



GEORGIA CENTER  
for NONPROFITS

*Nonprofit Solutions At Work*

## Connecting Leaders to Leaders

The Georgia Center for Nonprofits (GCN) works with community leaders from all sectors (government, corporate, foundation, nonprofit) to promote the work and worth of the nonprofit sector. It is just one way that we serve, strengthen and support the nonprofit sector.

In Georgia, we are fortunate to have one of the most active and philanthropically minded corporate sectors in the country. From matching corporate partners and executives to nonprofit boards, crafting philanthropic strategies, designing events, producing research about the sector, identifying and linking project partners, and through many other activities, GCN connects amazing causes to amazingly philanthropic companies.

### **The Home Depot Connects its Values to Action: Building Community**

The Home Depot has a long history of philanthropic leadership across the U.S. and throughout the world. In 2006 its leadership formulated a strategy to increase at an even higher level, the company's support of nonprofit leadership in the metro Atlanta area. Working with executives at the Georgia Center for Nonprofits, a strategy was designed to connect The Home Depot Foundation with some of Atlanta's most effective nonprofit organizations, focused on building communities through innovative programs and collaborative partnerships that fall outside of the Foundation's usual areas of giving. The effort, called *Building Community Day*, focuses on supporting and convening top tier leaders in nonprofits to learn and build new networks. For a company with legions of their own employees serving on boards and volunteering in causes around the city, the effort is a perfect marriage of its core values and action orientation.

*"We are delighted to support and celebrate nonprofits in our hometown that have a long-standing commitment to making Atlanta a healthier and more sustainable*

*city where families can thrive,” said Kelly Caffarelli, President, The Home Depot Foundation. “All of our partners deserve enormous credit for the work they are doing, particularly in these difficult economic times, and we are glad to be part of their efforts.”*

## **Building a Legacy of Impact through New Concepts and New Networks**

Since the first Building Community Day program, 80 nonprofits have been involved in an expanded series of events combining leadership awards, content filled leadership symposiums, cross sector networking events, and presentations on topical issues challenging our combined interests. The top leadership of the company including the CEO, senior staff and foundation executives and board attends these events.

*“We wanted these peer learning opportunities to be powerful networking opportunities, but also to provide advanced tools and concepts useful to leaders in their roles as CEO’s; to us building leadership is the core of building community. “ noted Karen Beavor, President & CEO, Georgia Center for Nonprofits. “It establishes a lasting legacy – a strong foundation for our community’s future.”*

### **New Concepts**

In 2009, the Building Community Day event featured a special learning opportunity designed by the Georgia Center for Nonprofits. Through leading examples, best practices and peer conversations, Udaiyan Jatar, CEO, Blue Earth Network, explored with the group the topic of social innovation and helped participants to identify ways their organization can institute innovative approaches to achieve social change. [Click here to view U.J.’s presentation.](#) In the spirit of innovation, three virtual presenters joined Building Community Day via video presentations that explored innovation from the programs, process and systems perspective. To view those videos, follow these links:

- [Video 1 – Reasons to reinvent the Syringe](#)
- [Video 2: Let my Dataset change your Mindset](#)
- [Video 3: Birth of Wikipedia](#)

In advance of Building Community Day, attendees were provided with materials to frame the conversation and help them begin to think about the process of leading innovation; seeing innovation opportunities in small everyday processes and approaches, and considering large-scale disruptive change opportunities within reach.

## **New Networks**

When Marilyn Midyette, CEO, Girls Scouts of Greater Atlanta, first joined the organization, it was a time of tremendous change. With a new mission “to build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place” and an expanded vision “to be known as the premiere leadership development organization for girls and young women” she certainly had her work cut out for her as the organization sought to rebrand itself and roll out new programs.

*“We have historically been known for cookies and camping. While these traditions will always be part of our identity, we know we must be much more in order to remain relevant and resonate with today’s girls. Most people don’t realize that we have over 300 programs for girls from forensic science to financial literacy to aeronautics and robotics.” Said Marilyn Midyette, CEO, Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta.*

Knowing that the Girl Scouts work was intertwined with that of many others, and realizing that communicating these changes to peers, partners and supporters was an important element to ensuring success, Midyette, sought ways to expand her network, connect with community, and share best practices; The Home Depot noticed.

In November 2009, the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta was selected to receive, The Home Depot Foundation’s, Building Community Day Award. As a recipient of this award and a participant in the Building Community Day program, Marilyn was not only able to connect with an unlikely corporate partner, but also provided with an opportunity to share best practices and network with dozens of other nonprofit executives.

*“I am enormously grateful for the chance to participate in the Building Community Day event as well as the opportunity to benefit from the Georgia Center for Nonprofits guidance. The opportunity to connect, leader-to-leader, is essential to our goals and effort to develop girls into the strong civic and business leaders we know they can be.” Noted Marilyn Midyette, CEO, Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta.*

## **Connecting the Dots – Values – Strategy - Action – Impact**

At GCN we love a great strategy. Unifying The Home Depot’s love of Atlanta, its legacy of leadership, its action approach to service, and its true heartfelt belief that nonprofits are essential to building a great community, is the magic in this program. Issues change, causes shift and morph, revenues ebb and flow, politics

happen, but when leaders support and build exponentially more leadership – we have the core magic that can work through anything, build anything, and ultimately, transform anything.

The core of the word community is unity. The Home Depot knows and GCN knows, that a unified approach to our community's issues and challenges is the only way to Build Community.

### **GCN resources to help you stay connected:**

- [\*\*Atlanta Nonprofit Professionals\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Georgia Nonprofit Summit\*\*](#)
- [\*\*GCN's Online Community\*\*](#)
- [\*\*GCN's LinkedIn Group\*\*](#)

### **Additional Resources**

- [\*\*\*Corporate Social Responsibility in a Downturn\*\*\*](#)
- [\*\*\*Pumping up your Professional Network: Using Online Social Networking Tools Effectively\*\*\*](#)