

Nonprofit groups find business help

By Cindy Bellinger
For The New Mexican

Newcomers to the business world who need guidance getting started often turn to SCORE, the Service Corps of Retired Executives. The group of volunteers has been helping people navigate the world of commerce for years. But people who want to start nonprofits can also get advice from SCORE.

"We've been helping nonprofits for a long time, but only formally for the past 10 years," said Judy Nix, a member of SCORE who has more than 35 years of experience working with nonprofit organizations in Texas and New Mexico. Locally, she served as development consultant to STEE Santa Fe and was a founding board member of Santa Fe Film Arts Institute.

There are between 600 and 900 nonprofits in Northern New Mexico, and Nix says it's very different managing a nonprofit because of two factors: money and people. For instance, generating income by ticket sales requires different accounting procedures. And most people working with a nonprofit are volunteers.

"Most people that are attracted to a nonprofit are idealistic and educated. They are out to do good work. Treating volunteers as unpaid professionals is truly an art," said Sara Lawless, another SCORE counselor also with 30 years of experience in managing nonprofits.

Another difference from for-profit businesses is the necessity of creating a governing board of directors. "It's the board that your organization is accountable to," Nix said. "This makes sure the money is used for what it's intended."

But even with these differences, SCORE volunteers advise nonprofits to operate like a business. "Nonprofits are in business to serve the public interest such as feeding the homeless or putting on a performance or providing health care," said Nix. "This means that nonprofits should create a business plan just as for-profit businesses do."

Sara Owens, a local psychologist, turned to SCORE after deciding to set up a nonprofit and quickly learned how much business savvy was needed. "I



Ulla Pederson, owner of Kindred Spirits Animal Sanctuary, says her nonprofit would not have been possible with the help of SCORE volunteers Bill Moffett, left, and Jim Langley.

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ULLA PEDERSON

founder of Kindred Spirits Animal Sanctuary

was a novice when it came to business. I didn't know how to make a business plan or a marketing plan or even what they were," Owens said. Her goal was to set up a center to provide intensive mental-health services for children under 5, and she began working with SCORE a year ago.

"Judy has been great to work with and helped find ways to determine the need for such a center in Northern New Mexico," Owens said. "Our focus is on fundraising, and she's training us on how to ask for money, how to go to foundations."

Owens is starting the center, De Colores, with three other women, and they hope to open next fall. Because the center will provide quality treatment for low-income families, she wants Medicaid to provide 50

percent of the costs. "If you're for-profit, you don't have to follow so many rules," she said.

Another nonprofit that benefited from SCORE is Kindred Spirits Animal Sanctuary. Incorporated three years ago, the sanctuary takes in elderly animals. Ulla Pederson is the founding director and works with 14 volunteers.

"I didn't have any business experience except with my own checkbook," Pederson said. "I couldn't afford a consultant, so I went to SCORE and they've been great. They've helped me stay on target with budgeting and operate within a realistic scope." She says after three years she still consults with SCORE, but not as often. "But they are always willing to take the time with you."

Besides counseling individuals,

SCORE presents seminars for nonprofits. The seminars outline things to consider when setting up a nonprofit, then how to manage the finances. The first "So, You Want to Start a Nonprofit" is Wednesday. Other seminars address the needs of nonprofit organizations that have been in business three to five years, then more than five years.

"There's a misunderstanding about nonprofits," said Mary Ellen Dugan, another counselor who also has 35 years of working with nonprofits. "Sometimes people think if they become nonprofit, then they automatically get donated money. There is a lot of fundraising involved. You have to have great personal passion to start and keep a nonprofit going."

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

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Its a cult computer company into the mainstream

the MP3 player. Sure enough, the concept is the dominant one in the consumer-tech industry, with every company from Microsoft to Intel to Apple toiling away at products that will play music and video files, display pictures and network with other devices.

days, though, a computer's main use is accessing the Internet — so the operating system doesn't matter as much.

Now that Microsoft has announced that its next version of Windows will be delayed until next year, some analysts

don't even really matter anymore to Apple. The iPod, along with the iTunes online music and video store, has started to contribute more profits and revenues to its parent company than the Mac computer line.

It's hard not to notice that

video screen and a personal digital assistant, among other things. One popular and persistent rumor says Apple has a cult phone in the works.

Many Mac fans have been holding out hopes that Apple will come out with some new