

North East Seattle Together (NEST)

Strategic Plan 2017 – 2019

Introduction

North East Seattle Together (NEST) was founded in 2009 by a dedicated group of people living in Seattle’s NE quadrant to “give neighbors choices for staying independent, active and connected.” NEST programs, which launched formally in 2012, make it possible for elders to “age in place.”

NEST is a premiere example of the type of independent nonprofit organization inspired by the Village Movement, which began in Boston in 2001. The goal of the Village Movement is simple: Instead of leaving their homes for senior housing or assisted living, a group of residents in a given community forms a non-profit membership organization to provide access to services that help elders remain at home as long as possible.

In the four years since it began to formally offer its programs, NEST has become the largest village-style nonprofit in Seattle. Noteworthy accomplishments include:

- ❖ 178 members
- ❖ 260 volunteers
- ❖ 70 vendors
- ❖ 624 volunteer hours *monthly*
- ❖ 30 interest-based groups that meet monthly
- ❖ 90% retention rate of membership renewal

During this period of rapid growth, NEST leaders created annual work plans. This document is the organization's first three-year Strategic Plan. It builds on the organization’s existing strengths, while also identifying new opportunities.

This strategic plan features four core goals:

Expanding fundraising to support sustainability with measured reliance on membership dues and individual donors, while increasing other sources of income including grants, corporate/vendor contributions, and a new planned giving program.

Steadily growing membership by: 1) Maintaining a high member retention rate; 2) Continuing to add new members; 3) Increasing the rate that new and existing members volunteer and participate in programs, and 4) Increasing the balance of members, donors and volunteers across our service area.

Securing a long-term home that meets our programming needs.

Exploring the expansion of our services to adjacent areas not served by other similar organizations.

NEST Mission:

To give our neighbors choices for staying independent, active and connected

NEST Vision:

To live in a community where no one has to grow older alone

NEST Advantages

- ❖ We are the largest village in Seattle in terms of the number of members, the number of volunteers, the most services and activities offered, and the highest utilization rate.
- ❖ We succeed in filling more than 95% of member service requests.
- ❖ We fill service gaps in our community (i.e. there is no senior center in NE Seattle).
- ❖ We are building a strong "give and take model". More and more, members take care of each other; they are not taken care of.
- ❖ We have the strongest intergenerational participation of any village in Seattle.
- ❖ We have the highest usage of trusted vendors.
- ❖ We have the highest member retention rate among Seattle villages.
- ❖ We have a diverse funding model.
- ❖ Aspects of our model are being replicated locally and nationally.

Strategic Goals

Goal One: We will support the sustainability of NEST by growing and further diversifying our revenue model.

Objectives:

- We will increase the number of grant applications to family foundations and other organizations.
- We will increase fundraising activities at the board level and provide the board with more tools to help them as fundraisers.
- We will grow revenue from vendors and corporate sponsors.
- We will implement a planned giving program by the end of 2017.

- We will build connections with adult children of full members to serve our mission of helping their parents' age in place and to welcome adult children as potential donors.

Goal Two: We will steadily grow our membership.

Objectives:

- We will retain a minimum of 85% of NEST members.
- We will increase membership income by 17%.
- We will increase the rate that new and existing members volunteer and participate in programs.
- We will increase the balance of members, donors and volunteers within the geographic area we serve.

Goal Three: We will find a permanent home that suits our programmatic needs.

Objectives:

- We will determine the best location that meets programmatic needs and budget parameters by August 2017.
- We will develop and implement the funding plan for the permanent home by September 2017.
- We will occupy our long-term home by April 2018.

Goal Four: We will explore the expansion of our services to adjacent areas not served by other similar organizations.

Objectives:

- We will collect data on the interest in NEST and the willingness to pay.
- If interest warrants, we will develop an expansion plan in 2019.

Conclusion

These four key goals provide a framework for steady organizational growth as NEST moves beyond the founding-board phase and into a phase of deepening the solidity and sustainability of the organization.

Acknowledgments

This Strategic Plan was a collaboration between NEST Executive Director Judy Kinney, Board Chair Marilyn Spotswood, the full NEST Board of Directors and facilitator Karen Hirsch of The Ostara Group.