	Washington	DC
7	The Mission Continues	St. Louis	MO
8	AHC	Arlington	VA
9	Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia	Washington	DC
10	Communities In Schools National Office	Arlington	VA
11	Pearl S. Buck International	Perkasie	PA
12	Space Foundation	Colorado Springs	CO
13	Kessler Foundation	West Orange	NJ
14	American Heart Association	Dallas	TX
15	National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy	Gaithersburg	MD
16	Partnership for Public Service	Washington	DC
17	Alzheimer's Association	Chicago	IL
18	Make-A-Wish Illinois	Chicago	IL
19	CAP Tulsa	Tulsa	OK
20	ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer	Alexandria	VA
21	Cinnaire	Lansing	MI
22	Young Community Developers	San Francisco	CA
23	BoardSource	Washington	DC
24	PRS	McLean	VA
25	Positive Coaching Alliance	Mountain View	CA
26	DoSomething.org	New York	NY
27	Women's Business Enterprise National Council	Washington	DC
28	The Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults	Baltimore	MD
29	Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society	Arlington	VA
30	SightLife	Seattle	WA
31	Pathway Homes	Fairfax	VA
32	Career Path Services	Spokane	WA
33	Downtown Streets Team	San Jose	CA
34	Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse	Tucson	AZ
35	The Achievement Network (ANet)	Boston	MA
36	North Carolina Outward Bound School	Asheville	NC
37	CCSSO	Washington	DC
38	Directions for Youth & Families	Columbus	OH
39	Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona	Tucson	AZ
40	iMentor	New York	NY
41	Soles4Souls	Old Hickory	TN
42	Caring Voice Coalition	Mechanicsville	VA
43	Century Housing Corporation	Culver City	CA
44	The Children's Home of Cincinnati	Cincinnati	OH
45	Year Up	Boston	MA
46	Birthright Israel Foundation	New York	NY
47	Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida	Daytona Beach	FL
48	Summer Search	San Francisco	CA
49	American College of Emergency Physicians	Irving	TX
50	Our Family Services	Tucson	AZ



**America's emblem
stands for great strength
and long life.**

With that in mind, let's talk retirement.

The Spirit of America[™]
Visit us at mutualofamerica.com or call us at 1-866-954-4321.

MUTUAL OF AMERICA
Your Retirement Company[®]

Mutual of America[®] and Mutual of America Your Retirement Company[®] are registered service marks of Mutual of America Life Insurance Company, a registered Broker/Dealer.
320 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10022-6839.

Continued from page 2

At BoardSource, "The Incredible Co-worker Award" is given away during the monthly staff happy hour. Employees nominate each other and the winner gets a trophy filled with candy and other knick-knacks, along with \$100 to use anywhere within the organization. That can be used for anything from hosting a happy hour to bringing cake and ice cream or even hiring a temp if a department needs help. "The team is looking for more opportunities like that as well as thinking about how we're recognizing service," Sunderland said.

Employee recognition doesn't always have to be a big production. During staff meetings, supervisors announce employee anniversaries and other milestones. "We're really trying to formalize that and other ways to recognize staff," Sunderland said.

CAP Tulsa (No. 19 overall) provides staff with "Core Value" notepads. Every time a staff member does something above and beyond, a colleague may give them a personal message.

Chief Operating Officer Karen Kiely sends a note to staff every two weeks, highlighting things like grants received and employees in the local news. The human resources team highlights achievements each quarter on the home page, such as degrees earned, promotions, certifications, and speaking engagements. Employees are quick to point out if they've been left off in error. "I love that because that means that they read it and they care," Kiely said.

Children's Home of Cincinnati (No. 44 overall) has a newsletter every other week and all-staff emails that update employees on changes. CEO John Banchy tries to keep his ear to the ground and work among employees to get their perspective on policy changes. There has been a focus on leadership training for every manager, director and executive, the idea being to create a culture of engagement.

"It's an easy place to cut, but if our people are first, we're not going to cut... It's easy for directors and managers to say, 'I'm too busy,' but when they see us there, they know we are invested," Banchy said.

Chicago-based Alzheimer's Association (No. 17 overall) focuses on the three Cs of making employees feel valued:

- Communication is being transparent, updating staff on issues and direction;
- Collaboration is engaging task forces, committees, focus groups toward steering direction; and,
- Compassion is understanding that the employee's life goes beyond work.

"We all know that employees bring home is-



Karen Kiely

issues to work and work issues come home. Our leaders and co-workers understand the whole person," said Karen Wollensak, vice president of human resources.

At Make-A-Wish Illinois (No. 18 overall), CEO Stephanie Springs said they actively work on the office culture. "We may not be at it every single day but actively try to live the culture. It comes through in how we approach the work we do, it comes through in social things we do, in performance management, and we try to reinforce and live the culture. I think that's a big piece of why people like it here," she said.

The organization has a merit-based compensation plan based on performance, and in addition, staff members are eligible for a "thank you" cash bonus if fiscal year goals are reached. If it's been a good year and things have gone well collectively, the board will authorize the one-time payment to each employee. There's also an incentive program for leadership employees. Specific objectives are tied to overall goals for the organization.

That's the structured part of staff recognition. "The Wishys" are the unstructured – and one might say fun – part of that reinforcement. Each employee creates a unique award for another staff member to recognize the person's

strengths of the individual. It's the message and appreciation that are most important. Creativity is key; not a competition," Springs said.

Best Nonprofits To Work make a point of bringing staff together to connect with one another and get to know fellow employees beyond the office. "We want staff get to know each other on a different level other than projects. We encourage those friendships," BoardSource's Sunderland said. "You're seeing really different people just sitting and chatting about different things," during the monthly happy hours. "It's a way to build camaraderie as a team and appreciate them for what they're doing," she said.

Different departments might host it each month, sometimes picking a theme and decorating the conference room, and organizing get-to-know-you games.

The Downtown Streets Team (No. 33 overall), another newcomer to Best Nonprofits To Work For this year, has a task force dedicated to it. More serious or formal meetings are handled by dedicated staff but the Feel Good Committee handles things like throwing a joint, all-gender wedding shower – which they did when four employees got hitched last summer.

"We've always done fun stuff together but formalized it in committee," said Executive Di-



Candice Schmitt

Therapy) to a low of seven (Make-A-Wish Illinois and Soles4Souls).

Cinnaire recently established an unlimited vacation policy and has flex scheduling to allow employees to engage in volunteering opportunities. Staff doesn't have to go in during the two-week holiday season toward the end of the year. "If your work is wound up, you don't have to come in. We feel strongly about the strength of your family," said President and CEO Mark McDaniel.

Some 33 organizations provide cafeteria, meal subsidies or daily free snacks and beverages. Results from BoardSource's last employee survey indicated that staff members were interested in healthy eating and lifestyle, according to Sunderland, so a health and wellness task force was formed. The committee is tasked with distributing healthy living information but also bringing food for staff meetings. The initiative aims to make sure staff know about healthy options when it comes to food but also activities.

The task force started a scavenger hunt-like challenge to encourage people to take the stairs. Things are hidden in stairwells and employees can win prizes for finding the items.

All or part of employees' costs for health club memberships or fitness or wellness programs is picked up by 13 organizations. Lansing, Mich.-based Cinnaire (No. 21 overall) goes even further, offering a full gym at its headquarters. In addition, dry cleaning services pick up and drop off weekly for its employees.

Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse (No. 34 overall) in Tucson, Ariz., offers 24/7 assistance. A local massage therapist has come in to provide pro bono help to mitigate burnout. Compassion-fatigue sessions conducted by clinic staff help direct service staff members.

"There is no magic solution. It is draining. With massage, compassion fatigue, or a general attempt to have a really active culture of fun in the organization we try so that not every moment is crisis," explained CEO Ed Mercurio-Sakwa.

Brighton Center in San Antonio, Texas, (No. 5 overall) started the Energy, Drive, Goals, Execute (EDGE) program a year ago. Based on an online prize system within their insurance carrier, employees get points for things such as going to the gym and getting regular check-ups. Points can lead to prizes such as money toward a gym membership, Fitbit devices and wireless headphones. Some employees have lost 70 pounds through the program.

"It's a win-win. Really the focus is bringing health and awareness. Everything we do, we try to have a lot of options," CEO Kim Jeffries said. "We do incorporate Paleo, vegetarian, gluten-free, so we are supporting eating habits." *NPT*

2016 Top 10 Key Drivers

Rank	
1	I feel I am valued in this organization
2	I have confidence in the leadership of this organization
3	I like the type of work that I do
4	Most days, I feel I have made progress at work
5	This organization treats me like a person, not a number
6	I like the people I work with at this organization
7	There is room for me to advance at this organization
8	I can trust what this organization tells me
9	My job makes good use of my skills and abilities
10	This organization provides the technology, equipment and resources I need to do my job well

achievements. "The concept was really for us to be able to recognize each other for some accomplishment for the previous period of time, whether the end of the fiscal year, or if you did it last night for our team," Springs said. She encourages staff to "sprinkle in a little of their personality" and The Wishy usually aims to hit on something unique about that person and what they've accomplished, not a numerical goal.

"Sometimes it's done in a funny way, sometimes in a serious way. It takes on the personality" of the person awarding it, Springs said. One employee might not know the other very well so discovering something about their work mates adds another dimension, she said.

For instance, Springs recognized an employee for always doing an incredible job of showing gratitude to all the people she works with and being on lots of external event committees. The Wishys culminate with a presentation during the year-end celebration – in theater style, of course – followed by a happy hour and some networking.

"It's probably one of the events staff members enjoy the most. It lets us see a dimension of a person and it's also fun and communicates in a different kind of way," Springs said.

Staff members are asked to participate and draw names to determine the individual for whom they will create The Wishy. The award could be a certificate, trophy, scrapbook or even a snow globe. "It should be created to honor the

rector Eileen Richardson. Employees also participate in a variety of recreational activities, from volleyball and softball to fantasy football leagues. "There's always something for everyone," she said.

There's also an all-hands meeting where staff members meet the first Friday of each month. Sometimes the committee will organize barbeques or a department might take a beach day together. Downtown Streets Team also shuts down for its annual holiday party, in addition to the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. "Everyone can get downtime on top of other vacation. We're always dealing with complicated cases, sometimes working almost 24/7," Richardson said.

Team Rubicon might cater an early dinner or appetizers to try to get people to socialize around the office some more. "The idea is to get the staff to connect to one another, get to know each other more personally," Schmitt said. It was important to incorporate new activities, like movie nights on-site, to try to diversify the group as sometimes the same groups might attend happy hours. It's also a chance for directors to connect with the rest of the team, as they can't step out for a half-day to do a backpacking trip, Schmitt said.

The average paid number of holidays across the 50 organizations was 12.6, with a high of 35 (National Board for Certification in Occupational

HUMAN SERVICES PROTECTION NON-PROFIT/FOR PROFIT

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE SERVED. 1 SHARED RESPONSE.



PHLY helps ensure that our Human Services customers continue to gain positive feedback from the millions of people they serve. We offer customizable package policies, along with superior customer service, and a free risk management plan toolkit to help meet the ever growing needs of non-profits.

Call 855.411.0797
Or visit ThinkPHLY.com/HumanService

A.M.Best A++ Rating

Ward's Top 50 2001-2015

96% Claims Satisfaction

100+ Niche Industries



PHILADELPHIA
INSURANCE COMPANIES

A Member of the Tokio Marine Group

Non-Profit/For Profit Human Services | Mental Health | Substance Abuse | Home Health Care | Home Medical Equipment

Philadelphia Insurance Companies is the marketing name for the property and casualty insurance operations of Philadelphia Consolidated Holding Corp., a member of Tokio Marine Group. All admitted coverages are written by Philadelphia Indemnity Insurance Company. Coverages are subject to actual policy language.

Best Large Organizations

Making sure staff members aren't just numbers

By ANDY SEGEDIN

Gerald Chertavian, founder and CEO of Year Up, which focuses on helping young adults in urban communities, likes to think of himself as a “chief people officer.” The organization already boasts a competitive salary, up to 5 percent matching on contributions to employees’ 401(k) plans and four weeks of vacation after the first year. But, Chertavian is keeping his ear to the ground.

Boston-based Year Up collects staff feedback through a variety of means, including surveys and questions submitted anonymously in a town-hall style format. Questions are “voted up” by staff and are answered by organizational leaders via video call to Year Up’s staff in 13 regions. More flexible work schedules evolved from staff response. Year Up staff members now have the option of starting their workday earlier, later or to work four 10-hour days as opposed to the typical 9-to-5, five days per week.

“It requires constant listening, attention and willingness to adapt,” Chertavian said of maintaining employee satisfaction. “I think that you’ve got to build the best listening mechanisms and systems you can and have people feel comfortable speaking the truth.”

Year Up ranks 45th overall and fifth among large organizations in the *2016 NPT Best Nonprofits to Work* list. All five large organizations have appeared on the list at least once in the previous reports, meaning that sustained employee satisfaction and engagement are possible, but seldom easy or direct.

Straightforward metrics, such as liking the work one is doing (96 percent), enjoying co-workers (96 percent), and satisfaction with salary and benefits (90 percent), are among the key metrics separating large organizations that made the list and ones that didn’t make the cut. Less tangible benchmarks such as feeling treated as a person as opposed to a number (91 percent of large organizations on the list as opposed to 67 percent not on), trust in leaders caring about employee wellbeing (91 percent to 64 percent), and feeling as though quality work is properly recognized (82 percent to 57 percent), are just as prevalent.

Creating a personal feel in a large organization doesn’t have a one-size-fits-all answer. Year Up has the compounded challenge of rapid growth, increasing its staffing by 25 percent almost every year since launching in 2000. Chertavian anticipates that the organization will hire 250 staffers during 2016. The hiring spree, accompanied by a turnover rate of about 15 percent, will put staffing at about 800. Locations in Dallas and Los Angeles are about to open and Chertavian hopes to grow north of 20 percent in each of the next six years.

Maintaining employee satisfaction through growth incorporates competitive salary and benefits, stretch and advancement opportunities and the carrying out of leadership mandates. Each staffer responsible for another employee is required to follow four mandates: reinforce the values of the organization, demonstrate and

connect operating principles, connect staff to the purpose of their work and develop talent.

Chertavian said that he lives by those principles and often finds himself thanking staff members for performance. “Not a day goes by in my life as a CEO that I don’t express my sincere appreciation.”

Managers at CAP Tulsa, an antipoverty and childhood education organization in Tulsa, Okla., take a few approaches for making sure staff members feel included and valued, according to Karen Kiely, chief operating officer. Kiely issues notes to staff every two weeks, recognizing things such as grants received or employees featured in news articles. The HR team collects accomplishments such as promotions, earned degrees, certifications and speaking engagements and highlights them quarterly on the organization’s homepage.

“This is a very complex organization,” Pritchett said. “There are a lot of things that we do around our mission. I think folks who come here, it’s not something that they can pick up after a few weeks. We have an extensive on-boarding process. I’ve been here just under two years and I’m still learning.”

AHA, headquartered in Dallas, Texas, places a good deal of accountability on leaders to ensure that each of the organization’s 3,000 employees feels important and in the loop. The everyday effort is HR supported, but leader driven, Pritchett said. Metrics such as turnover rate, which stands at about 13 percent, are monitored as a lack of retention slows progress.

“Leaders understand that they own those conversations with their folks,” said Pritchett. “At the end of the day, when their folks aren’t engaged or understand what they’re supposed to

frankly, we want to hear.”

TCH, which entered *The NPT* list as the fourth-rated large organization and 44th overall, provides new hires with a “family welcome,” having lunch with a supervisor and meeting Banchy and staff across departments as part of on-boarding. The organization has also invested in personnel by offering dental and vision coverage, keeping health premiums flat, matching up to 4 percent on employee 403(b) plans and matching an addition 1.5 to 4 percent based on position and seniority.

TCH’s turnover rates stand at 22 percent. The goal is to move the needle closer to 10 percent. Banchy sees improvements toward the organization’s mission as a means of accomplishing that goal. “When we get improved outcomes, a byproduct will be staff retention,” Banchy said. “People inherently want to be a part of a successful team. We have to keep our eye on the prize and that’s being the best we can be in accomplishing our mission.”

Alzheimer’s Association, coming in second among large nonprofits and 17th overall on the NPT list, also relies on its hiring, on-boarding and staff communication processes to get employees moving, and staying in the right direction. The organization’s on-boarding process, particularly for leaders, chapter executives and the like, has been adjusted for quick assimilation, according to Kate Wollensak, vice president of human resources.

The two-day process takes place at Alzheimer’s Association’s Chicago headquarters. There, new employees are taken on a tour of the library, call center and speak with members of a wide variety of departments. “It’s the mentors, the peers they’ve created,” said Wollensak. “When you have good on-boarding, you’re likely to stay longer. You’re assimilating.” New hires are followed up on with 30, 60 and 90-day touch points to intervene on any early issue.

Association leaders rely on *The NPT* survey and focus groups to help gauge employee satisfaction. Beyond that, a three-Cs approach is utilized, according to Wollensak. There are:

- **Communications.** Executives consistently send updates to staff to share organizational updates and direction.

- **Compassion.** What Wollensak referred to as the human side, leaders understand that home issues sometimes come to work and work issues sometimes go home. Leaders are given the ability to offer workplace flexibility such as telecommuting to help staff.

- **Collaboration.** Task forces, committees and focus groups are used to engage employees in working toward organizational strategy. “It’s easier to get up and go out to work knowing that you’re valued,” Wollensak said.

Feedback is used to make adjustments to the organization. In 2015, more attention was placed on professional development per staff request. Alzheimer’s Association will similarly look to enhance its technology in 2016, such as implementing a more easily operational expense reporting system, in response to staff feedback, Wollensak said. *NPT*

2016 Large Nonprofits (250 or more employees)

Rank	Organization Listing	U.S. Employees
1	American Heart Association	3246
2	Alzheimer's Association	555
3	CAP Tulsa	550
4	The Children's Home of Cincinnati	297
5	Year Up	492



As long as people feel their voices are heard, they don't expect to get everything they want, but they do expect to have their voices heard. --John Banchy

Each staff member, for a more personal touch, keeps “Core Value” notepads at their desks. Staff members are encouraged to write a note when they see a co-worker do something positive and to hand it to them personally. “It allows leaders to see people doing well,” Kiely said.

CAP Tulsa, which ranked third among large organizations and 19th overall in this year’s list, counts on both creative and traditional measures to keep employee morale up. Though federal Head Start regulations prohibit organizations from outbidding for teachers, CAP Tulsa remains competitive with state rates and health coverage and benchmarks its policies to remain ahead of the game. Leaders will also mix things up with snow cone and lunch trucks in the summer, relaxed dress policies and annual service awards.

The efforts have helped CAP Tulsa trim the turnover rate from 25 percent to 17 percent during the past two years. “Our executive team’s style is really about finding ways to have fun and make people feel valued in the process,” Kiely said.

The nature of American Heart Association’s (AHA) work helps to keep things fresh and exciting for employees year after year, according to Les Pritchett, vice president of human resources. AHA leaders are constantly adjusting and expanding the organization’s mission as science evolves and staff members hold a strong relationship with the volunteer community and experts in the field in an “invigorating” work atmosphere.

be doing, it surfaces pretty quickly.”

AHA ranked 14th overall and first among large organizations on NPT’s list and is in the midst of building its talent management and leadership development initiatives. Talent management starts with succession planning and AHA’s talent pipeline. Dialogues are created for career paths and staffers are engaged by learning what their current role could lead to down the road. AHA is also working toward building a track for emerging and existing leaders through programming and training.

John Banchy, president and CEO of The Children’s Home of Cincinnati (TCH), said that creating and maintaining a positive work environment is easy so long as it remains an organizational focus. TCH leaders look to engage employees in informal settings such as team-building exercises, retreats, picnics and staff exchanges. One recent team-building exercise had staff build food baskets including turkey and dressing for the holidays.

Newsletters are sent to employees every other week and staff emails provide updates on organizational changes. Banchy said that he works on the ground, out in the field with managers, and speaks directly with employees and seeks input on policy changes. “As long as people feel their voices are heard, they don’t expect to get everything they want, but they do expect to have their voices heard,” Banchy said. “Quite

Best Medium-Sized Organizations

Fun and healthy employees propel medium-sized groups

By ANDY SEGEDIN

Kirk Jewell joined the OSU Foundation as president from the private sector. His profit-centered background led him to quickly reject the foundation's existing family atmosphere. He was sure to emphasize that staff wasn't a family, but a team, during the first six months of his tenure.

Well, that was 12 years ago and things change.

"I've since come back and apologized to my staff," Jewell said. "I didn't know before I got here that an organization could perform as a team, but still care like a family."

The past 12 years at the organization in Stillwater, Okla., have been a culture adjustment for Jewell and the foundation. There was a lot of "kumbaya" and a lack of accountability early on, Jewell said. While he has softened his style, expectations have also been elevated. "The way I describe the culture we are striving for is 'exceeding expectations and having fun with it,'" Jewell said.

The result is becoming this year's second-ranked organization in *The NPT Best Nonprofits to Work* survey and top medium-sized nonprofit. Much in the same fashion as OSU Foundation's culture change, many organizations on the list



A "money machine," which whips around coupons like a cyclone, is one of the attractions at the Brighton Center's annual carnival.

have worked in recent years toward trying new strategies in employee engagement, hiring, managing work-life balance and gauging success. The difference between top places to work and those off the list this year is razor thin in areas such as role satisfaction (91 percent to 82

percent) and engagement (92 percent to 82 percent). The differences are narrower than that of large and small organizations and illustrate how far a little extra effort can go.

OSU Foundation holds a staff retreat each spring featuring team-building exercises such as

a riff on speed dating that enables staffers to learn something about one another. The retreat also serves as a preview for the upcoming fiscal year that begins in July. A few months later, in early August, the organization hosts a year-end celebration featuring the awarding of a dozen culture-value obelisks to staff members.

Employees, excluding leaders, also receive a team bonus of up to 5 percent of base pay for performance as it compares to annual goals at the year-end celebration. Bonuses are typically on the high end, Jewell said, with the notable exception of the recession-hit 2008-09 fiscal year when staff decided not to take the \$300,000 to \$350,000 cumulative bonus to protect from further staffing cuts.

Jewell leans on his "Director of Mirth," an honorary position typically held by the head of human resources that helps carry the organization's culture. "I'm an accountant. I'm not fun by nature," Jewell said. "My wife is. I always try to find people who have fun." Each month, fundraisers who have raised \$1 million or more get to talk about their work over cookies and punch. Ice cream socials are also planned during the year.

The foundation's voluntary turnover rate

Continued on page 8



dp | donorperfect
online fundraising software

Fundraise Easier.

DonorPerfect's intuitive donor management tools simplify the way you fundraise.



Begin your free trial today!

Call 800-220-8111 or visit donorperfect.com/NPT-EASY.

Continued from page 7

stands at 8 percent and leaders have worked toward improving employee satisfaction through surveys and with an employee advisory board. The board, comprised of about 10 elected employees, vets staff ideas and suggestions and brings them to leadership. Additional emphasis was placed on finding strong fits in the hiring process, Jewell said, a priority given that the foundation plans to hire 20 development officers before its next campaign in about three years.

"We kiddingly call it the gauntlet," Jewell said. "You're going to meet a lot of people. We now are at a place where, if people see a red or orange flag around someone's fit (within the organization), they will vocalize it. We try to be more intentional about the culture fit."

Kessler Foundation in West Orange, N.J., is similarly dependent on the hiring process to foster a positive work environment. The foundation serves individuals with disabilities. It had a voluntary turnover rate of 12 percent last year, but has managed to retain nearly 100 percent of managers and scientists in recent years, according to Rodger DeRose, president and CEO.

When changes do occur, as they did a few years ago when two research directors departed, Kessler relies on target interviewing to find strong replacements. Prospective additions meet with representatives from several disciplines within the organization -- each with a very specific focus for their questions that highlight areas including teamwork, communications and problem solving.

The process prevents applicants from becoming prepped early on by the types of questions they will field and also provides a greater understanding of the individual, DeRose said. The interviewers get together and discuss the focus of their meetings and their impressions.

"A lot of presidents and CEOs [will say] 'We became the best business because of time off, salary, the work environment is flexible and comfortable. We invest in employees,'" DeRose said. "Everybody is going to say those types of things. But I really think it comes down to, what is the mission of the organization and can people relate to that mission?"

That isn't to imply that Kessler, the sixth-rated, medium-sized organization and 13th overall, switches to autopilot once a hire is made. A spot bonus for meeting and exceeding expectations is one method used to convey appreciation. For example, a scientist who wins a grant for the foundation will immediately receive a spot bonus from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars based on the grant size. Similarly, an employee might receive a spot bonus for taking a leadership role in organizing a semi-annual foundation meeting.

"It's not just the scientific wins. It's also recognizing smaller performance achievements in the organization to say to the individual that we appreciate the work that you are doing," DeRose said.

Quality work at Cinnaire, formerly Great Lakes Capital Fund, in Lansing, Mich., is met with some end-of-year time off. "We kind of slow the company down for that two weeks," said Mark McDaniel, president and CEO, of the holiday season. "It's almost a two-week holiday. We have a lot going on year end, but if your work is wound up, you don't have to come in."

Cinnaire takes a few outside-the-box ap-

proaches when it comes to time off. Employees are provided with time off for volunteer service. McDaniel recently unveiled an unlimited employee vacation plan, which is not tied to earned or accrued time. Employees may take as much time off as they like provided goals are met and a workflow problem isn't created by the absence.

"It's contrary to everybody's thoughts on vacation," McDaniel said. "I've been studying this for a year. The biggest message to people is 'We trust you. We're all professionals, we shouldn't have to judge your vacation time.'"

The time off hasn't restricted Cinnaire's leaders' ambition. The organization slots in at 21st in *The NPT* survey, eighth among medium-sized nonprofits and hopes to become one of the five largest community development financial institutions in the country within the next 10 years.

Cinnaire employees sketch out organizational growth during an annual two-day summit, which focuses on specific growth themes. Summits are structured to promote employee growth

provide optimum service while also attempting to make work more engaging and less draining for staff.

Emerge! experienced a 25-percent voluntary turnover rate last fiscal year. Burnout and employees moving on to pursue advanced degrees are common, making traditional methods of evaluating turnover poor indicators of morale, Mercurio-Sakwa said. Instead, Emerge! conducts satisfaction surveys throughout the year and pays attention to departures not meeting the typical profile.

Employee appreciation is promoted throughout the year with events such as the annual potluck arranged by the culture club, quarterly team building and monthly staff meetings featuring activities and snacks.

Emerge! operates a "Wow bucks" program in which employees give the fake currency to their coworkers for going above and beyond. Accumulated bucks lead to prizes such as gift cards and Emerge! swag. "Essentially, it's employee-

rier. EDGE incentivizes employees to hit the gym, eat right and go for regular medical, dental and vision check-ups to receive points.

Points can lead to money toward a gym membership, wireless headphones, Fitbits and entry into a cash drawing. The points system is used to help the demographic of the center's workforce. The vast majority of employees are women with an average age of 33, according to Jefferies. Most of the employees are married with children and have limited time for themselves. "They always put themselves last and we wanted to make a fun way to have some incentive to take care of themselves," Jefferies said.

Some employees have lost in excess of 70 pounds with the help of the program. Those efforts have been met with a streamlined health plan that no longer differentiates between exempt and non-exempt employees. All employees were transitioned to a health program this past September in which Brighton foots 90 percent of the tab. A discount program by the carrier helps employees pay for their share at next to no cost.

Brighton, the second ranked medium-sized organization and fifth overall, has cut its turnover rate almost in half since 2011, from 33 to 17 percent. "It's our employees are telling us what's going on," Jefferies said. "They are driving changes. They hold themselves and us accountable."

Kimberly Sanchez, executive director of Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida (CLSMF) headquartered in Daytona Beach, Fla., has been on both sides of that exchange within the past two years. Sanchez worked as a staff attorney at the nonprofit for about seven years before moving up to deputy director. CLSMF's longtime executive director retired about six months in, thrusting Sanchez into the interim and then fulltime role.

CLSMF, the 24th ranked medium-sized nonprofit and 47th overall in the *NPT Top 50*, has long boasted a quality benefits program including 100-percent premium coverage for employee health and dental. Sanchez has looked to make her mark by continuing to show staff that they are valued and looking for ways to improve organizational operations.

Sanchez practices an open-door policy and sends handwritten birthday and Christmas cards to staff. Employees are engaged in the strategic planning process and progress is marked during quarterly staff meetings during which client accolades are highlighted. "I really try to engage and include staff in our vision so that they have some ownership in the organization, so that they don't feel like they're just coming to work for a paycheck," Sanchez said. "My staff wants to be part of something."

An operations position was created to help collect, track and analyze data in an effort to keep CLSMF ahead of the curve. Internally, giving employees measurables provides them with goals and keeps everyone accountable, mission-driven and motivated, according to Sanchez.

Her relatively quick climb up the ladder provides Sanchez with the credibility of still being one of the staff. Asked what she would share with other leaders based on her perspective, Sanchez emphasized honesty and directness. "I think the answer is candor, transparency and communication," she said. "I think that's really it. People want to follow somebody that they think is being genuine with them and in line with their goals. It's that easy." *NPT*

2016 Medium Nonprofits (50 - 249 employees)		
Rank	Organization Listing	U.S. Employees
1	OSU Foundation	148
2	Brighton Center	106
3	AHC	72
4	Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia	51
5	Communities In Schools National Office	50
6	Kessler Foundation	114
7	Partnership for Public Service	94
8	Cinnaire	75
9	PRS	82
10	Positive Coaching Alliance	65
11	DoSomething.org	52
12	Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society	211
13	SightLife	146
14	Pathway Homes	120
15	Career Path Services	98
16	Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse	66
17	The Achievement Network (ANet)	177
18	North Carolina Outward Bound School	52
19	CCSSO	78
20	Directions for Youth & Families	137
21	Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona	115
22	iMentor	116
23	Century Housing Corporation	66
24	Community Legal Services of Mid-Florida	82
25	Summer Search	134
26	American College of Emergency Physicians	125
27	Our Family Services	66

and insight into how that growth relates to the organization's direction.

Cinnaire helps staff handle personal pressures at the office. A full gym was set up in the basement and a dry-cleaning company picks up and drops off clothing weekly. "People get stressed about everyday things you have to get done," McDaniel said. "What we're trying to do is give people some relief."

Managing employee stress is similarly a point of emphasis at Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse in Tucson, Ariz., an organization that ranks 16th among medium-sized nonprofits and 34th overall. Emerge! offers clients 24/7 crisis support, which takes a toll on employees, leading Emerge! to secure a local massage therapist to provide pro bono treatment to help relieve stress. "We don't limit it to direct-service staff, but it was created with that in mind," Ed Mercurio-Sakwa, CEO, said of the program. "That crisis transfers to those doing the work."

Emerge! evolves and restructures staff positions, shuffling responsibilities, periodically. The purpose of the adjustments combines a desire to

to-employee appreciation," Mercurio-Sakwa said. "It's a goofy-but-fun mechanism for that."

Leaders at Brighton Center in San Antonio, Texas try to inject some fun into the organization at least once a month. Events include a cowboy-themed staff breakfast and "Show Your Love" week with candy-grams and valentines. The center had put on an annual Saturday picnic, which was poorly attended. Through a task group call, leaders learned that Saturdays were difficult on employees and families. Brighton has hosted the picnic and carnival during the workday for the past two years, complete with traditional fare, competitions and managers in dunking booths.

The center complements workplace fun with birthday cards, anniversary cards and recognizing births and deaths in staffers' families. "We try to let them know that we are part of their life, not just their work life," said CEO Kim Jefferies.

One of Brighton's newest employee initiatives, Energy, Drive, Goals, Execute (EDGE), kicked off in February, 2015 and includes an online prize program offered by the organization's insurance car-

Best Small Organizations

Fighting burnout keys success at small organizations

By MARK HRYWNA

Downtown Streets Team (DST) has been adding staff during the past several years, which got Eileen Richardson thinking about how to retain those employees. Over the years, people tend to need a break and they end up going to another organization or switch jobs. "It's a self-imposed sabbatical of sorts," said Richardson, DST's executive director.

Most staff members have been at DST from one to four years. Richardson implemented a sabbatical program last year in which employees are entitled to four weeks. "It's a vacation to do whatever you want to do," she said. On top of accumulated vacation time, it could mean as much as six to seven weeks of time off.

The sabbatical is meant for employees "to truly get out of the rat race for a bit," Richardson said. "One of our keys to success is we want them to take a break – but come back to us," she said.

Training, career advancement, and staffing levels were areas where organizations in the small category of the *Best Nonprofits To Work* really distinguished themselves from those that didn't make the list.

Each nonprofit completed the Employer Benefits & Policies Questionnaire (EQ) from Best Companies Group (BCG), providing information

about policies, practices and demographics. The Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey features 78 statements that employees respond

to on a five-point agreement scale, such as "Agree Somewhat" and "Agree Strongly."

Among small organizations, the biggest disparity between those on the list and those that didn't make it were in the categories of:

- Leadership and planning, where small nonprofits that made the list scored 93 percent versus 78 percent;
- Training, development, resources, 86 percent versus 72 percent; and,
- Overall employee engagement, 94 percent versus 81 percent.

Where small organizations diverged was among initial and ongoing training, encouraging staff to explore growth and advancement within the organization.

Within the categories, small organizations on the list distinguished themselves from those not on the list in areas such as:

- Providing as much initial and ongoing training as needed;
- Encouragement to explore growth or advancement opportunities within the organization; and,
- Understanding what's expected for career advancement.

Continued on page 10



Team Rubicon receiving its marching orders. Photo by Kirk Jackson.

ONE CLICK

Hundreds of Trusted Resources

The NonProfit Times prides itself on being the one-stop source for all your nonprofit information and resource needs. Our online Resource Marketplace showcases hundreds of suppliers and service providers that serve the nonprofit sector, offering a unique and vital understanding of the particular needs of organizations like yours. Whether you're seeking cutting-edge technology to improve your website, ways to improve your fundraising efforts, or innovative accounting solutions, the Resource Marketplace is the place to begin your search.

Visit NPT's Newly Updated Online Resource Directory
-- The Best Source for Nonprofit Services --

www.thenonproffitimes.com/resources



If you have a high-quality product or service to offer the nonprofit sector, you can be included in the Resource Marketplace. For more information, please contact Larry Post at larry@nptimes.com or 973-401-0202 ext. 207 today.

EXEMPT

THE FINANCIAL MAGAZINE FOR NONPROFIT EXECUTIVES

EXEMPT magazine is the premier publication for financial executive teams of large charitable organizations. Its purpose is to keep senior managers (CFOs, Executive Directors, board members, and other top managers) abreast of current trends and how they affect organizational performance. With content focusing on finance asset management, planned giving, donor advised funds, risk management, technology and so much more, advertisers have an opportunity to introduce their products and services to key decision makers.

Get Ahead With EXEMPT Products

- Print**
 - Now 6x/year
- Digital**
 - EXEMPT E-Newsletter
 - EXEMPT Custom E-Blast
 - Webinar
 - Whitepaper
 - Social Media



To reserve your space, please contact Ted Olczak, Publisher
The NonProfit Times -- 973.401.0202 x 219 -- publisher@nptimes.com

CONNECT • ENGAGE • ACHIEVE

Continued from page 9

There was a wide disparity among small non-profits when it came to staffing levels being adequate to ensure quality products or services, and satisfaction with tuition reimbursement benefits.

"We're in the people business. We have to back each other up. We can work hard to get four people jobs, and if suddenly all four people have an interview the next day, you need to tap some co-workers to handle that. It's all about teamwork," Richardson said.

"Other agencies are so bogged down by their funding. Some advertise that 60 percent of your job will be paperwork. What caseworker went to school to do that? I don't want someone who studied the current system because the fact is the current system doesn't work; it hasn't worked," Richardson said.

At Team Rubicon, CEO Jake Wood often pushes employees to consider their work-life balance and take a personal day or two after a busy period. When an event takes place over a weekend, such as the annual leadership conference, employees are encouraged to take one to two days off for personal matters, according to Candice Schmitt, director of human resources. "It often comes after lots of operational meetings, if people aren't taking time off," she said. "It's easy around here, in tight offices, you see people throughout day. It's easy to pick up on it when burnout rates are getting high," Schmitt said.

Wood has at times required staff to even take a one-week "staycation" to catch up with family

and friends.

Team Rubicon also tries to create a buddy system with new hires. About half of new hires have some prior exposure to the organization but it's such a tight-knit group that it can be intimidating, Schmitt said. New hires are paired up with people who started around the same time.

Some veterans struggle with a structured environment, so they might be paired up with someone who's on their team or a manager taking them under their wing or looking out for them, Schmitt said. "It's a very informal program," she said. "It's just something we do to

support new hires and some of our vets who have a tougher time in this professional environment," Schmitt said.

After a significant staff reduction three years ago, leaders of BoardSource in Washington, D.C., have worked hard on organizational culture. They created an internal task force that looked at where the organization is, where it wants to be, and how to get there. An internal survey was used to get feedback from staff, followed by some brown bag lunches to drill down deeper and compile an organizational culture statement.

"One of the things we were aiming for was to be able to go through this process," set a base year and feedback received through the process would be used to see how the organization could be made better, said Marci Sunderland, vice president of human capital and operations.

Sunderland said transparency within the organization was important. "Obviously, not everyone can know every single thing about the organization, but as much as we can, across the organization, we included staff in conversations at appropriate levels," she said. "Most organizations I talked to prior to putting together the task force, when they'd done things like that, they brought in outside consultants. We felt strongly that it had to come from within, having really open and frank conversations," Sunderland said. "Definitely doing it from within was key to our success," she said.

"We actively work our culture. We do a lot of things. We've defined it. We may not be at it every single day but actively try to live the culture," said Stephanie Springs, CEO of Make-A-Wish Illinois. "It comes through in how we approach the work we do, comes through in social things we do, in performance management, try to reinforce, live the culture. I think that's a big piece of why people like it here," she said.

"There's a collective understanding across this organization of why we're here. It goes into a collective passion of why we're here: Make things better for families going through something really difficult," Springs said. *NPT*

2016 Small Nonprofits (15 - 49 employees)

Rank	Organization Listing	U.S. Employees
1	Team Rubicon	44
2	Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Midlands	32
3	The Center for Trauma & Resilience	16
4	National Communication Association	15
5	The Mission Continues	47
6	Pearl S. Buck International	16
7	Space Foundation	49
8	National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy	35
9	Make-A-Wish Illinois	45
10	ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer	20
11	Young Community Developers	30
12	BoardSource	30
13	Women's Business Enterprise National Council	20
14	The Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults	21
15	Downtown Streets Team	38
16	Soles4Souls	33
17	Caring Voice Coalition	46
18	Birthright Israel Foundation	49

Put it HERE!



Print



Web



Digital

www.thenonproffitimes.com

Get the *AD*vantage in your sector via our far-reaching print, web and digital platforms