

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

Businesses Help Program Step Up Its Efforts to Assist Nonprofits

PHILANTHROPY: Group Aims to Coordinate And Promote Worthy Causes

■ By MARTY GRAHAM

With donations from **Eset North America** and Mission Federal Credit Union, a program designed to promote nonprofits and their supporters is set to launch April 1.

“Our community needs one hub for people and organizations where they can discover links and critical information they need to make good choices on the nonprofits they choose to support, as well as a place for nonprofits to find best practices and access to new resources quickly and conveniently,” said **Parker Pike**, a UC San Diego marketing guru. “Nobody is promoting the sector itself — that’s what we do.”



Parker Pike

Pike teamed with **Anne Bolzoni**, executive director of the program — called Step Up San Diego — to bring UCSD resources to the table, including building the program’s Web site.

The idea for the program came from a series of focus groups with major local donors, including **Sempre Energy**, **Jack in the Box Inc.**, **Qualcomm Inc.** and Mission Federal, to find out what company donors think would improve the process of selecting nonprofits, maintaining relationships and making the most of their donations

STEP UP SAN DIEGO

Executive director: Anne Bolzoni.

Funding: \$135,000 plus pro bono donations of time.

Headquarters: Kearny Mesa office of Sandan.

Date: Scheduled to launch April 1.

Mission of organization: To have a central place for gathering information and resources for nonprofits, sponsors and media partners to promote nonprofits.

Step Up has formed partnerships with seven media outlets to be able to leverage advertising at a far lower rate, enabling nonprofits and their donors to tell the stories of the good they’ve done in the community.

— for the charities and donors.

“Companies want recognition for the good they do — and not just for marketing and image purposes,” Pike said. “The employees want to know their companies are actively doing good in the world and that they’re making good choices — especially younger employees. Checkbook philanthropy doesn’t sustain the relationships over time.”

7 Media Partners

To that end, Step Up has formed partnerships with seven media outlets to be able to leverage advertising at a far lower rate, enabling nonprofits and their donors to tell the stories of the good they’ve done in the community.

Step Up’s media partners are KPBS, XLTN – 104.5FM Radio Latina, the **San Diego Business Journal**, **Cox Communications Inc.**, **Time Warner Cable Inc.**, **McGraw-Hill Broadcasting Co.’s** 10 News and **CBS Radio Inc.’s** KYXY.

The launch includes the group’s third advertising effort, a television spot about Mission Federal’s support for Abraxas High School in Poway, a continuation school that focuses on students who need a more flexible and intimate program to be able to complete high school.

With \$75,000 from Eset, a global security software company with its U.S. headquarters in downtown San Diego, and \$50,000 from Mission Federal Credit Union, Step Up has been recruiting partners to help promote nonprofits and their donors. It also has been compiling — and vetting for value — links to existing groups and opportunities so people can find information in one place.

“We want to build confidence in the nonprofit sector by providing resources for nonprofits and donors, and by creating a greater sense of collaboration and partnership among the nonprofits and the donors,

existing and potential,” Pike said.

Step Up is also marshalling resources for potential donors, including access to far more financial information on the nonprofits, such as their tax returns, through a well-respected charity monitoring Web site, Guidestar.org.

Strengthening Organizations

Sandan, aka the San Diego Association of Nonprofits, plans to work with nonprofits to create customized marketing initiatives that will help promote their projects and attract new investment, according to Bolzoni, who also is executive director of Sandan.

“We promote volunteerism,” Pike said. “We promote and then we connect volunteers to Volunteer San Diego, an excellent group that has been doing great work for years.”

Pike said Step Up also plans to link nonprofits with training and resources to help them become stronger organizations.

“We want to build confidence in the sector by helping nonprofits reduce their administrative costs, be more transparent for donors, and increasing their skills at the business of being a nonprofit,” Pike said.

Pike and Bolzoni have developed a self-assessment tool for nonprofits that they plan to offer through the Web site at StepUpSanDiego.org.

“They can see where they are strong and where they need help and then click through to the resources — school, training, programs — to help them build their strengths,” Pike said. “Right now, there is no local, central connection point for the great training and information that’s out there. We think that this tool may help us identify areas where nonprofits as a group need help and we can help develop more resources in those areas.”

Marty Graham is a freelance writer for the San Diego Business Journal.