

CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

http://www.craindetroit.com Vol. 21, No. 51

DECEMBER 19 - 25, 2008

\$1.50 a copy, \$99 a year

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FOCUS

BEST-MANAGED NONPROFITS

Save the date

Crain's will honor the Best Managed Nonprofits at its Anniversary of the Year Luncheon.

When: Feb. 6

Where: Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center

Tickets: Call the Detroit Economic Club at (313) 963-8647 or go to eventclub.org after Jan. 9.



Innovation, expansion a hit

Budget over \$3 million



Executive Director John Van Camp stands in a building renovated by Southwest Solutions, which will soon house a branch of the Detroit Public Library.

Winner:

Southwest Solutions, Detroit

Executive director:

John Van Camp

Notable achievement:

Has invested more than \$45 million during the past decade to help revitalize many properties and neighborhoods. Its **Southwest Housing Nonprofit Corp.** manages more than 238 units of housing at 14 residential properties and about 18,000 square feet of commercial retail space.

Southwest Solutions finds housing answer

BY SHERRI BEGIN
CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

Southwest Solutions' designation as Crain's Best-Managed Nonprofit with revenue of more than \$3 million is long overdue, the contest's judges say.

Southwest historically has provided services to children and adults with severe emotional, behavioral and mental disorders.

But the nonprofit took a new direction more than a decade ago when it also began providing them with affordable housing.

Winner Today, its **Southwest Housing Nonprofit Corp.** subsidiary manages more than 238 units of housing at 14 residential properties and about 18,000 square feet of commercial retail space.

Many of the residential sites were abandoned and blighted, but Southwest's investment of more than \$45 million over the past decade has helped to revitalize those properties and their neighborhoods.

The nonprofit is overseeing \$12 million of additional housing projects to provide more than 100 more units of housing in other parts of southwest Detroit, said Bob O'Brien, director of partnership development at Southwest.

The complexity of managing a real estate subsidiary hasn't taken Southwest Solutions away from its mission.

When it realized it could only help one of every four parents calling for assistance and that the problems facing children in southwest Detroit were outpacing any one agency's ability to respond to them, Southwest in 1998 led the formation of the **Community Partnership of Southwest Detroit** to better address them.

The collaboration of more than 20 public-private organizations last year alone brought in \$4.2 million in new funding for seven of its members, including \$2.5 million for Southwest Solutions' programs.



Hall

Southwest "clearly identified and understood a community need and forged a successful collaboration to address the need," said Karla Hall, manager of corporate

contributions at **DTE Energy Co.**, vice president and secretary of the **DTE Energy Foundation** and a judge in this year's contest.

The additional funding allowed Southwest to serve 150 more children in the community last year above the 500 children and adolescents it was already helping, O'Brien said. The new funding the collaboration attracted allowed it to provide new after-school programs aimed at preventing behavioral problems to 1,300 children in the community this year.

Southwest has been very innovative in responding to the changing character of the human-service industry, said Mark

Neithercut, principal of **Neithercut Advisors L.L.C.** in Detroit and a judge in this year's contest.



Neithercut

"They were very entrepreneurial in branching out to a new area of service so that they could better serve their clients and take advantage of other sources of income."

Southwest also has done an excellent job of stabilizing and expanding its organization in two very difficult areas, said Gary Dembs, a judge in the contest and president of the **Non-Profit Personnel Network** in Southfield.

"They were able to serve their mission in spite of the challenges of the region they serve and (the challenges) of providing housing."

ABOUT THE CONTEST

This is the 16th year that we've identified the best managed nonprofits in metro Detroit.

Our annual contest continues to show that the bar for nonprofit management moves higher every year. Nonprofits are challenged by competition for funding, the ability to offer competitive wages, the need to diversify their funding sources and build endowments to smooth over dips in bad economic years.

Our thanks to the nonprofit practice group at **Plante & Moran P.L.L.C.** in Southfield, led by partner **Sue Parlin**, for its thorough financial analysis of all the applicants and to our independent panel of judges for their hours spent reviewing each application.

JUDGES

- Gary Dembs, president, **Non-Profit Personnel Network**, Southfield.
- Anika Goss-Poster, senior program director, **Local Initiatives Support Corp.**, Detroit.
- Karla Hall, manager of corporate and governmental affairs, corporate contributions, **DTE Energy Co.**, Detroit; vice president and secretary, **DTE Energy Foundation**, Detroit.
- Robert Inskeep, professor of management, **Lawrence Technological University**, Southfield.
- Deanna McGraw, president, **Detroit Executive Service Corps**, Southfield.
- Mark Neithercut, principal, **Neithercut Advisors L.L.C.**, Detroit.

Photos by
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