



# Community Foundation E-Newsletter September 2009

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Read about how awareness and perception are two key metrics for your foundation to measure.

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## Words of Wisdom

## Awareness vs. Perception



*"What does the community know about our foundation?" I'm sure this question has come up in past discussions among your staff and board members when thinking about your communication strategies or donors. If you haven't already researched the answer to this question, it's time to find out what exactly the community thinks and knows about your foundation.*

Frequently, foundations come to our market research firm with this question and in most cases, the executive director

will tell us their foundation is well-known in the community, but people still don't seem to understand what they do. What the community foundations don't realize is that they are trying to discover the fundamental difference between awareness and perception.

### Awareness

Awareness can be defined as the number of people who have heard of your foundation. Very few foundations have high levels of awareness, such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation or the Ford Foundation. Smaller community foundations may be lucky to have awareness approaching 20 percent.

### Perception

Perception is the number of people who have not only heard of your foundation, but can also describe your foundation. However, not all perception is good. There may be people who describe your

"It is easy to get to the top after you get through the crowd at the bottom."

- Zig Ziglar

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## Request a Community Foundation CD-ROM



A resource developed specifically for community foundations. The CD-ROM includes information about Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc.: who we are and what we do. Request a copy of our community foundation CD-ROM by e-mailing [info@perspec.com](mailto:info@perspec.com) or call (800) 724-9994 to see how Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc. can help your community foundation.

foundation in less than glowing terms, or describe your foundation in ways that are inaccurate. Especially for local community foundations, it is not uncommon for our market research firm to find two out of three people with no perception of the foundation, and one in five people with a negative perception of the foundation.

### Awareness vs. Perception

Having great awareness is not as valuable to a community foundation as having great perception, since only those people with a positive perception of the foundation will be donating. Awareness alone will not bring dollars in the door. Perspectives' research has helped foundations determine if they should be working to increase awareness because they already have good perception in the community, or if they should be working to cultivate perception because many people have no idea what their foundation does or who it serves.

Increasing awareness or developing a positive perception of your foundation is critical to your long-term success. The process starts with evaluating your current awareness and perception in the community.

At Perspectives Consulting Group, we traditionally assess awareness and perception for community foundations by conducting a random-sample survey of community members in the service area of the foundation. In a few short months, we can understand your awareness and perception in the community and get your foundation headed for success.

For more information on how Perspectives Consulting Group can help your community foundation discover your awareness and perception in the community, contact us at 1-800-724-9994 or visit our Web site at [www.perspec.com](http://www.perspec.com).

## Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan to Receive \$5,000 in Research Assistance



Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan will receive \$5,000 in market research services as the recipient of the 2009 Nonprofit Research Assistance Program offered by Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc. The program, in its fifth year, provides valuable information to a nonprofit organization that positively impacts the community.

"We are very excited about the opportunity to work with Perspectives

Consulting Group, Inc. on our important mission of promoting opportunities for children with disabilities and special needs to fully participate in society through the support and education of families and communities," said Candi Bush, Executive Director at Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan.

Founded in 1998 and incorporated in 2004, Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan is a nonprofit organization that serves families who have children with disabilities or special needs throughout all of Southwest Michigan. Since their inception, they have assisted over 4,000 families through mentor support, referrals, information, recreation opportunities, a bi-monthly newsletter, parent network meetings and social events.

"We had an overwhelming response to the program this year," said Kasey Sylvester, Director of Client Relations at Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc. "With such a high number of applicants, it definitely made the decision difficult. While every nonprofit organization that applied was deserving of the research assistance, we feel confident about our decision to help Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan. Not only will the research benefit their organization, but it will benefit local families as well."

Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan will be working with Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc. on research to evaluate the efficacy of their current programs and services and to find out what other programs and/or services they could offer to better support families. Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan hopes to use the information gained from the research to apply for funding to implement requested programs and/or services.

To learn more about Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan, visit [www.p2pswmi.org](http://www.p2pswmi.org). For more information on the Nonprofit Research Assistance Program, visit [www.perspec.com](http://www.perspec.com).

### About Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc.

We are dedicated to our mission of providing information and planning that make the difference to community foundations. We use state-of-the-art market research techniques including telephone and mail surveys, interviews, and focus groups to obtain the necessary information to make effective decisions to plan for the future. We would be pleased to share our experiences working with other community foundations and discuss how we can help yours make informed decisions and plan for continued success.

Sincerely,



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