

# **STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE RONDA COON WOMEN’S HOME**

In March of 2015 the Institute for Senior Professionals received a request from the Family Life Ministries Ronda Coon Women’s Home for “help with marketing strategies to help bring about community awareness, volunteer recruitment, financial soundness and brand.”

## **BACKGROUND**

Originally founded on a desire to raise the standard of the sanctity of human life by saving the unborn of homeless women and girls facing crisis pregnancies, the overseeing agency of Family Life Ministries of NW Florida, Inc. (FLM), a 501(c)(3) not-for profit organization was formed in 1986. A year later, the Ronda Coon Maternity Home in the City of Wright opened and housed their first residents. Although no longer currently part of the charter, FLM opened the SOZO Life Connection resource Center in 2005 to provide resident counseling centered on preserving life, family sanctity and promoting sexual integrity.

Amid culminating financial challenges in 2009, mainly centered on low demand for homeless maternity services and a substantial decline in fundraising income, the Ronda Coon Maternity Home suspended in-house resident operations. This said, the FLM continued to provide educational services such as community parenting classes.

Throughout the next few years, in an effort to solicit increased demand for services and fundraising, the FLM Board reassessed and revised the original charter and elected to expand focus from supporting only homeless expecting women to also include support to women in homeless situations. An age limit restriction of 18 years and older was also levied on in-house eligibility as those younger would be referred to pre-existing agencies within Bay County operating specifically for girls under the age of 18 years.

In 2011, the Covenant Community Church in the city of Ft Walton Beach offered FLM a building behind their church to reestablish the women’s home. Leasing the property for for one dollar a year, FLM proceeded to renovate the building and opened the Ronda Coon Women’s Home in 2012. The Home is a 2 story, 8 resident, 3,580 square foot building located at 1008 Gospel Road, Fort Walton Beach FL 32547.

The Ronda Coon Women’s Home currently invests in women's lives by providing Residency (homeless women and expecting mothers) with required attendance classes in Education, Life Skills, Discipleship, Pregnancy Support (adoption support and referrals if applicable), Budget Management and Confidence. The Home houses up to eight women at a time (currently, there are five residents)

along with a live-in resident manager. All women must pass a drug test, remain drug free and have no violent felonies or serious mental health issues. Each woman accepted has an Individual Success Plan drawn up as well as a Good Mentor or Big Sis. Women can stay for up to nine months while they look for a job and permanent housing. Even though women of any religious denomination are accepted, they are required to attend Bible study and a weekly religious service of their choice.

Meanwhile fundraising income remains low and there are not enough volunteers and staff. The identity is confused by the previous alignment with Family Life Ministries and the Covenant Community Church which hampers public awareness. The 5, soon to be 4, ladies who run the whole operation are well aware of the problems, so this study will concentrate on setting a strategic plan and providing recommendations on needed courses of action.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING FINDINGS**

This planning exercise was conducted with an organizational model created by Corporate Systems Design (CSD). The model breaks up the components of an organization into logical categories that can be addressed in isolation before combining with the others. The CSD model defines an organization's two major divisions as Focus and Alignment. Providing and maintaining Focus is an important first step in designing or redesigning organizations. It keeps all the stakeholders on the same path in executing the mission and achieving goals. Alignment refers to getting all the components of an organization optimized and coordinated with all the rest. Alignment divides the organization's daily efforts into six systems: Work Processes, Structure, Information, People, Reward, and Renewal. The ISP Ronda Coon team concentrated on Structure and Work Processes. Structure is the way job responsibilities are divided up and assigned to positions and is usually displayed as an organizational chart. Looking at the most important daily business from the perspective of "processes" is a powerful way to link responsibilities with outcomes.

### **I. Focus**

Senior leadership provides the focus in an organization. Focus is gained through full understanding of the mission and vision, guiding principles, high level strategy, and goals and objectives across the entire organization. Focus provides a direction and boundaries to the members and clients alike.

#### **A. Mission**

"Sustain and enrich homeless and/or pregnant women and their babies."

#### **B. Vision**

"Help transition to self-sufficiency by providing:

- Spiritual support
- Housing
- Life skills education"

## **C. High Level Strategy - a roadmap for the redesign of the organization**

### **1. Core skills - the main skills required in accomplishing the mission**

The organization will need the following listed in rough order of importance to be "in-house." Some of the skills may be found outside of the Home, but they should serve in the organization on a full or part time basis.

- Board of directors
- Overall program manager (Executive Director)
- Housing manager
- Funding and grant manager
- Food manager
- Case worker (experience in social work)
- Training and education manager
- Mentor
- Accountant/bookkeeper

### **2. Main Processes - important processes that will be executed in-house**

- Rebuilding lives program (Core Program)
- Housing
- Fund raising
- Administration
- Public relations
- Finance
- Food service
- Services

### **3. High level goal measures - ways to describe the success of the organization**

Successful organizations monitor how they are doing and measure their performance. An often repeated homily is "if we don't measure it, we can't improve it." Entry applications, records, and exit questionnaires should be set up to track the following measures:

- Percent of entries to the program that exit as self-sufficient women
- Percent of individual goals met as set at the beginning in each Individual Success Plan.
- Percent increase in applicants, donors, and volunteers (to measure community awareness)
- Spiritual growth measures

### **4. High level organizational structure - The responsibilities at each level**

A good starting point on structure is:

- Board of directors - strategic level policy, guidance, and oversight (including budget, fundraising, public relations)
- Executive Director - coordinates the day to day operation
- Working level – daily contact with the clients

#### **D. Goals - the first cut at what we want to do**

This is a living list. These goals should be reviewed periodically and modified, deleted, and added to. The idea is to boil it down to prioritized lists for the near, mid, and long term.

##### **1. Near Term Goals and their objectives:**

- Strengthen Board size and relevance
  - Commitment
  - Interest
  - Experience (fundraising, marketing, finance)
- Increase community awareness
  - Finish website
  - Get the new identity known everywhere
- Increase volunteers
  - Add office worker
  - Add Board members
  - Plan for a volunteer coordinator when warranted
- Establish fundraising plan
  - Pay off credit card debt
- Establish facilities, development, and maintenance plan
  - Repair building
  - Move telephone
  - Two new beds
  - Replace A/C compressor
- Prioritize current mission elements and goals since current fiscal income will not cover them all.

##### **2. Mid/Long Term Goals:**

- Provide Day Care for the clients
- Find better paying jobs
- Keep babies longer
- Provide individual rooms
- New facility
- Hire working staff
- Establish a lucrative cottage industry

## **E. Guiding Principles - define the clients to be accepted into the program and the expectations of their behavior and commitment**

It will be relevant to the application process and be used in the entrance process.

- Drug/Alcohol free (testing required)
- Commitment to the program
- Subject to background check
- Nine months maximum
- Smoke free campus
- Maintain reasonable hygiene standards
- Dress modestly
- Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated
- Held accountable
- Attend Bible study
- Attend weekly church service

## **II. Alignment of the Internal Workings of the Organization**

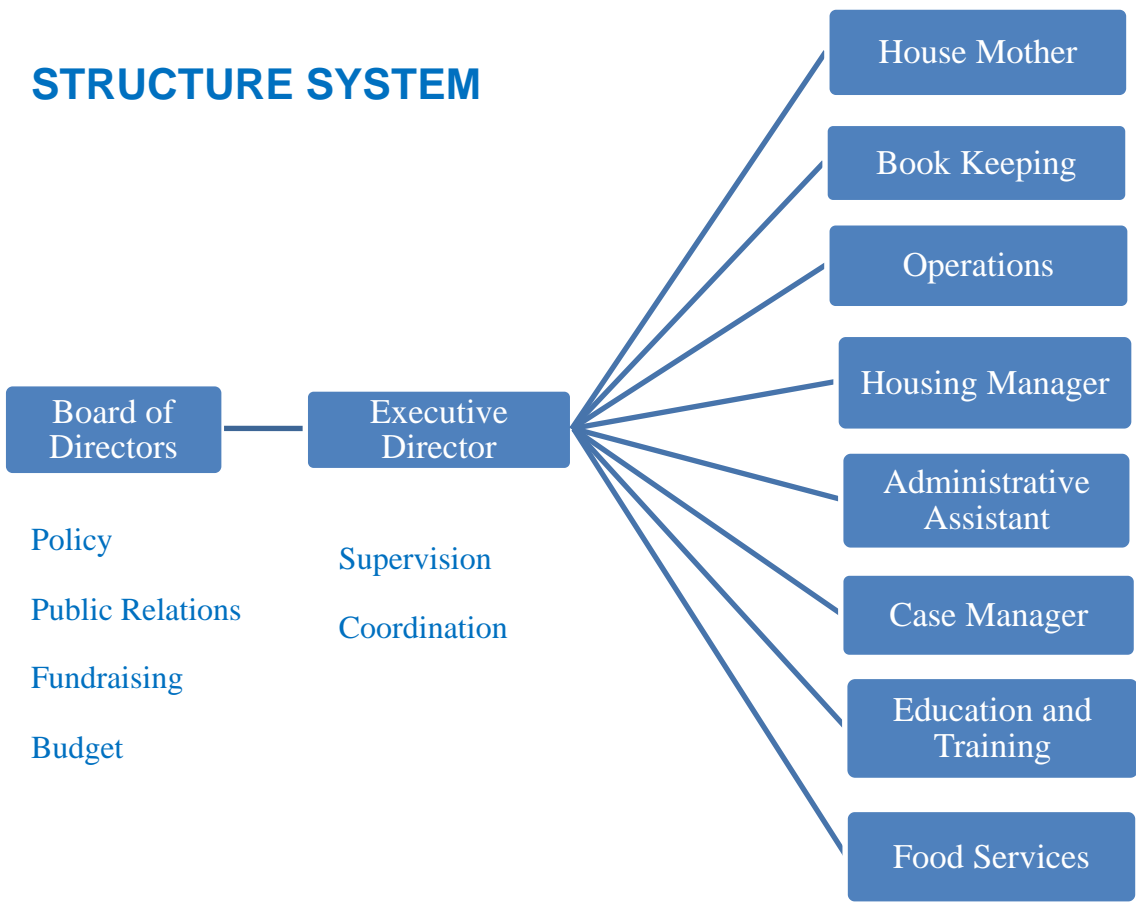
Our organizational model divides the internal workings of an organization into six systems: Work Processes, Structure (responsibilities), Information, People, Reward, and Renewal. In the time available the planning team was able to define the two more important Work Processes and lay out the Structure. The Information, People, Reward, and Renewal systems remain to be addressed by the Board when the time is appropriate.

### **A. Structure System - describes how the organization's positions and responsibilities are laid out**

When the positions are aligned with work processes the actual responsibilities become easier to see. The goal would be to have an individual responsible for each work process. Initially processes will have to be distributed among the staff available, but responsibility for the steps in a process should not be divided if at all possible. The organizational chart will show what positions are supervised by whom. Job descriptions for each process will describe the responsibilities and authorities delegated to it. It is useful to have job descriptions on file for each position including Board members.

The planning team determined that the positions responsible for fund raising, public relations, and budget will report directly to the Board and free up the Executive Director to run the daily operation. These board positions will have to coordinate closely with the Executive Director, but the ED will not have to supervise them. The remaining positions fall under the Executive Director to support the primary mission. Initially, the Executive Director may have to perform a lot of these tasks. As more workers become available, these positions can be filled and take the pressure off the ED.

The structure is illustrated below in a horizontal format to emphasize some important concepts about leadership, supervision, and responsibility/authority. If the mission of Ronda Coon Women’s home is to provide shelter for our residents, and teach them the building blocks that will prepare them to become productive members of society then the most critical positions on the chart are those that make daily contact with the residents. The ones who provide the shelter and teach the building blocks. The Executive Director provides the coordination of resources, guidance, training and recognition that supports the workers who are helping the residents every day. The Board provides the policy and the resources to the Executive Director. No one is above any other in importance to the mission because all are necessary for its success. Additionally, residents who are treated as equals will respond better than those who are talked down to.



**B. Work System - This system is comprised of the work processes and the equipment required (furniture, classrooms, etc.)**

Work Processes have inputs and outputs. The steps in processes are meaningful, chronological, and have rationale for spending the time. It is useful to have a single person/position responsible for each process and process team. The best organizations measure process results and have periodic process reviews to see if changes are necessary and warranted.

The planning team listed the main processes and addressed the Structure System with a suggested organizational chart. It is useful to link the processes with positions on the chart. At some point it will be useful to analyze the remaining processes and define their steps.

**1. Core process – Rebuilding Lives (Executive Director)**

Input - potential client                      Output - self-sufficient citizen

Steps

1. Screen - use guiding principles
2. Background check
3. Assign case worker
4. Build Individual Success Plan tailored to client
5. Approve entry into program
6. Execute tailored plan
7. Monitor progress
8. Exit program - complete questionnaire

Equipment and furniture

- One office
- Filing
- Computer/printer

**2. Housing process (Executive Director)**

Input – Building/resources                      Output – Comfortable, healthful living space that supports the mission

Steps

1. Determine the housing requirements
2. Set up required living spaces
3. Monitor building
  - a. Routine and emergency maintenance
  - b. Inspect periodically for upkeep and hygiene
4. Seek feedback on success of the process (interview/questionnaire)

Equipment and furniture

- Apartment Building
- Appropriate furnishings

### **3. Fund raising process (Board)**

Input - budget needs                      Output - funds

Steps

1. Identify sources/activities
2. Prioritize
3. Plan
4. Execute plan
5. Review results for improvements

### **4. Public Relations process (Board)**

Input - focus items (Ronda Coon story)                      Output - public awareness

Steps

1. Establish Brand
2. Identify promoter
3. Build plan of attack
4. Prepare presentation/literature
5. Execute Plan
6. Review results - improve process

### **5. Other processes (Executive Director)**

- Finance
- Services
- Administration
- Mentorship
- Food service

## **C. Information System - communicate, assess progress, and improve results**

The information system is the hardware and software that is used in the conduct of daily operations. It should support the mission and all the other organizational systems by providing for the smooth transfer of information up, down, and laterally. The system should also keep a history on the conduct and results of the organization overall and each process. Regular backup of the data is essential.



Initially most internal and external communications can be accomplished by e-mail. The software directed by the HUD and Florida Department of Children and Families is the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Consider acquiring the system and getting the training. It will improve record keeping at a minimum and in all indications aid in the daily operations supporting the homeless. The HMIS and training is provided by the Continuum of Care/Opportunity Inc.

#### **D. People System**

How do we find people to work in our organization? How do we identify, attract, hire, orient, train, keep happy, and let go? At some point it will be useful to develop a policy and plan for this system. The Board President and Executive Director can provide important inputs to the formulation of this policy and plan.

#### **E. Rewards System**

The rewards system addresses how we compensate our people and how we recognize superior performance. For our purposes the senior leadership should address what positions should be compensated, how much, and whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic compensation.

Primarily, volunteer organizations need to recognize good effort as well as good work. Human beings need to feel that their work is appreciated. Positive feedback given when extra effort is seen can go a long way.

#### **F. Renewal System**

The renewal system is aimed at preventing stagnation, encouraging continuous improvement, and recognizing the need for dramatic redesign. The intent is to measure the important processes and goal accomplishments. It is critical to have measureable data to support analysis and necessary changes in the operation's processes.

The recommendation is to conduct periodic review of the key operational results and to review the strategic plan at least annually to confirm that the "Focus" is clear, and the organizational systems are productive and aligned.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS**

Create a sense of urgency! The Ronda Coon Women's Home cannot continue unless the new identity is widely publicized, the Board is seriously strengthened, and expanded public awareness leads to increased fundraising.

#### **A. Focus (Set yourself apart)**

- Change the Organization’s official name to Ronda Coon Women’s Home, Inc. All branding, marketing, community engagement and fundraising events should reflect this name change. The anchor is “Ronda Coon Women’s Home.” For clarity, articulate the connection with the Covenant Community Church and Family Life Ministries.
- Design a new branding logo/image to reflect the name change and market the design. (Samples provided).
- Formally register the new name in both the federal and state 501(c)(3) registries. Change from Family Life Center of NW FL Inc. to Ronda Coon Women’s Home, Inc.
- Update/standardize orientation pamphlets, brochures, job application forms, training programs, By-Laws, website, social media venues, e-mail addresses, and Board of Director orientation brief. Reflect the new name, branding, mission, vision and operational focus. Remove all references to SOZO Life Connection Resource Center.
- Identify the organization by placing a large sign (with new logo) on Lewis Turner. Let the public know who and where you are. This opens the potential for no-notice donations of gifts and/or personal items for the clients.
- Become an official Stakeholder within the Okaloosa Homeless Continuum of Care and Opportunity, Inc. Change the Continuum’s website to reflect Ronda Coon Women’s Home vice Family Life Ministries Pregnancy Shelter. Educate the Continuum that clients “do pay” for services rendered. They so do with mandated personal service time to the Home.
- Immediately change organization policy and receive available federal/state/county fees for the educational classes being taught by the organization. The funds serve a purpose for services rendered, as such, use them. Extensively market the educational programs offered that relate directly to the mission. If you don’t charge for it, people will believe it has no value.

## **B. Strengthen Board Membership**

- Board membership must be revitalized and expanded to include not only a cadre of concerned citizens with varied skills and contacts, but with those willing to actively devote time to and participate in fundraising, marketing, community engagement, policy and budget oversight.
- Other useful Board member skill sets would include: banker, attorney, accountant, grant writer, educator, pediatrician, law enforcement officer, food store manager, and clergy.
- Assign each Board member specific responsibilities and get them training in their duties. Place the Board treasurer, the finance position, fundraiser, and marketer directly under the Board’s jurisdiction to take advantage of volunteerism and take pressure off the Executive Director.

- Implement a training plan for full-time/part-time employees and volunteers. Explore available classes/opportunities provided by the Northwest Florida State College, Costa Leadership Institute.
- Clear, well defined job descriptions should be readily assessable to employees and volunteers and used for evaluation. In particular the Executive Director, Case Manager, Administrator, and House Manager. Additionally, consider marketing, finance, special events coordinator, and grant writer.

### **C. Expand Public Awareness and Increase Fundraising**

- Explore/plan/open a cottage industry in a visible location that will raise money, provide benefit for clients, and provide a venue to attract volunteers.
- The Board must step up their responsibility for developing and executing a coordinated and enduring PR and fundraising strategy/campaign. The level of effort to sponsor an event should be worth the payoff. Consider partnering with other likeminded non-profits.
- During fundraising initiatives, put a face on the clients being served. Couch resources needed in terms of client needs rather than things.
- Develop a resource list of media outlets including but not limited to print media, broadcast media, and special interest publications.
- Establish a process including a timeline for getting the words out, e.g. monthly press releases and media contacts for covering special events.
- Prepare “stock” stories/pictures ready for press releases including success stories, descriptions of progress made, and special needs.

### **D. Develop a Realistic Budget and Set a Fundraising Target**

- The Board and Executive Director produce a realistic short-term and a long-term financial plans geared toward solvency of the organization. As a minimum, establish the level of fiscal resources that must be generated from fundraising, grants, and other sources to sustain operations.
- Prioritize current mission elements and goals since current fiscal income will not cover them all. Goals must have identifiable outcomes and must be measurable.
- Establish a grant writing committee to research and pursue local, state and federal grant opportunities. Write a grant template and flood the market with grant submissions. Nominally, for every ten submitted requests, one may bear results. Set targeted fiscal goals and measure the success rate.

- The Board should review this strategic plan at least annually to confirm that the “focus” is clear and the organizational systems are productive and aligned.

## **Conclusion**

The ISP team members would like to thank the Ronda Coon Women’s Home Board and staff members for their excellent cooperation. Finally, the ISP team would like to comment on the extraordinary dedication displayed by everyone with whom we met. We wish them the best as they move forward to continue to provide Christian-based services to the community.