

A Place for Us...and Our Friends

from Urban Connection Newsletter, Summer 2011

A new collaborative nonprofit website will take a dynamic approach to social media and functionality as a full service gathering place and workspace for Milwaukee-area nonprofits.

Greater Milwaukee area nonprofits will soon have an online platform designed to transform the way we interact with each other and connect with our supporters and clients in the community. The nonprofit collaborative website, to be called MKE123.org, is the brainchild of the Helen Bader Foundation. Staff members there saw a compelling need for a new way to look at social media and channel its power to build nonprofit collaboration. That vision has led to a partnership with the Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee, which is facilitating site development through a collaborative of nonprofits.

No, this won't be just another Facebook clone. Not by a long shot. Matt Brown, a Public Ally serving as Social Media Manager for the Helen Bader Foundation, conducted extensive research and formulated a unique model for the site that builds on existing social media tools while addressing their limitations.

What's in store is an interactive, full service gathering place and workspace for nonprofits that will provide:

- o A virtual table around which organizations can gather and communicate, share resources and best practices, cross-promote campaigns and events, and work together on joint projects.
- o Innovative outreach to community residents to build a substantive network of support for nonprofit sub-sectors and individual organizations, reaching beyond a "Donate Now" button to more meaningful, lasting and personal relationships.
- o Profile pages and service promotion easily tailored by your organization, with quick search functions so those who need your services can find you and access what you have to offer.

A task committee is making recommendations on site features, tone and content that will best serve organizations and residents. Those involved with the collaborative to date are excited by the prospects of the sector and its friends having a real online home, not just a home page.

"Beyond our grant support, the Helen Bader Foundation has long sought to further our strategies by bringing nonprofits together to share ideas and deepen collaboration," said Daniel Bader, Foundation president. "We are excited to work with the Nonprofit Center on creating a unique online platform that connects and empowers the nonprofits that make a difference every day in our communities."

Paul Post of Ancilla Partners, a Nonprofit Center board member active with the collaborative website task committee, said, "With this tool in place, I fully expect to hear many stories of individuals and organizations building new relationships with other individuals and organizations with similar interests."

The site will be what we make of it together. To get involved email mke123@nonprofitcentermilwaukee.org or call 414-344-3933.