



CPFdn News

Weaving Partnerships to Improve the EBCI's Quality of Life and Strengthen Western North Carolina

January 2007

Local Training Options Offered to Nonprofits

Duke University conducts a popular educational program for people working in nonprofit organizations to help them strengthen their skills and their organizations.

Through May, nearly a dozen courses will be offered in different mountain communities, including “Demystifying Your Organization’s Finances,” “Technology in Your Language,” “Communications” and “Optimizing Your Fundraising Effort.” Details about the topics, where they will be offered and how to sign up are located at www.learnmore.duke.edu/nonprofit/classlist.asp?Site=KWest&Submit=SEARCH.

WNC Partners for Nonprofit Success, of which Cherokee Preservation Foundation is a sponsor, is the host for the Duke program in the mountain region.

Report Eyes Grantmaking Settings Similar to the Qualla Boundary

Cherokee Preservation Foundation (CPFdn) recently released the findings of *Arm in Arm: Engaged Grantmaking in Local Communities*, a study that focuses on grantmakers whose mission requires them to make grants over many years in communities that have a limited number of nonprofit organizations appropriate for grant support and a limited number of individuals with the experience and skill required to lead those organizations. The report examines these grantmakers’ particular challenges, and the strategies they undertake as a result.



The findings of *Arm in Arm* are based on interviews with people working in a range of settings, including First Nations, Native American and Aboriginal Peoples communities, as well as in rural areas and in developing countries. These communities often have the following similarities:

- A limited choice of potential grantees.
- A limited number of potential leaders for community organizations.
- Few philanthropic resources.
- A long-term relationship between the grantmaker and community.
- A sense that the community is entitled to grantmaking resources.
- A culture that differs significantly from the mainstream.

The study points out several important implications. First, it means these grantmakers’ legitimacy comes from serving the needs of the community and from being a steward for the community’s endowment. This is not the case in other settings, where the grantmaker’s legitimacy comes from adherence to the benefactor’s will.

Another consequence is that the development of local capacity—human resources (board, management, staff and volunteers), financial management, revenue sources and planning—is as important to the grantmaker as achieving specific program goals (*continued on page 2*).

Sequoyah Fund Encourages Sound Planning and Big Ideas

Thanks to the Sequoyah Fund, members of the Eastern Band who want to start or expand a business have never been in a better position to pursue their dreams successfully. Unlike conventional banks, the Sequoyah Fund goes beyond just making loans and provides comprehensive training to prospective borrowers so they know what they are doing before they assume the considerable risk of starting or expanding their business.



The Sequoyah Fund is a Native American community financial development institution (CDFI) that has received funding from the Tribal government, various agencies of the federal government, and Cherokee Preservation Foundation (CPFdn). It began in 1998 as the Tribe's community development corporation, and went through a rigorous process to become a CDFI when the need for business training services became apparent through the community-wide Vision Qualla planning effort CPFdn led in 2005.

Tribal members who contact the Sequoyah Fund to start a business and have no prior experience start the process of getting a low-interest loan by participating in a pre-venture class that gives participants a good idea of what it's like to be in business and what is required to start one. Then they work with a counselor from the Cherokee Business Development Center (an organization that partners with the Sequoyah Fund and is located alongside them in the Ginger Lynn Welch complex).

Prospective borrowers must have a sound business plan before they will be considered for a loan. When a loan is made, associate director Chris James then provides additional success coaching to the new business owner, helping them establish an inventory control system, for example.

Supporting Big Ideas

The Sequoyah Fund also provides support to established businesspeople, loaning up to \$150,000 to people who have big ideas that would have a significant positive impact on the community if these ideas were to take shape. In the event that an even larger, sound financial transaction is in order, Sequoyah Fund is able to partner with a bank so both financial institutions can participate in the loan and help the client (*continued on page 3*).

Arm in Arm Study

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The grantmaking process must develop individual leaders for both the staff and boards of local organizations, and it must develop the capacities of the organizations themselves.

Another finding of the study is that the type of grantmakers that were the focus of the report need to be engaged partners with their grantees, with the staff spending considerable time coaching and supporting grantees.

While *Arm in Arm* is expected to be especially helpful to grantmakers working in settings similar to the Qualla Boundary, the report is also intended to be useful to the staff and board members of nonprofit organizations and tribal programs based in the communities that such grantmakers serve. By clarifying what grantmakers are seeking to accomplish and the roles they can best play, this report can help nonprofits and tribal organization see the ways in which they can respond.

Copies of the report are available on CPFdn's web site at www.cpfdn.org/arm.html. For a hard copy, call CPFdn at (828)497-5550.



Sequoyah Fund Encourages Big Ideas

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“The Sequoyah Fund’s purpose is to facilitate the creation of a strong, diversified, year-round economy on the Qualla Boundary,” said executive director Nell Leatherwood. “Working with the new Cherokee Chamber of Commerce, the Cherokee Business Development Center, North Carolina’s Small Business and Technology Development Center, the Mountain Microenterprise Fund and others, we want to help qualified people who have great ideas about new businesses and/or the desire to put up quality new buildings in downtown Cherokee. We want to be part of making Cherokee the community we all want it to be.”

Helping Tribal Enterprises and Nonprofits Think like Businesses

Now the Sequoyah Fund is beginning to offer tribal enterprises and nonprofits serving members of the Eastern Band the same kind of assistance that it provides to businesses. It works with

organizations to develop sound business plans that will address their facility, equipment, marketing and other needs. As part of the loan process, nonprofits will be required to obtain funding from multiple sources. “If we get these organizations to look at themselves as if they are a business, they will strengthen their staffs and their organizations, and they will become self-sustaining,” said Leatherwood. “As they repay their loans, the Sequoyah Fund will be able turn around and make loans to additional tribal enterprises and nonprofits.”

For more information about the Sequoyah Fund, call 497-8136 or visit www.wncbap.org/agency_page.php?id=6.



Eco-Study Tour Leads to Youth-Driven Recycling Program in WNC

A program established with North Carolina Cooperative Extension two years ago to expand the horizons of WNC youth by taking them to Costa Rica for an eco-study tour has led to an emerging recycling education program in Swain and Graham counties and on the Qualla Boundary.

The eco-study tour host, EARTH University in central Costa Rica, emphasizes the development of agricultural entrepreneurialism, commitment to community and responsibility to the environment. Visiting



teenagers from the Qualla Boundary and neighboring counties have been astounded by the lengths the university and its student population go to in their recycling efforts *(continued on page 4)*.

Theatre in Education Earns Rave Reviews

Western Carolina University theatre students have been teaming up with the Cherokee community to create a drama program that is getting bravos from many quarters.

The Theatre in Education (TIE) program was designed so Western students could create and perform quality theatrical productions that are culturally accurate and educationally relevant. In one element of TIE, WCU students in the theatre program create workshops for Cherokee middle school students *(continued on page 4)*.

Youth-Driven Recycling Program

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The university community embodies “green” living through its efforts in environmentally conscious living.

For example food residuals from the university cafeteria are fed to hogs on the academic farm.

All plastic, glass, and aluminum containers are deposited in appropriate color-coded receptacles. And fertilizer for the university’s farm is made from composted banana stalks.

The reuse of virtually everything so impressed the eco-tour travelers that they came back determined to expand recycling efforts in their communities. With the support of NCCE and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Recycling Program and a grant from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, students organized a recycling education project.

During a pilot education program launched at the Cherokee Indian Fair this past October, students talked with fair visitors about recycling and encouraged them to deposit over 100 pounds of aluminum cans and plastic bottles in special receptacles at the fair. Led by Daniel Garza, EARTH University’s visiting intern in Cherokee in 2006, the students’ main message to fair visitors was to not throw trash in the recycling containers.

After the Indian Fair, students took their efforts to area high schools within Swain, Robbinsville and Cherokee. Their goal was to build interest in recycling and get other students to take action in their schools. Grades within each school competed with each other, and each victorious class earned a pizza party.

The recycling effort is beginning to pick up steam. Schools and tribal government offices are requesting that special recycling containers be provided in their locations, and those requests are being fulfilled. The Snowbird Community is planning a summer camp for youth focused on environmental stewardship and recycling.

A third eco-study tour will take place in Costa Rica this June. More students will bring back excitement about preserving the environment and recycling from EARTH University. These young community leaders will take the Western North Carolina recycling effort up a notch with community service efforts when they return.

Rave Reviews

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The workshops help students and their teachers integrate drama, art and music into the young students’ way of thinking and learning. Middle school students have created a story and will perform it in April.

In another element of the program, for the second year WCU theatre students are developing a play adapted from a Cherokee legend and creating costumes by working with Cherokee artists, scholars, elders and the WCU-Cherokee Center. Davy Arch and Eddie Bushyhead, in particular, are mentoring the theatre group this year as it prepares its own production for the April performances.

The 2006 production was videotaped and presented at national conferences to convey how TIE has helped link college students with younger people in the community and created opportunities to experience literature, theatre, art and music.



A student actor plays a water beetle in TIE’s 2006 production.