

Moving on...

Over the years, I have taught hundreds if not thousands of folks about starting a nonprofit organization. In every class, someone wants to know how to ensure they as the founder will be able to be on the board (or sometimes be the Executive Director) forever and ever. I always tell these individuals that they have to consider their nonprofit to be like their child. You want to raise a child to be self-sufficient so that they don't need to depend on you. Parents need to let go of their children and founders need to let go of their nonprofits.

Technically I am not a founder of Maryland Nonprofits but I do feel very much like a parent of the organization. I've been on staff for over seventeen years but my involvement pre-dates my employment. I have committee minutes dated 1990 documenting the initial dues structure. I've spent as many or more hours with Maryland Nonprofits than I have with my own children.

It was difficult to nudge my children from the nest (at least one of them swears it wasn't a nudge but a full-out body check) but it was necessary for them to grow even more and thrive. The same is true for Maryland Nonprofits.

"What does success look like?" I ask this question in every How to Start Training that I do. When I began at Maryland Nonprofits, I had a vision of success. I wanted an organization that had a membership that truly represented the sector. The original plan had us achieving 281 members in year 5 (we actually had 671.) Membership was expected to grow at a rate of 25 new members per year. Actual member growth has been 100 per year. Program growth has outstripped the first projections and has exceeded my view of success.

It is now time for others to ask the question "What does success look like" for Maryland Nonprofits. Just as a mother looks at her 6 foot tall son and sees a toddler, I look at Maryland Nonprofits and see those 150 first members. It is tough being objective.

Don't believe the rumors that I am retiring to Boca. I am leaving Maryland Nonprofits because it is time for new hands, new eyes, and new dreams for this organization. I plan to stay involved in the nonprofit sector helping organizations and individuals achieve success and excellence. I plan to continue teaching and sending out a whole crew of "Nancy-ites" to be the next generation of sector leaders. I want to work on projects that take a couple of weeks or a couple of months instead of a whole career. It will be like having grandchildren; you love being with them but not full-time.

It has been a grand and glorious ride. Thank you one and all for sharing it with me.

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