The Nonprofit Institute at the College of Southern Maryland  
Quarterly Report to St. Mary’s County  
April through June 2016

The past quarter has been a busy one, the highlight of which was the NPI’s Annual Conference. This and the many other activities engaged in by the NPI in St Mary’s County for the past quarter are summarized below.

**Strategy One: Ensure the value of training provide by the NPI.**

During the past quarter, through our new partnership with Maryland Nonprofits, we offered a variety of webinars. We used our regular E-News to inform our constituents about these webinars in addition to the training offered by the local libraries and other entities. We also directly offered a course entitled Your Financial System in early April, concluding the NPI’s course offerings for the school year.

The NPI St Mary’s Coordinator and CSM’s Director of Strategic Partnerships will meet with the Executive Director of Maryland Nonprofits in July, 2016 to further explore how we can share resources, such as course instructors, additional webinars, and consultants.

We will offer 7 new courses beginning in September 2016. These will be:

* The importance of vision in Fundraising
* Fundraising Fundamentals
* Building Your Organization by Building Leadership
* Managing in Today’s Changing World
* Talking the Talk
* Putting Polish into Your Marketing Program
* New Perspectives on Strategic Planning

Courses will be listed in the CSM Continuing Education Catalogue and will be highlighted on the NPI website and E-Blasts. We will provide a bio and photo of each instructor, along with a brief summary of the course that is designed by the instructor.

**Strategy Two: Review the Structure of the NPI**

The basic structure of the NPI has remained the same while we have been seeking a new Coordinator for Charles County. During this period of time, The St Mary’s Coordinator has continued to focus on the needs of St Mary’s County, while adding a emphasis on developing a training curriculum that appeals to the entire region.

The NPI hired a summer intern to develop written procedures for accessing Southern Maryland Gives, Volunteer Southern Maryland, and the various social media platforms that we use.

The small, but enthusiastic NPI team meets on a regular basis to share ideas, resources, and to plan.

**Strategy Three: Measure the Effectiveness of the NPI’s Marketing Efforts**

The NPI staff works closely with the marketing team at CSM, making adjustments to the website, E-Blasts, and newsletters. Our mailing list continues to grow, reaching more citizens in the region. We’ve used Linked In, Twitter, and Facebook to further increase our network.

One measure of the effectiveness of these marketing efforts is the increase in attendance at our annual conference. It also appears that our readership uses the E-Blasts in making plans to attend training and networking events. Furthermore, nonprofits have increasingly requested that we list their special events in our regional E-Blasts.

We plan to further explore how we can best measure the strength of our outreach efforts. On an anecdotal basis, they appear to be effective.

**Strategy Four: Measure the Effectiveness of the NPI’s Annual Conference**

The April 29th conference was a great success, based on increased attendance and very positive feedback. Using the input of our planning committee, we offered five different tracks, each of which included sessions that appealed to new, intermediate, and seasoned staff and volunteers. We collected 157 feedback forms that provided us with data about each session, including suggestions for additional future topics. The day concluded with an awards ceremony during which we honored volunteers from the region. A complete agenda for the conference may be found on the NPI website.

**Strategy Five: Review and Enhance the Effectiveness of NPI’s Current Activities**

* **Executive Director Learning Circles-** Participation in these monthly meetings continues to grow. The following organizations have attended:
  + Leadership Southern MD
  + Tri County Council
  + Greenwell Foundation
  + Historic Sotterley Plantation
  + Walden
  + The Patuxent Partnership
  + The St Mary’s Historical Society
  + The St Mary’s Mediation Center
  + The St Mary’s Animal Welfare League
  + The Arc of Southern MD
  + Community Resources of St Mary’s County
  + Boundless Expectations
  + Circle of Angels
  + St Mary’s Caring
  + Donna’s House of Dance
  + Literacy Council of St. Mary’s County
* **Volunteer Initiatives**

The volunteer coordinators of 18 organizations gathered together in June in Historic St Mary’s City. The group was treated to a tour of the property by a long time volunteer, following a discussion that was focused on the critical aspects of the volunteer program at St Mary’s City. The group visited various sites on the property and learned how volunteers are recruited, supervised, managed, and recognized.

This inspired the group to decide to meet 6 times each year in a variety of sites so that participants can learn how different organizations use volunteers in their day to day activities.

The NPI has initiated a new relationship with the Governor’s Commission on Service and Volunteerism through a member of our St Mary’s Advisory Council, Erin Lewis. Erin and Jeffrey Griffin, Director of the Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism, presented certificates to our volunteers during the NPI annual conference. They then reached out to the NPI for nominations of outstanding local businesses that engage in volunteer activities. The St Mary’s NPI Coordinator was also invited to participate in a panel that will determine the recipients of the annual volunteer awards for the State of Maryland.

The NPI staff have scheduled a meeting with the company that designed and hosts the Volunteer Southern Maryland website in order to better understand it’s current capability and future potential. An introductory webinar will be offered on a monthly basis to our constituents so that they become more familiar with this valuable resource.

* **Southern Maryland Gives**

Southern Maryland Gives was launched in May of 2015 and there has been steady growth in community participation, raising $17509. The NPI Summer Intern has developed a users manual for organizations in order to make access easier. In order to create a user friendly manual, the Intern and St Mary’s Coordinator met the board leadership of the Garvey Center Council to walk them through the process of setting up their page and obtain feedback about how best to present the process to other organizations. We will continue to provide this very needed technical assistance and support.

Razoo, the hosting company, provided CSM with periodic reports that summarized data collected for site usage, donations, highest activity days, demographic data about users, location of users, dollars contributed, and organizations receiving the most donations. This data will help us to assess site usage and guide us to focus on best practices in online giving.

**Strategy Six: New Initiatives**

Even though our group is missing one partner we continued to move forward and develop new ideas. We initiated a relationship with Maryland NonProfits that will assist us in exploring additional resources for Southern Maryland, such as potential instructors, technical assistance, and relevant courses.

We are in the early stages of implementing a networking group for Fundraising Professionals and Faith Based organizations. We are also developing a list of local consultants who can be called upon for assistance.

**Strategy Seven: Enhance Board Development Activities**

In response to requests from local boards of directors and executive directors, the NPI conference included topics and presenters that appealed to members of nonprofit boards. Examples of these topics were: Organizational Sustainability, Succession Planning, Strategic Planning, Developing Young Leaders, and Thanking Donors. These topics, in fact, did appeal to volunteer board members. For example, 6 board members from one St Mary’s organization attended the board focused sessions. Board members were also honored during the Volunteer of the Year ceremony for their contributions to nonprofit organizations.

The St Mary’s Coordinator is currently working with one organization that is currently focused on Succession Planning. She has received requests from 3 individuals who are in the planning stages of starting 3 new organizations. She has also met with the members of the Garvey Center Council, providing periodic technical assistance as requested.

The St Mary’s Coordinator has collaborated with the Board and Executive Director of Leadership Southern MD (LSM) to select the annual Heritage Award Winner. She has also worked with LSM to increase outreach to the regional nonprofit community for the purpose of implementing future program activities.