

# 74%<sup>+</sup>

seventy-four percent

EXPLORING THE LIVES OF WOMEN LEADERS IN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS | 11/2011

The **Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at Robert Morris University** works with nonprofit organizations to provide effective and practical management and governance tools, information, education and research that strengthen nonprofit missions and multiply all investments of time, talent and money in regional nonprofit organizations.

Our intensive and customized Management, Governance, Financial and Technology consulting services are designed to educate leaders and have resulted in:

- Higher functioning governing boards
- Enhanced financial planning and management
- Heightened brand awareness
- Increased partnerships and strategic alliances
- More effective approaches to fundraising
- Better informed, evidence-based decisions for future directions
- More capable nonprofit leaders and organizations
- Effective management information systems
- Prudent software choices and website design
- A strategic approach to decision-making

“Sometimes I feel like when we’re sitting at the Board Meetings the women are very excluded. Just by the geography. If you look at the diagram of how the chairs are and where everyone sits in the chairs, there’s the inner circle at the board meeting, which is all white men. There’s an understanding that you’re on the outside for consultation... You’re not to pipe up and say your two cents, that’s not your time.”

A strategic research project of the  
**Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management**  
at Robert Morris University

# Introduction

A reality exists in nonprofit organizations, which are supposed to be bastions of social justice: That justice seems too often attempted for those served, not the people who are serving, including the 74 percent who happen to be women.

74% are female. They lead the nonprofit sector in Southwestern Pennsylvania. These women earn about 75 cents to the dollar earned by their male counterparts. They are underpaid and underrepresented in the leadership of large organizations. The 74% are the approximately 225,000 women working in nonprofit organizations in Allegheny and surrounding counties.

The Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at Robert Morris University is promoting change in this picture through a multi-year education and research initiative named for the majority that drives nonprofits – the 74%. The Kitchen Cabinet, comprised of regional leaders, is helping to guide new research and education programs. Fueled by powerful qualitative research via one-on-one interviews and surveys with women in nonprofits and the hard facts about compensation rates, employee retention, and just how far women have advanced, this program has been building the case for change since 2008. We aim to develop more opinion pieces, white papers, and advocacy – and a national symposium in 2014 – with the input of nonprofit leaders. We welcome to the 74% family our newest sponsor Horovitz, Rudoy & Roteman, LLC, for their support.

We invite you to visit the 74% Web site to view results of the biennial Wage and Benefit Survey (conducted by Bayer and RMU in partnership with the United Way of Allegheny County since 2000), pay equity research as related to size of organization and gender of board leadership, and other illuminating data about women in the nonprofit workplace.

We invite you to provide your own perspectives and experiences as we tell this story – your story. As we continue to ask the hard, relevant questions and distill knowledge into action, we are engaging the power of 74% to do just that.

Visit 74% on the Web: <http://seventyfourpercent.wordpress.com/>

**74%: Exploring the Lives of Women Leaders in Nonprofit Organizations is made possible by the generous support of the Eden Hall Foundation and Bayer USA Foundation.**

# Telling 74% Stories



Learning from each other. That's a big part of the 74% Project. We aim to both learn from the data and respect the integrity of the data. But it's always important to the Bayer Center that we learn from each other and that respect people's experience as well as the numbers.

When Sally Helgeson visited, she taught us that trusting only numbers can wreak severe havoc when viewing the workplace. The 74% Project relies on a strong listening component and a very systematic effort to record and describe women's nonprofit employment experience. We say women are relational and that women value people. Women are listeners.

So, in the summer of 2009, I listened to 12 women – board and staff leaders representing each age range, from their 20s to 70s. This eclectic and fascinating set of conversations whetted my appetite.

Next, I conducted 21 more interviews with women from age 24 to 50 during the summer of 2011. Most were women in their 20s and 30s as we decided to focus on the lives of mid-career or younger nonprofit professionals. About half were the senior executive officer (perhaps titled executive director, CEO or president); about half had substantial staff positions, reporting to an executive director. They represent organizations ranging in size from a global corporation to a large 32 million dollar nonprofit to a new nonprofit with an annual budget of \$220,000. While salaries did not correlate to budget size, annual compensation ranged from \$36,000 a year to \$107,000 (for the two-thirds who disclosed their salaries).

Through 2012, we aim to meet with 70 more people, many of whom will be older – mid-career and beyond – to gain a deeper understanding of representative nonprofit career trajectories.

## The conversations

What did we most recently discuss? I asked these women about their career choices, who had influenced them, and how they had gotten to their current place. We discussed their families' influence and their education. They talked to me about the people and things that have helped and advanced them. And they told me what held them back.

When I asked a specific question about race and gender discrimination in the workplace, almost all of the women in their 20s and 30s said that while they had some sense of discrimination because of gender, they felt age discrimination most keenly. This genuine condescension towards

[continued >](#)

## The Gender Wage Gap Related to Education

Both women and men with less than a high school diploma have experienced a decline in inflation-adjusted earnings since 1979. Getting a degree continues to be critical to increasing lifetime earnings. Regardless of industry, women have to achieve a doctoral degree (lifetime earnings of \$2.86 million) in order to out-earn men with a Bachelor's degree (lifetime earnings of \$2.60 million).

Weekly earnings by gender	1979	2002	% change
Women: < high school	\$348	\$323	-7.2%
Men: < high school	\$578	\$421	-27.2%
Women: college degree	\$605	\$809	+33%
Men: college degree	\$908	\$1,089	+20%

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Earnings by educational attainment and sex, 1979 and 2002, October 2003.

# Telling 74% Stories continued

## The Big Picture: The U.S. Labor Market

### 1960s

Baby boomers enter the U.S. labor force in record numbers. 1.7 percent annual increase in the nation's collective work force.

### 1970s

More women go to work. 2.6 percent annual labor force increase.

### 1980s

A smaller cohort of new workers follow the boomers. Work force growth slows to 1.6 percent.

### 1990s

Labor force growth slows to 1.1 percent per year. Women's participation leveled off.

### 2000s

The economy's slow down in 2000 further curtails women's access to jobs.

Now, as baby boomers retire, this deceleration is projected to continue over the next five decades at about 0.6% per year.

younger women was a direct contradiction Pittsburgh's recent positioning of itself as a place mindful of talent retention. I was dismayed to hear so many young women feel that they are discounted and dismissed because they are young. And they told me that it's even worse if they are deemed attractive, that looking good "really means you don't have a brain in your head."

In addition, interviewees shared that people of color in this community are indeed challenged by being stereotyped – not just the African-Americans among us (although they certainly suffer in that regard), but also Asian and Hispanic people as well.

### "It chose me."

Questions about career choice and development are answered with a highly casual feeling. So when asked, "How did you choose to go to work in the nonprofit sector?" the response generally was, "It chose me." Sometimes a teacher had directed someone, sometimes the career step was happenstance. It is clear that the nonprofit sector is not well understood and human resources is often not well administered. Young people get hired but are not put into management training programs so valued in many for-profit professions. These entry-level staffers may lack mentors. Their serendipitous career paths are illusive and not understood.

People come for the cause; they come because they're compelled to. But how they may develop their career and feel valuable as young professionals is essential to whether they will stay, develop and grow.

### "I feel stuck."

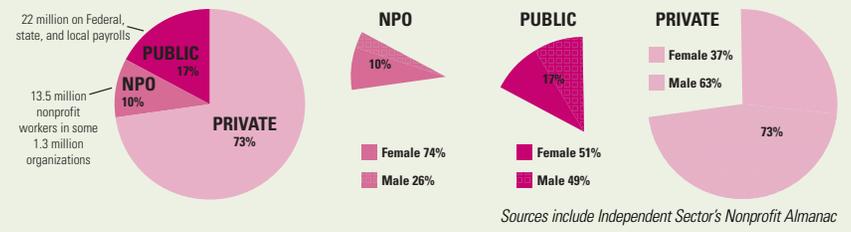
The historic career path for women in nonprofit has been to change organizations in order to advance. How can women who are not able to change organizations remain optimistic, engaged and adequately compensated?

Each of our interviewees has a lot of talent, drive, ambition and capacity. They are smart, capable, strong, effective people. But these professionals don't have a sense of optimism and opportunity around their own careers. The very things that make this world feel very uncertain to all of us – the economy, the 9% unemployment rate, the reductions in state funding for health and human service agencies – are keeping women in jobs longer than they might have stayed. They seek a sense of opportunity for career growth, even if it isn't a new job.

## US Workforce Sectors

The US nonprofit section has more than doubled in size in the past two decades. Between 1991 and 2010, the number of tax-exempt organizations increased from approximately 500,000 to more than 1.3 million, including private foundations, while not all Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) organizations are required to apply for recognition of tax exemption (including churches, integrated auxiliaries, subordinate units, and conventions or associations of churches).

**Total employees: 131.1 million; approx. 43% women**



Women in the baby boomer generation (ages 55-64) have lengthened their tenure in their jobs; now they stay on average about 10 years. It seems that only retirement because of age or infirmity may end their careers. While economy uncertainty continues, these nonprofit veterans are staying put. Thus, women in their 20s and 30s lack opportunity. The long tenure of the boomers is putting a cap on their organizations. Thus, nonprofits need to take this situation serious and provide ways for nonprofit employees to feel progress and optimism.

Our interviews revealed another theme. Many younger women shared the importance of their participation in some sort of leadership program, mentoring, or negotiation training. However, these skills seemed more applicable when changing jobs as negotiating on their own behalf in their own organization was challenging.

Entrenched behaviors inside organizations often reinforce throughout that a male as a board leader has more power, clout and value than female board leaders possess. As we believe the boards hold the key to solutions for very critical workplace concerns, my staff and I are watching this closely.

I listened to women talk about their children, parents, friends and family. The work/life balance issues that we hear repeatedly are still very alive and crucial in most everyone's negotiation with their own sense of worth and life. I also asked how they take care of themselves and what gives them joy. And, not surprisingly, they often don't take care of themselves.

What gives them joy is other people. This admission directs us full circle, back to what motivates many women in nonprofit – that this sector is relational and cares deeply about people and their lives, hopes, dreams and aspirations. The women I meet retain much energy about continued learning and professional development, along with great degree of uncertainty about their own career paths. It is my truly privilege to have these conversations. I hope that as we share factual information, you will hear the voices of these women who are living these facts every day.

*Peggy Morrison Outon*

Peggy Outon Morrison

# Interviewees

# Kitchen Cabinet Members

Interviews were held with 30 dynamic nonprofit leaders during 2011. Peggy Morrison Outon talked with each about their career and life journeys and the future of women in nonprofit management.

“It chose me. I didn’t choose it. I mean that I’ve never been a person who could simply read about problems. I had to jump in and try to solve them.”

“The end result of a nonprofit is the female-ness. It’s directly impacting a person one-on-one. The nursing, the education, the ‘let’s nurture the lives of these young girls.’ The kind of thing that draws me and other women more.”

“Anything outside the business and finance world doesn’t make any sense to my family, let alone ‘nonprofit.’ They still don’t get and understand what I do.”

“When I started off, it took me a lot of years to build up confidence. I felt like I was always being discriminated because of my age. You start thinking you are not capable.”

“My frustration comes, because if you have women that aren’t afraid to negotiate, aren’t afraid to ask and they STILL can’t make anything happen?”

“I’ve always had my heart in the nonprofit sector, so this was the right fit for me, at least as a first job in my career. Now that I’m here, what does that mean?”

**Heather Arnet**  
Executive Director,  
Women and Girls Foundation  
of SWPA

**Kenya Boswell**  
Charitable Giving Manager,  
Bank of New York Mellon

**Cherise Clark**  
Gift Shop Supervisor,  
Phipps Conservatory

**Yvonne Cook**  
Vice President for  
Community & Health Initiatives,  
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Leadership Pittsburgh, Inc.

**Linda Dickerson**  
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Natural Biodiversity

**Dara Ware Allen**  
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**Susan White**  
Consultant

Individually and collectively, Kitchen Cabinet Members will apply their community knowledge, professional expertise and stellar leadership to fuel the power of 74%.

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**Rebecca Lucore**  
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**Kimberly Hammer?**