

Social Entrepreneurship and the Donald McNeely Center for Entrepreneurship

The McNeely Center for Entrepreneurship offers its services and programs to the people interested in ventures addressing needs and opportunities in the market place and ventures that address unmet social and community needs. All center programs are designed to reach across sector lines to engage people with entrepreneurial spirit without regard to the resulting organizational structure, source of funds or use of the finances resulting from its success.

A social entrepreneur is someone who addresses a social problem or community need using entrepreneurial approaches to organize, create, and manage a venture that addresses the issue. While business entrepreneurs typically measure performance in financial terms, social entrepreneurs are driven by the vision of impact they have on community and society.

Those seeking to address an unmet social or community need are served with an additional set of unique resources. The Center Director, Terri Barreiro, brings a 30 year career of developing and funding services to meet unmet social and community needs in the Twin Cities. Her expertise is sought out by others in the region. She also regularly taps into the network of state and national experts in nonprofit operations and services strategies that she built over those years. In addition many of the alumni/ae of CSB/SJU are in leadership positions in the nonprofit sector, many of whom have committed to share their time and talents with students of our colleges. Center Mentors and Center volunteers include a number of people in leadership positions with extensive experience in the creating and leading nonprofit organizations.

Students with social entrepreneurial ideas are provided individual coaching and assistance in connecting to the best nonprofit leaders in their field of interest. In the past three years students have:

- Designed a student hospice program that would match summer traveling college students and retirees with underused college dorm spaces.
- Designed a dance education center for rural children needing activities to bring them away from their computers and into physical activity addressing obesity concerns.
- Experienced internships with health organizations, a consulting service to improve environmental friendly practices of businesses and nonprofits, and community based children's programs.
- Shadowed for a day or more, leaders of nonprofit organizations in St. Cloud and the Twin Cities.

For the last three years the Center has provided coaching support to emerging nonprofit organizations in the St Cloud Area. For example, Hands Across the World is a new organization started by Brianda Cediél who saw the great need of newly arriving refugees in the St. Cloud area. She set out to do something about it on her own and quickly discovered she needed added help. As volunteers appeared, donated space was obtained she suddenly found she was running an organization but lacked training and skills to ensure its success. Ms Cediél now uses the individual coaching services of the Center that include Board training, fundraising planning, volunteer management coaching and strategic planning. She also uses student teams provided through the colleges service learning office.

In the summer of 2007 the Central Minnesota Community Foundation asked Terri Barreiro to help design a new regional resource for new and emerging nonprofit organizations. She provided a complete business plan to them that includes the McNeely Center as a supporting partner. When fully implemented, the new regional resource will engage the students, faculty and alumni of these colleges in helping address the most pressing social and community issues.