

The Women's Connection redesign lifts visibility, participation, donations

KELLY LAMMERS is a communications professional who knows the value of effectively reaching stakeholders and making it simple for them to participate.

A communication consultant at Fidelity Institutional Retirement Services Company, Lammers utilizes her talents on behalf of The Women's Connection.

One of the key areas in which the 27-year-old volunteer has had a profound impact on the Price Hill organization is redesigning its Web site.

"When I look at the support, professional skills and expertise Kelly brings to us, it's amazing," says Jenny Brady, volunteer/outreach coordinator at The Women's Connection. "The impact she has made is fantastic. We would have never been able to get where we are without her."

The Women's Connection is a nonprofit neighborhood center that opened in 1997 following a needs assessment by the Sisters of Charity. Its mission is "to educate, empower and enrich the lives of women, children and families through educational programming, personal enrichment, professional development opportunities, support groups and referral services."

Serving about 2,500 participants on a \$175,000 annual budget through 200 volunteers and six staff members, the center offers such core programs as assisting with employment connections, developing employment plans, improving life skills and helping break down barriers so women can achieve stable lives for themselves and their children, Brady says.

"In general, Web sites are huge marketing tools. We didn't have anyone on staff, and we couldn't pay



Kelly Lammers is a communication consultant at Fidelity Institutional Retirement Services Company and volunteer at The Women's Connection.

anyone to help us. Kelly created a whole new site," Brady says. "For volunteers, 60 to 75 percent make initial contact through Web and email. It's huge for us to now have this ability."

Equally critical is providing an avenue for online giving. "Donors look to Web sites like ePhilanthropy and e-giving, especially GenXers. It's a primary way to reach people," Brady says. "Online giving makes it much easier for donors and staff. It's a really important tool to have in place."

An alumna of Theta Phi Alpha, Lammers says she has always been family and community oriented. The University of Cincinnati graduate says The Women's Connection is a perfect fit.

"I wanted to volunteer in the community like I did when I was in college," says the Covedale resident and native Cincinnati. "I wanted to give back, so I looked online for groups where women are helping women."

Brady first met with Lammers last fall to discuss how to best leverage Lammers' expertise. Knowing a gift when she sees one, Brady asked Lammers if she would like to join The Women's Connection marketing and public relations committee.

Redesigning the Web site was one of several initiatives undertaken by Lammers and her team. Lammers says she and other volunteers reviewed strengths and weaknesses of The Women's Connection's online functionality, as well as developed clarity of the mission statement.

The team reviewed best practices of other nonprofit organizations, including Boy Scouts of America and Big Brothers Big Sisters, to learn what would best help The Women's Connection.

What Lammers and her group discovered was that the successful organizations provided online giving capabilities, as well as easy volunteer connections, detailed program descriptions and simple site navigation.

The redesigned Women's Connection Web site (www.thewomensconnection.org) has an up-to-date look, plenty of program information and online giving capabilities.

The redesign officially launches this month. The new site boasts more detail about The Women's Connection history, board of trustees, staff and programs. The new functionality also provides online program and volunteer registration forms.

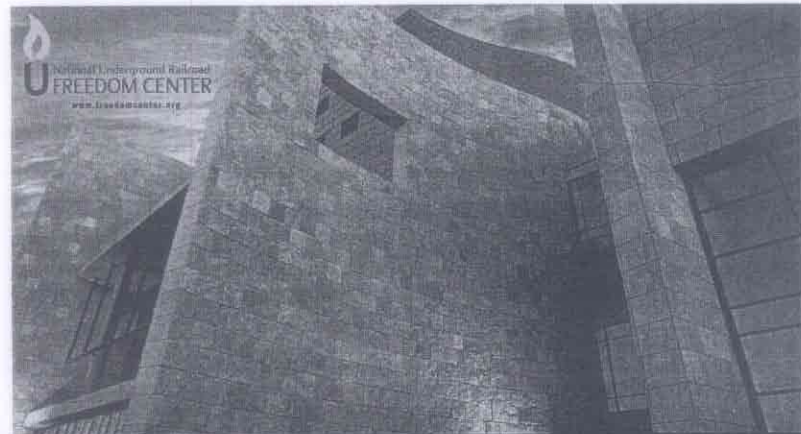
Again calling upon her previous corporate experience, Lammers has been instrumental in making e-correspondence an integral part of The Women's Connection community outreach.

The organization knew it was onto something successful when its marketing committee relied solely upon electronic correspondence to promote a young professionals fund-raising event in February. According to Brady, monthly hits to the Web site increased 120 percent, and event attendance was 50 percent beyond expectations.

"Kelly has great energy and she really cares for The Women's Connection," says Brady. "It says a lot about a person who gives as much as Kelly does."

For more information about The Women's Connection, visit www.thewomensconnection.org or call 513.471.HOPE (4673). The Women's Connection is located at 4042 Glenway Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45206.

—Lisa Cieslewicz



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—ELEANOR ROOSEVELT



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