CHASING SUCCESS

The Challenge for Nonprofits

Judith B. Van Ginkel

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Judith B. Van Ginkel, PhD

University of CINCINNATI | LIBRARY PUBLISHING SERVICES

About the Author

Considered an innovative strategist and leader, Judith Van Ginkel's career has been distinguished by 40 years of strong and effective nonprofit leadership including encouraging public-private partnerships, supporting program initiatives with sound research, emphasizing the importance of working cooperatively, thinking entrepreneurially, urging funders both public and private to provide the resources for organizations to validate the effectiveness of their work and listening to those who will be served as well as those who deliver the service.

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Cincinnati, Ohio

University of Cincinnati Press, Langsam Library, 2911 Woodside Drive, Cincinnati, Ohio 45221

ucincinnatipress.uc.edu

ISBN (hardback) 978–1-947603–62-2
ISBN (e-book, PDF) 978–1-947603–63-9
ISBN (e-book, EPUB) 978–1-947603–64-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023910355

Cover and Interior Design: Jennifer Flint
Typeset in New Caledonia LT Std
Production Intern: Mars Robinson
Dust Jacket: Author Photograph by Brenda Clark-Conley

Printed in the United States of America
First Printing

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Preface

"Why did you write this book?" is always an intriguing question and rarely comes with a simple answer. Writing a book is a difficult undertaking. So, what was it that caused me to sit down at a computer day after day, hour after hour, and write down what happened in my workplace over the last 20 years at Cincinnati Children's—and 20 years before that at the University of Cincinnati and Drake Center—and in the greater Cincinnati community? What did we learn about delivering services that families and communities want? How was learning turned into lessons and guidance for working in the nonprofit world? What was it that made my experiences unique, but at the same time, universal? The answer lies in my belief that by capturing 40 years of experience and developed wisdom, I could help others walking a similar path, people and organizations who choose to address big social issues and are not paralyzed by the enormity of the task. These are people who know that not one of us is successful alone, and that it is through collaborative thinking, deep reflection, and holding ourselves to high standards that we even begin to make the smallest change.

As I retired and began to consider how to spend the time that was left to me, I reflected about what had been important over those working years. Family, friends, and dogs came first and have always been key to who I am. But beyond that, what did I learn in my life of designing and implementing programs for young children? Writing this book began as a way to consider my experience

and to be more objective, not only about what I learned, but also—and more important—what I did and whether what I and my colleagues did truly made a difference for children. And, if so, how?

What are the lessons for other nonprofit organizations working to address and remedy large social problems? What is transferable across strategies to provide support to people in early childhood, adolescence, and aging? As I have moved away from the daily operation of leading the Every Child Succeeds (ECS) program in greater Cincinnati (www.everychildsucceeds.org), a nonprofit with an annual budget of close to $8 million, I have been able to see our work from a broader, more realistic perspective, as though someone brought new lighting to reveal unseen new facets. Patterns have emerged that made me think of those dragons that were vanquished and those that were merely prodded. I was able to see more clearly what we did well and where we could have improved. So, this book provides an opportunity to capture those learnings, and make them available to others, as my lifetime-developed wisdom and reflections can perhaps be meaningful for other nonprofit leaders.

I am proud—infinitely and forever—of what we were able to do in the two decades since our founding. We were given significant tools to work with and guidance that was invaluable, but I think that what we did most successfully was to take what we were given and use it well. ECS is a relatively small nonprofit, and a single case study cannot serve as a generalization for all nonprofits. However, I believe that it is a useful empirical reference as an organization that grew responsibly, used resources effectively, and demonstrated value. There is guidance here for existing and new nonprofit organizations working to address social issues, including organizational executives, board members, staff members, students, and consultants, as well as lessons for funders, policy makers, community leaders, and the people who use services delivered by nonprofit organizations.

But with the lessons, there are still questions—complex questions about programs that span generations. What works? What

doesn't work? What is really needed? What can we afford? What evolved over time? But what I have kept in mind is this: Over our first 20 years, we served 28,000 families (website of ECS) and at least 56,000 caregivers and young children. Their lives were changed through engagement with us. They received more than 700,000 home visits delivered by a corps of caring, talented, well-trained home visitors. We have evidence to prove that we positively influenced the health and well-being of those people we served. We are often asked about why, if our program is so good, our community metrics have not moved, and my answer is always the same—when you serve only 20% of those who need your service, you cannot significantly change a community metric. But—and this is crucial—the lives of 56,000 mothers and babies were changed. Science tells us that what happens in those first 1,000 days of a child's life has relevance for a lifetime, for two and three generations. I will not apologize for serving only 56,000. Rather, I continue to be proud of what we did, but I ask myself how we might have done more.

I grew up as the daughter of a pediatrician in Charleston, West Virginia (a pediatrician who made house calls—they did that years ago). We seem to be moving back to that model today. When I was a small child, my father often took me with him on those calls. I learned early that being in the house with the family allowed him to make better decisions and recommendations. He was a trusted, valued member of a team for the child and, in time, the siblings and the extended family. He had a way of practicing pediatrics focusing on the parent and the child, but also saw them in the larger environment of the family constellation, the neighborhood, and the stresses upon the entire family that would affect their lifetime trajectory.

Harkening back to what my father learned about the families he served by visiting their homes, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought new insights to many of today's health providers. In May 2020, Jennifer Haythe, MD, a cardiology professor at Columbia University, in a short *Wall Street Journal* editorial (Jennifer Haythe, "House Calls Are Back—Virtually," *Wall Street Journal*,

May, 7, 2020, Eastern Edition), reflected on her experience as a physician during the pandemic. She wrote that though the virtual visits she was making were not ideal for every appointment, they were giving her "insight into the patient's lives that only a house call would provide." And that "COVID-19 has taken much from us, but it has given us back this connection to our patients."

Within the last few years, the concepts of hope and trusted, positive relational experiences have emerged as the best way to engage families—to build on their strengths, to understand that even in the face of trauma, resilience and strength, they can overcome what is negative; and that having even one caring adult giving that positive relational experience can make a difference. Years ago, I worked with a young man who had belonged to a gang in Chicago. He got out. He reported seeing his friends shot on the way to school and his sister afraid to go out of the house. I asked him, "What was it that allowed you to be here today?" His response consisted of two words, "My grandmother." "She cared about me," and he was not going to disappoint her. Intuitive and real. Moreover, many studies point to the importance and value of having that single caring adult in the life of a child, particularly in the early years. Professionals in medicine, psychology, child development, and other fields now embrace the importance of these relationships as foundational to lifelong health and well-being. That has been the work of our nonprofit, and if anything, the work needs to grow. But within this book, I will offer not only our experience, but also ideas we can offer to other nonprofits working to address an array of social needs.

We experienced the stress and challenge that most nonprofits face—to solve a huge, seemingly intractable problem with the lowest budget—and then sustain the initial success. But, fortunately for us and for the families we served, we emerged in the late 1990s into a community that recognized that there was a critical problem to be solved—how to support families in the first three years of a child's life in order to ensure a positive life trajectory. We were given extraordinary support from our business community

and our three founding partners, United Way of Greater Cincinnati, the Cincinnati Children's, and the Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency (CAA). We were given the latitude we needed to craft our program and deliver it.

Now, 20-plus years later, nationally known and respected, ECS has weathered storms, embraced welcome windfalls, and responded to evolving challenges, but has always held true to its original mission: to ensure that all children can get the best possible start in life. Over the years, science has reinforced and elaborated upon our original basic concept that the first 1,000 days of life are important and foundational to all that follows. Our intervention strategy has been proven to be sound and the prevention focus correct (Shonkoff et al. 2012; Shonkoff et al. 2009). We have celebrated their accomplishments with our families and the hope they bring for the future. So many times, as I met with our families and talked with them about their experiences, I came away humbled yet ever more eager to support them in building upon their strengths, resilience, and opportunities. We walked beside them. Not in front. Not behind. ECS was—and continues to be—as a partner walking together. And, after all, isn't that the magic and the hope for the future?

My personal work reflects decades of senior leadership with more than three dozen nonprofits—as president, board member, volunteer, paid staff, and consultant—on topics ranging from blood banks to health care, to community activism, theater, and fine arts. Issues related to families and early childhood are not appreciably different from those in other focus areas for nonprofits tackling social challenges. Similar challenges face organizations working on the well-being of youth, seniors, or people with disabilities. The systems (and funders) that provide guidelines and expectations for our work heavily influence what happens. Those factors have a profound impact on the potential for success of any nonprofit endeavor. I've contemplated ways to begin to tackle this challenge by holding programs accountable for their expected outcomes—working together to identify those outcomes; determining how the

information will be gathered and analyzed; and mindful of what funders expect. One of our board members said it this way, "Find the simplest possible measurement that will tell you what is going on." It needs to be a joint process with decisions made in advance rather than changing the rules after the work has begun. Yet, for programs and organizations of long standing, funding priorities and public perception of the problems change over time, some for the better, and some less so.

In the face of such changes, maintaining focus on the mission and vision of the work is essential and requires steady leadership. In 2007, I wrote to one of our board members to thank him for his guidance, and I ended the letter this way:

> Far too often we forget our roots. We forget the endless meetings, the people who urged us to be better than we thought we could be, the people who saw the future and helped to lead the way. Here in Cincinnati our leaders and our community gave us the support and vigor we needed to go forward each day, and that is what I remember when we are triumphant and when our world grows cold. Thank you for the confidence you placed in us.

ECS stands on solid ground and can say with pride that over the last 20 years, more than 28,000 families made up of 56,000 people were helped. The services improved the developmental trajectory, life course, and opportunities for thousands of children, and their families were changed in a positive way. How we did it is the story I'm going to tell.

Part 1 of this book describes the evolution of ECS as a nonprofit focused on families and young children from 1999 to 2021, as a case study. Understanding that our greater Cincinnati community is but a microcosm of the broader world, we have learned, on a small scale, about the challenges and barriers to scaling programs and the importance of focusing on what works. We have learned much about the challenges and limitations facing small nonprofits who tackle big social issues. Part 2 of this book shares principles

of nonprofit management from collaborations, to private and public-sector partnerships, to measurement and financing. The word *focus* is one that you will read repeatedly, because it is at the very center of what happened during my time with ECS and is essential to the principles highlighted in Part 2.

Of course, no one individual represents the full history or life course of an organization. I retired from ECS in January 2021, leaving the organization with an exemplary staff; local and national respect and recognition; and most important, documented positive outcomes for thousands of families. We created a strong institution where none existed before. With new leadership, ECS continues operation, faces new challenges, and plans strategically for the future. As emphasized in this book, changing sociopolitical times call for wisdom, collaborative thinking and execution, accountability, and even bravery, always keeping the mission in mind and building upon programs that are producing what they promise.

We have a moral imperative to make the home, the village, and the society for that child a safe, stable, and nurturing environment for relationships. The late US Representative Elijah Cummings of Maryland expressed in his words the same understanding of those of us who work with children—we live in the present, but we are committed to their future: "our children are the living messengers we send to a future we will never see. . . . Will we rob them of their destiny? Will we rob them of their dreams? No—we will not do that."

Years ago, I was selected as a winner of the national Purpose Prize, for people over the age of 60 using their accumulated wisdom in their second half of life to make significant social change—to turn life lessons into purposeful projects. Ideas ranged from the ethical treatment of farm animals to food insecurity, to using children's artwork to decorate corporate offices. They were small and large projects, but each one powerful. And they collectively had an important lesson: Change cannot always be all-encompassing; rather, change can mean working within our own organizations, linking with others where possible, keeping a common goal in

mind, and sharing strengths. That may be why I was chosen for this award, as I have held to my mission and vision throughout my career, most notably in my later years. Change in the world can, as Margaret Mead famously said, come from "a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens." (Mead 2005) I hope this book will inspire others to lead, join together, and innovate in ways that foster significant social change, at whatever scale, from a deeply held vision.

CHASING SUCCESS

Chapter 6

Working with the Private Sector

Business Community Partnerships

ECS had the right team when it came to funding, professional development, business guidance, and decision-making. This was ECS's important advantage: Our business community supported us and was critical to our success in a variety of ways. When Pepper made Frank Smith, a senior P&G executive, available to us for a year to help us launch our program, we put processes and clear strategies in place that became the foundation for how we operated. What we knew then is that a nonprofit must have a strong business foundation to be successful and accomplish its mission. In the argot of the early childhood world—not only to strive but also to thrive.

Examples included tools for systematizing planning and priority setting by identifying the compelling improvement need—the value proposition—the killer issues and the reason to believe. Focus is essential not only in asking the hardest questions but also being clear-eyed about the answers. We had strategic OGSM analyses (objectives, goals, strategies, and measures) and STAR diagrams (structure, people, incentives, information sharing/decision making, tasks) for the more tactical work.

We used these tools to guide decision-making and were disciplined about our willingness to go back to basics when a problem or an opportunity arose. We committed ourselves to unifying our long-term direction, providing visible accountability, continually

improving and learning from mistakes. In short, we accepted the challenge to assess our position, renew our commitment on a regular basis, and be courageous enough to make changes when they were warranted.

Walker, in his role as both ECS board chair and mentor, asked questions that were pointed and strategic. He wanted to see plans and proposals concerning agency profitability, maintaining quality, the real cost of service, the ability to build capacity internally and externally, the availability of government funding, and whether we were separating long-term strategic choices from near-term decisions.

Our for-profit business guides nearly always led with an admonition: run ECS like a business with market knowledge, subject expertise, data, and measurement. Ask the right questions, the hard questions. Identify the "killer issue," get to root causes, continue to explore and clarify our value propositions, reject facile explanations, focus.

Examples from a senior P&G executive and ECS board member included these questions more than once: What are the most critical ECS goals that we absolutely must achieve over the next twelve months, over the next three-to-five years? What are the most foundational priorities—the no-miss action plans? What are new capabilities that we may not have today but that need to be developed? What are ongoing optimizations/improvements for what we are already working on today? Are we, as a board, and as a program, organized and structured to implement the most foundational actions we need in the next three-to-six months?

And from our P&G colleagues, we were encouraged to confine answers to one page and never use more than seven words on a slide in a presentation. If people are reading your slides or you are, the audience is not paying attention to what you would like them to know.

Another board member described our situation this way: We do not have laurels to sit on. Actually, no sitting is allowed.

The need for leadership that was focused, analytical, courageous, and thoughtful led to three recommended questions—call them "join-up" topics for potential board members or for anyone who might become the voice or the face of ECS in the community:

1. What are the three most important things that you would like to see ECS accomplish over the next two years?
2. And for you, personally, what would you like to do over roughly the same time period?
3. What do you think are the top one to three problems that ECS faces and what are the three opportunities?

Here is an example of how we applied those questions to our operation: When community pressure arose about reaching all mothers in the community or providing services beyond home visitation, Walker, as our board chair, effectively brought us back to the massive work we had already promised to do, letting us know that our focus was on the big assignment that we had accepted but not yet accomplished. We quietly but emphatically rejected those community requests, mindful of the P&G saying, "Make a little, sell a little, learn a lot." The point being that we needed to get experience on a small scale, learn what works, and expand that later. That is what we did.

But the help and guidance didn't stop with P&G. There was an entire group from our business community who stepped forward and, as I told *The Wall Street Journal* for an article that appeared on page one June 20, 2006, brought us time and ideas from the kinds of minds we couldn't afford to buy. As a leader I have always welcomed a strong management team, people smarter and more accomplished than I am but who also bring the same work ethic and are focused on the same cause. With our business-minded partners, we were able to amplify our ideas and receive new ones, making the partnership the best of both worlds.

Acknowledging that we would probably always be swimming or rafting in "permanent whitewater," we focused on our mission, made solid decisions even when they were difficult, documented

our progress, and ensured that the investment made in us was well founded. Our friends in the private-sector world provided invaluable guidance.

There is a story here, too, from Walker, who let us know why he has spent nearly 40 years volunteering at senior levels for nonprofit organizations and making sizable financial contributions. He explains it this way:

> I am a firm believer that people with business skills should become involved in helping their communities become better places to live. This value was impressed upon me during my career at P&G. But sometimes, people leave some of what they know at the door when they get involved in community work. We accept conditions in our communities which are not acceptable—assuming the problems are just too big and too persistent to be solved. I don't accept that—never have and never will. So, I hope that my legacy with nonprofits I worked with is that I pushed myself and everyone else around me to make a larger difference than we have before.

An essential lesson for any nonprofit is this: An initiative must be able to survive as a business to even begin to deliver the social mission. We were fortunate to have outstanding guidance; to our credit, we were able to maintain our focus for more than two decades. Following recommendations and guidance from the business community allowed us to create a nationally recognized and applauded program. But even with our good advice and our entrepreneurial spirit, there is an essential limiting factor: Nearly unsurmountable challenges placed upon nonprofits frequently cause them to be unable to deliver on what they know to be true. Remedies come in the form of funders who demand verifiable outcomes, improved coordination among organizations working on the same problem, and funding that supports research and development rather than just service alone.

An initiative must be able to survive as a business to even begin to deliver the social mission.

Strategically, the close relationship with our business community brought foundational design, growth, and systems development

based upon best business practices. Among the advantages and knowledge our partnership provided and nurtured:

- The importance of clearly defining the problem to be solved and using a stringent, candid structure to ensure that the root cause is clearly identified
- The opportunity to access the "kinds of minds we couldn't afford to buy"
- The open doors for meetings with people influential in the community and the fertile ground for the development of community will
- The emphasis upon accountability and return on investment
- The willingness to stop something that isn't working
- The ability to leverage public money with private dollars to enhance program quality, and be as innovative as funds allow
- The respect in the community that comes with support and approbation from business leaders
- The integration of the need to find creative solutions rather than saying no to opportunities
- The significance of collaboration and a systems approach to solving problems

Our business partners taught us skills of negotiation and demonstrated tools to manage our work: Red Green Charts for quality assurance, dashboards and data requirements identifying the crucial numbers and information needed for good decision-making, and the benefits of understanding our competitive advantage and our outcomes. Crucially, our friends in the business world continued to let us know that our work mattered and that, regardless of the internal and outside pressure, we must never give up.

Deloitte Organizational Assessment

In 2000, soon after we opened our doors, and with the recommendation from our founding partners, the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati (now Interact for Health) commissioned

Deloitte, a leading business consulting and professional services firm, to conduct a "thorough organizational assessment of (our) management structure and span, critical business processes, provider relationships and performance metrics." In its report, Deloitte commended the community leaders who committed time and energy to develop ECS and who envisioned a quality program supported by a collaboration of business, nonprofit, and academic leadership. Their assessment included the following key findings:

1. Exceptional progress has been made in a short time.
2. Collaboratives can be beneficial but require respect, trust, and nurturing.
3. Agency growth will require more clear definition of management roles and responsibilities.
4. Sustainable funding and demonstrable outcomes are key.
5. Detailed business planning, including capacity and utilization, are vital to success.
6. Process and outcomes measures need better definition and presentation.
7. Subjective and informal measurements are implemented more often and consistently than are quantitative measures.

The assessment from Deloitte came after we had been operational for about 18 months. It reinforced what we knew and offered a valuable critical appraisal as well as ongoing guidance for our work.

IDEO

In 2010, as a result of my receipt of the Purpose Prize, I had the opportunity to attend a session with the IDEO group in California. Long recognized as a leader in human-centered design, IDEO provided a context for me to think about how we at ECS could clarify problems that needed to be solved. Remembering our P&G guidance about addressing the killer issue and solving the most limiting factor first, I was eager to better understand the logic model employed by the IDEO group.

Working with them was fun and thought-provoking as we moved away from the constraints and restraints that too often control us, and try to find creative but realistic solutions to problems. Basically, what I learned was this: Study how people behave in their environment, go out and actually see it. Tell stories about what you saw and felt, break down the stories into manageable pieces—a concept that, like Goldilocks found in the Three Bears' home, is not too big but "just right." Actually, create a prototype that you can walk through. For me that meant going through every step of the process in my mind, maybe creating a roadmap, maybe using props, but in some way putting myself in the shoes of one of our moms or one of our babies or one of our referring counselors. And finally, present ideas as experiments, allowing co-creation. In our case, the solutions must always include wisdom and guidance from our families.

Focus

If there is one single message here that has been the underpinning of our success, it is *be focused*—be clear about what we planned to do, how we planned to do it, and why we chose this path. What we learned early on is that if goals are not clearly defined—focused—there always exists the tendency to broaden the lane and move a little beyond the plan for funding sources, for "mission creep," for joining a new initiative. The guidance about focus came from P&G but also from our longtime advocate and board chair, Jim Spurlino. As a successful small businessperson with a fervent interest in early childhood, Spurlino exhorted us to always go back to the original questions: the Toyota "five whys," ensuring that we were remaining committed to our original purpose and staying in our lane.

If goals are not clearly defined—focused—there always exists the tendency to broaden the lane and move a little beyond the plan.

In his book *Business Bullseye*, Spurlino explains how to "take dead aim and achieve great success," a concept applicable to nonprofit and for-profit enterprises alike. One graphic example of Spurlino's thinking continues to be part of his public comments. His business, building materials, concentrated on concrete

foundations for large structures. When he talked about early childhood and ECS, he often used good construction as a metaphor for the importance of the early years, the foundation laid during the first 1,000 days of life. This was both a visual and true depiction.

In another indispensable way, Spurlino, from a small-business perspective, provided an important lesson—just saying "no" or offering an excuse is almost never the right way to solve a problem. Rather, before closing the door to an opportunity, be creative about how to address it or find another way to make it happen. An example is text messaging with families when phone minutes don't work or meeting a family at the library when going into the home isn't advisable. Our pandemic response was testament to our ability to find new ways to serve families when going into the home or being together wasn't possible.

The Strategic Business Plan

The business plan that we wrote for ECS provided the blueprint for how the work would occur and who must be involved—the partners, the board, the funders, the agencies, the community members, the challenged families. We knew that guidance from our colleagues in the business community was essential for success. Involvement of large and small business leaders allowed ECS to be constructed on a firm foundation using the best principles of private enterprise so that we could respond to vagaries in the marketplace, the advent of competition, and opportunities for growth. Sometimes we say that there is P&G DNA in ECS and it has made us infinitely stronger. We have always been exhorted to clearly define our "unique selling proposition" and "reason to believe," advice from the world's largest and highly successful marketer.

The business plan that we presented in April 1998 had seven key components: the implementation strategy, the partners, the structure, the funding, the evaluation process, the marketing, and the timing. Those elements formed the blueprint for our work going

forward. We characterized our work as moving away from incrementalism and focusing on prevention and celebrating children and their ultimate success.

By October 1998, we had a good list of the critical tasks that we needed to accomplish to open our doors for families. They were meticulously crafted, well researched and community informed. The tenets in the April 1998 business plan resulted in a strong program launch in March 1999 and their relevancy endures:

1. Contract development with multiple service delivery organizations and the states of Ohio and Kentucky
2. Quality improvement (QI) and evaluation protocols focused on both program operation and family outcomes
3. Funding and fiscal management structures to support internal operations and budgets, legal and IRS requirements
4. Marketing to create community awareness and boost voluntary enrollment of moms
5. Board identification to develop and delineate roles and assignments
6. Provider council (now lead agency) to begin engagement and collaboration process
7. People/staff to secure consultants where needed, hire staff, and determine which services will be provided by partners
8. Program to inventory referral sources, set up proper training, determine the best program elements, and make neighborhood/agency assignments
9. RFPs for program to determine which agencies want to operate the Nurse-Family Partnership and Healthy Families America models (other models ultimately used as well)
10. Outcome monitoring and information systems to describe primary and secondary outcomes and the computer hardware, software, personnel, and facilities for home visit service coordination, training, and outcomes assessment

The Public-Private-Sector Partnership

In other chapters, this book provides further detail to amplify and describe how ECS was able to construct and maintain the public-private partnership that allowed us to go beyond the basic public-sector funding and do—albeit in a small way—what Pallotta compellingly urges in his book *Uncharitable* (2008). Our nonprofit organization benefited from our public-private partnership but was still constrained by our inability to benefit from the opportunities that free-market capitalism allows. For a variety of programs that we piloted and demonstrated as effective, we could not secure funding to keep them going. In some of these, learnings and opportunities were lost, and money was not well invested. We did not sufficiently build upon what was working and failed to keep commitments that could have built more trust with the families and communities we aimed to serve.

Linking Home Visiting with Pediatric Primary Care

An attempt at improved program coordination was illustrated through a proposal we wrote to develop mechanisms to link home visiting more closely with pediatric primary care. Even though research studies and national recommendations pointed to the potential positive impact of such an alignment, it had not been widely implemented. ECS could be, we argued, a good resource for a busy pediatric office where the doctor typically has only minutes to spend with each patient. If the physician were able to use ECS as a resource, and refer the child to a professional home visitor, that home visitor could address nonclinical issues—the social determinants of health—as well as support the family in using recommended health services. By maintaining close links to and accountability with the health provider, the result could be improved service by the home visitor who would have additional information about the family to guide her work. Such links could

also be a reliable resource for the pediatric primary care provider to address issues that couldn't be managed in an office setting.

A few small-scale research studies elsewhere had identified opportunities for improved engagement to better integrate services and systems, support the medical home, focus on healthy development and two-generational well-being, optimize existing capacity, and engage and empower families. Using our private-sector resources and the support of pediatric care leaders at Cincinnati Children's, we began designing small tests of change (e.g., getting family permission, using the medical record, sifting workflow), and we were successful.

We prepared a proposal for a project called "Integrating home visiting and primary care to improve child and family outcomes." Its purpose was to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of both home visiting and pediatric primary care through service integration. We then approached several national, state, and local foundations to seek funding for a demonstration project but were unsuccessful. The health foundations said they did not fund home visiting efforts, while those funders committed to home visiting told us they did not fund primary health care projects. We could identify no philanthropic sources of funds willing to step away from their siloed investment portfolio. We also could not identify a way to use government home visiting funds, other than public grants or Medicaid dollars, to launch this effort. While national expert recommendations continue to call for greater collaboration and linkage between home visiting and primary care, the promise of such efforts has not been fulfilled in greater Cincinnati or on a wide scale elsewhere.

University of Michigan Ross School of Business

The involvement of the business community and our business orientation was highlighted again in 2006, when we were asked by the University of Michigan Ross School of Business to present

at a conference for graduate students enrolled in the nonprofit management curriculum. Al Spector, retired P&G executive and longtime ECS volunteer, and I made the trip to Ann Arbor to participate in the university's social-enterprise symposium, "Quantifiable Outcomes to Support Funding Requests." Our topic was: "Real People, Real Issues, Real Solutions." The symposium leaders were intrigued with our close relationship with the business community and our focus on evidence-based decision-making. They told us we were 10 years ahead of our time. We were honored to be included.

The keynote speaker, Bo Burlingham, then editor of *Inc.* magazine, talked about his new book, *Small Giants: Companies That Choose to Be Great Instead of Big* (2005). The book focused on businesses who decided to remain small and, one would imagine, more manageable. Fortunately for all of us, one of the businesses he highlighted was the Katzingers Group in Ann Arbor, purveyor of a variety of wonderful food products and services that they liberally shared with us. Burlingham let us know that Katzingers was an outstanding example of why unbridled growth, as appealing as it may look on paper, is not always the best strategy to maintaining quality and control.

Spector and I focused on our relationship with private business—how it happened and why it mattered. We were gratified when the Michigan group complimented us, saying that we were far ahead of most social service organizations in terms of applying principles of entrepreneurship to a nonprofit organization.

To provide experience for their students and to help nonprofits, the Ross School created what it called a "domestic corps" so that organizations like ours could apply to have an MBA student assigned to us for a summer internship. Ethicon Endo-Surgery paid for the engagement with Ram Kapadia. We applied and were fortunate to have Ram Kapadia work with us in Cincinnati to create a financial model for ECS. His assignment was to analyze growth opportunities, including fiscal and personnel requirements, and at the same time, provide answers to a central question: What is a principled approach to growth, and what are the challenges?

Marketing: Procter and Gamble and Others

Nonprofit Marketing

As we considered how to best market our program, a single image became ubiquitous—a simple side-by-side illustration compared the brain of an infant swaddled and not stimulated and another infant with many sensory opportunities. In one brain, there were large dark spaces where synapses failed to close. The other was vibrant and full. From the beginning we emphasized that professional home visiting was vital to support many families to help their children achieve their best possible start. We used the dual brain image on publications and slide decks, in videos and as a part of most of our presentations, because there in stark contrast was the actual picture of why our work was so important. We could see the visible effect of early stimulation and exuberant brain development for an infant. Effective home visiting was viewed as a way to promote optimal brain development and the foundational relationships that support parents and children for a lifetime.

ISBN: 9781947603622

University of CINCINNATI | PRESS