

Life

How to find a nonprofit right for you

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By Sara Waisanen, Special Writer

Every so often, someone walks into the New Enterprise at Work Center at 1100 N. Main St. with their suitcase in tow, hoping to catch a train.

Nestled on the Huron River, it's easy to see why someone would confuse the building with a train outside, as a train station.

But this building is not a train station. It is a facility filled with many people who are working to help nonprofit organizations succeed.

Nonprofit Enterprise at Work has been working with nonprofit organizations in the community for the last 16 years. It houses 20 tenant nonprofit organizations, including NEW, and offers four services to help nonprofits succeed.

One of its services is BoardConnect, a training program for nonprofits and people interested in serving on a nonprofit board. The organization offers programs on how boards can raise money and understand financial statements, among others. For a full list of training programs visit www.boardconnect.org.

NEW offers a cost effective information technology service for nonprofit organizations called npServ that has a variety of different plan options to better serve the organization and its budget. NEW's goal with npServ is to take away the hassle of technologies so nonprofits can focus on their missions.

"Focus on what you want to solve in the community," said Ann Gladwin, a resource specialist for NEW.

Through NEW's ResourceConnect service, nonprofits can seek personal assistance from NEW employees who will work to answer their questions or problems. They have access to a resource database of more than 850 service providers and print resources, and they have access to a nonprofit database. They also can also find funding sources and find people to network within the community.

The NEW Center also has meeting rooms available for nonprofit organizations to rent for \$40. Register to rent a boardroom at www.boardconnect.org/boardroom.

How to get involved in a nonprofit

There are more than 1,051 nonprofits to get involved with in Ann Arbor and there are some 1,480 nonprofits in Washtenaw County, Gladwin said.

"Some people are shy and don't know where to begin," she said.

Gladwin encourages people to search NEW's database of nonprofit organizations to find one that best suits one's goals and interests.

The database, which can be found at www.new.org under "services," allows people to search by keywords or phrases to find a nonprofit related to their interests.

"I would encourage anyone to find something they're interested in," Gladwin said. "If you're interested in animals, by all means get involved with an animal shelter."

Gladwin emphasized that anyone with a skill could be useful to a nonprofit and that nonprofits can find a way to create a position using that skill.

NEW offers a three-hour training program for individuals interested in learning how to serve on a nonprofit board through the BoardConnect service. The training session focuses on board member's roles and responsibilities, board operations, planning, development and ambassadorship.

The next session will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. Oct. 20 at the NEW Center. The cost of the training is \$55, but participants can save \$5 by registering online at [new.org](http://www.new.org), or register by phone at 998-0160.

For more information about NEW and the services it provides visit www.new.org or call 998-0160.

URL: <http://www.heritage.com/articles/2009/09/04/life/doc4aa1914aa86ef296323399.prt>

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