

CASE STUDY OF
**Boulder County CareConnect
and Social Venture Partners
Boulder County**





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INVESTEE NAME: Boulder County CareConnect

FOCUS AREA: Aging and Seniors

CONSULTING HOURS: 1,481

CASH GRANTS: \$59,000

CONTACT INFO: 303.443.1933; www.careconnectbc.org



INVESTEE PROFILE

MISSION

Boulder County CareConnect (BCCC) promotes the security, comfort and independence of seniors and adults with disabilities while also offering volunteer-powered programs.

HISTORY

In response to a growing trend to meet the needs of aging populations in the United States, Congress created a national community service organization known as the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in 1969. RSVP became operational in 1971 and within the years 1972 to 1974, RSVP-affiliated programs spawned around the nation—including Boulder County. Each was planned, organized and operated on the local level with only one RSVP affiliate permitted in a community service area. Thus, Boulder County CareConnect began in its earliest incarnation as a small, three staff-member organization known as the Boulder County RSVP Board Inc. in 1972.

In the 43 years since its inception, Boulder County CareConnect has supported thousands of low-income seniors and adults with disabilities

in maintaining their independence. BCCC's unique programs and services help seniors and adults with disabilities avoid isolation and early institutionalization by offering safety-net services through several programs, as well as matching over-55 volunteers with clients in the community. The organization became an independent 501(c)(3) in 1978, and changed its name to Boulder County CareConnect in 2008. RSVP has also evolved: when the Corporation for National and Community Service was formed by then-president Bill Clinton in 1993, RSVP became housed under the umbrella SeniorCorps. Today, RSVP is America's largest volunteer network for people age 55 and over, with BCCC still serving as Boulder Valley's RSVP station.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

According to its most recent (2014) evaluation,

- 96% of program participants surveyed (86) stated that overall they feel satisfied with the services they receive from BCCC.
- 77% of program participants surveyed (67) stated that because of BCCC, they feel more secure in their home.

- 86% of program participants surveyed (74) stated that because of BCCC, they feel more independent.
- 69% of program participants surveyed (27) stated that if BCCC could not provide services to them, they would not have someone else they could rely on to provide the same service.

MAJOR PROGRAMS

In 2014, 1,114 BCCC volunteers invested 44,000 hours of time serving 1,520 clients in the Boulder Valley. Major programs include:

- **Carry-Out Caravan:** Volunteers take orders, shop for, and deliver groceries to the homebound and those who can't shop themselves.
- **Fix-It Home Repairs:** Skilled volunteers perform minor home repairs including grab installation, wheel chair and walker repair, fire alarm installation, and more to help seniors stay safe in their homes.
- **IceBusters:** Volunteers shovel snow all winter to help seniors comply with municipal regulations and reduce their risk of falling.
- **Medical Mobility:** Volunteers use their own vehicles to provide escorted transportation to and from medical appointments for those who can't get there themselves.
- **YardBusters:** Volunteers perform basic yard maintenance to help seniors comply with municipal regulations and reduce their risk of falling.
- **Retired Senior Volunteer Program:** In addition to safety net services, Boulder County CareConnect is also the RSVP station in Boulder County. In 2014, BCCC matched older adult volunteers with 42 nonprofit organizations throughout the county.
- **File of Life:** Provides a magnetized emergency health information sheet that quickens the emergency responder's ability to gather essential medical information

RATIONALE FOR SVP INVESTMENT

SVP originally invested in Boulder County CareConnect because the organization:

- provided a wide range of outstanding services to a large population in need and saved the community millions of dollars in the process,
- had strong staff and board leadership in whom SVP believed,
- had leadership that understood SVP and had a clear vision of how to engage Partners,
- was enduring a major transition point,
- offered an opportunity to scale to other communities within Boulder County,
- offered a relationship with a big leverage point for SVP, and
- was an excellent fit with one of the focus areas at the time—aging & seniors.

In addition, while risks were present, they were considered very acceptable.

KEY SVP IMPACT

- Conducted assessment of major programs to improve efficiencies
- Improved Medical Mobility and Neon databases to serve additional programs
- Replaced AmeriCorps VISTA positions with paid staff and skilled volunteers
- Analyzed and implemented improved marketing plan
- Created a new marketing video
- Conducted needs assessment to help steer BCCC's future planning and growth

SVP PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED

Wendy Bolger	Marketing/communications
Bruce Borowsky	Videography
Caryn Capriccioso	Needs assessment; social enterprise
Patti Cummings	Program assessment
Emily Davis	Board development
Michael Donovan	Fund development
David Gross	Program development & evaluation
Jodi Grossman	Human resources
Brian Hawkins	Fund development
Kyle Kuczun	Social enterprise
Deborah Malden	Program assessment
Amy Maranowicz	Human resources
Sarah Maranowicz	Fund development
Jeanette Marquess	Marketing/communications
Lon McGowan	Program assessment
Walt Pounds	Human resources
Tim Rohrer	IT
Amy Rosenblum	Fund development
Shannon Sackmann	Fund development
Peter Spear	Lead partner
Stephanie Wilson	Change management
David Wilson	Marketing/communications



In the 43 years since its inception, Boulder County CareConnect has supported thousands of low-income seniors and adults with disabilities in maintaining their independence.

Flood, Fire and Fluidity: A Case Study of Boulder County CareConnect and Social Venture Partners Boulder County

By Erin Shaver, for SVP Boulder County

INTRODUCTION

The three-year (2012–2015) partnership between Boulder County CareConnect (BCCC) and Social Venture Partners (SVP) Boulder County endured some challenges that were, arguably, as hard or harder than any SVP partnership has faced. These unanticipated and unprecedented changes included three executive directors in as many years, numerous physical locations, and multiple natural disasters—including the destruction of its facility from the cataclysmic “100-Year-Flood” that ravaged Colorado in 2013. Through all of this, the partnership evolved and SVP ended up becoming much more than a funder—essentially serving as one of BCCC’s first responders in a time of crisis. While the work didn’t go exactly as planned each step of the way, SVP and BCCC worked past the adversity to help BCCC turn the corner into a new and exciting chapter.

BACKGROUND

At the commencement of the SVP partnership, BCCC had been successfully serving Boulder elders through its safety-net services and volunteer match program since the 1970s. Yet the nonprofit was hitting a transformation period that necessitated change and evolution on its part to continue to thrive. Boulder County’s senior population was growing—and growing faster than in any part of Colorado, according to the Boulder County Aging Services Area Plan in 2011.¹ In trying to keep up with the new trends, explains then-BCCC Executive Director Emily Ditty, the organization was thinking

big and “in the middle of a huge growth phase” when the partnership began. “We had probably increased size and staff by 25 to 30 percent,” recalls Ditty. “We knew we still had a long way to go [to meet the growing needs]. So at that point we were looking for resources, period.”²

For SVP, the time was ripe to take a hard look at aging issues. SVP had gone through several cycles without having a topic of interest on aging, and with stats pointing toward a rapidly growing senior population in Boulder in the years to come, the time had come to make it a priority. So when the 2012 grant cycle rolled around and Aging and Seniors was an SVP Focus Area, it was a perfect match for BCCC.

“I had heard a lot about Social Venture Partners many years before we became an investee,” recalls Ditty, who admits she had been “kind of watching and waiting “for aging to become an SVP Focus Area. At that point, she was not yet the executive director of BCCC (she was director of development):

I remember going to a very early meeting and aging was discussed. It was an open format so people also got to talk about their own challenges. They wanted to hear from people in the community—I really appreciated that. I felt there was a real desire to support advocacy in the community. I learned quickly [if we were selected] this would be a very different kind of partnership.²

Ditty and other leaders at the time sold SVP on their readiness to dig deep and allocate the energy and

resources necessary to go through the SVP process and come out stronger on the other side. “We very much liked their mission—what it is they were trying to become,” recalls Lead Partner Peter Spear, who was on the committee that selected BCCC. “Also the ED at that time [Ditty] was and is a real ball of fire. She was energetic with lots of ideas, and clearly was ready for the help that SVP could provide, was open to change, and her board chair at the time felt the same way.”³

While funding was the initial attractor, Ditty says one of the most refreshing aspects about going through the application process was realizing that SVP is fine with nonprofits airing their dirty laundry, so to speak. Most funders, she says, don’t give nonprofits the impression it’s OK to reveal their weaknesses. With SVP, she says, it was a very different experience:

Cash was a great way to dip our toe in. After getting more in depth, I realized what actually would be of more value was the time investment of the Partners—I mean these are really high skill level volunteers. And the other part was having a Partner that wanted us to reveal our darker side, if you will. That was a very different funder relationship than what I was used to. Most funders when they see weakness, they tend to retract. SVP was more the opposite; instead of retracting it was an expansion.²

SUMMARY OF CAPACITY BUILDING ACHIEVEMENTS

DATABASE EFFICIENCIES/TECHNOLOGY

- Assess program procedures, processes and data collection methods to improve efficiencies.
- Improve and expand existing Medical Mobility database to serve additional programs.
- Design and launch Financial Capability program.

STAFFING

Analyze, restructure, and replace three expiring AmeriCorps VISTA positions with paid staff and/or skill-based volunteers.

- Increase engagement and diversity of Board.
- ED search.
- Change management.

FUND DEVELOPMENT

- Increase donations and grants. Evaluate and possibly institute sliding-scale fees for services.
- Work with Board and staff on fundraising skills — cultivation and making asks.

MARKETING

- Evaluate the current marketing plan, brand and media mix. Implement improved marketing plan. Create new marketing video.

EVALUATION

- Assess and suggest improvements to program outcome measurement and reporting systems/ strategies.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Investigate possibility of creating a social enterprise.
- Assess Boulder County needs for assisting the elderly. Match against existing BCCC programs for potential restructuring or shifting of resources.

SUMMARY OF SVP INVESTMENTS

	Total
Consulting Hours	1,481
Consulting Value	\$148,100*
Cash Grants Awarded	\$59,000
Number of Projects	15
Number of Partner Volunteers	22

*Rate = conservatively valued at \$100/hour

SUMMARY OF INVESTEE'S GROWTH

	2012	2013	2014
Income	\$687,859	\$783,482	\$795,902
Expense	\$613,860	\$671,034	\$780,826
Reserves	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Employees	9	9	9.25
Volunteers	1,107	1,226**	1,140
Total Clients*	1,472	1,134	1,520
Medical Mobility Units of Service	3,221	4,148	3,906
Carry Out Caravan Units of Service	7,414	4,788	4,529
FixIt Units of Service	1,318	840	1,497
YardBusters Units of Service	617	1,007	943
IceBusters Units of Service	227	2,542	767



With stats pointing toward a rapidly growing senior population in Boulder in the years to come, the time had come to make it a priority.

*Clients are counted per program (e.g. if a client used two different programs, they are represented twice)

**Higher after flood of 2013

EXPLORATION OF IMPACT

The partnership of BCCC and SVP started out very much one way, took several turns, and in the end—after some peaks and valleys—settled into the status as a successful venture for each organization. The year 2014, in particular, was a complicated one; the nonprofit went through three executive directors in one calendar year whilst still recovering from the 2013 Colorado floods—a disaster that destroyed its Boulder location. As a result, SVP gave its partner a slight extension that wraps up in the first quarter of 2016. “I don’t think we got as much done with the original plan as we wanted to,” says Lead Partner Spear. “We had to change our focus and be flexible in the face of those changes. Instead of focusing on carrying out some of the initially-planned projects,

BCCC—and SVP—now had to focus on continuing to function and serve its clients in the face of multiple disruptions. Despite all that, SVP and BCCC still got some projects done during the transition period.”³

DATABASE IMPROVEMENTS

One of the early initial successes of the partnership, recalls Spear, was modernizing and increasing efficiency in BCCC’s databases. Partner Tim Rohrer assisted in taking BCCC from an outdated and somewhat disorganized pen and paper system to giving them modern, proficient database and software to match clients with volunteers. These systems included upgrades to the Medical Mobility and Neon databases, and allowed BCCC to begin collecting better data on its clients. Prior to that, there

was little to no coordinated collected data about what their clients needed, what their volunteers could provide, or any ability to match skills or time frames. Systems were, essentially, stuck in the past or nonexistent—and somehow taking up an extraordinary amount of time in the process.

“Everything before was done by hand,” explains Spear. “They had little to no information about their clients. No income levels, no data on what services people were using, or how often they used the services, anything. So [fixing] that was an early win.”³

Ditty corroborates, recalling that while BCCC staff knew the old database was inefficient, there wasn’t a moment to come up for air, almost literally, to address systematic changes—even if everyone agreed that doing so would save time. The old system probably would have continued longer, Ditty says, without the investment and cushion SVP provided:

It was so heavily reliant on a person picking up a phone, going through binders of paper, sorting through papers—it was so inefficient. And we were spending so much time maintaining this antiquated, time consuming system, we didn’t have the capacity to raise our heads up and find a different solution. That’s where SVP came in. They said, while you continue working to keep this inefficient system going, we will help you come up with a new system that works better.²

With the new database, clients can now get online and make requests so volunteers are able to match these requests with their skills and availability, without any use of staff time. It also collects data on clients and volunteers to better manage their needs in future programs. Afterward, BCCC and SVP were able to extend this momentum to create improvements on other internal systems and databases. “I’m so glad we did all that at the beginning, not just because it needed to be done but it made my transition so much easier,” recalls Ditty. “I knew that staff would be supported because we now had the tools to do our jobs much better.”²

AMERICORPS VISTA/STAFFING IMPROVEMENTS

One of the huge tasks facing BCCC at the start of the partnership was with staffing. As a RSVP organization, under the umbrella of national government program SeniorCorps, BCCC had been utilizing the services of AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) volunteers for years—and subsequently had grown dependent on these volunteers as an easy staffing solution. In 2012, BCCC learned that the three VISTA positions it had on staff at the time would be running out, and the organization would not be able to reapply for new VISTA positions. With a staff total of 12 people, three of which were VISTA volunteers, “they were at kind of a turning point,” recalls Spear. “They were basically going to lose one quarter of their staff.”³

Ditty says it was never intentional to have so many VISTA volunteers; their programs and needs were just growing so fast that it was easy to assign a VISTA each time a new need arose. Recalls Ditty:

We reached our 15th VISTA position in five years, which I think is a lot. We had become dependent on this very low-cost staffing solution. They had tried to cancel us and said, you were never supposed to have VISTAs for that long. So at that point, it was, OK, we’ve got a year and a half left. We have 18 months to solve this problem.²

At that time, the organization did not have its own training program, any kind of systematic training in place, or even statements of job descriptions. SVP helped BCCC fix those deficiencies, helping both clarify the work each staff member was doing and to increase productivity. Many of these changes related to the aforementioned IT and system improvements, but also extended into creating job descriptions and training processes to educate new volunteers without the use of VISTA.

Current Executive Director Jim Rianoshek thinks that this turning point was actually a good problem for BCCC. “VISTAs are great,” he says. “But even SVP posed the question, would it be better to hire a FT person instead of hiring VISTAs? It takes a lot to get new VISTAs up to speed; it is often their first job. Sometimes it’s better to hire more experienced people to help row the boat through tough times.”⁴

Because of the changes SVP and BCCC were forced to address, now the organization has the internal capacity to handle breaks in VISTA volunteers—and use VISTAs more wisely and deliberately when they have these volunteers again.

OCAT & MARKETING

SVP conducts an Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) annually with each partner organization, and BCCC staff found this exceptionally helpful during this partnership—perhaps especially due to the challenges faced and the changes in leadership. Ditty says the OCAT was initially beneficial because it showed BCCC exactly what it needed to work on—and later served as a reminder of how to get back on track. Rianoshek says being able to complete the OCAT, and refer to previous ones, was specifically helpful coming in as a new ED. That said, it wasn't fun or pretty during the process, Ditty recalls. In fact, at times, the OCAT was downright painful:

I hated doing that OCAT because it was so time consuming. But it was also so critical to get to the pulse of the organization and especially to get input from staff and volunteers who might not have otherwise had a voice. I think it was really insightful and definitely shaped our goals. I didn't like doing it, although it was definitely worth it.²

SVP and BCCC also worked together to improve marketing, although according to Spear, some of the staff changes limited the impact. Partner Bruce Borowsky helped in making a new marketing video for BCCC, but the new marketing plan did shift some with changes in leadership, recalls Spear: “They wanted a new marketing plan, but then they got a new marketing person. So that was another challenge—there was a lot of staff turnover... The need for us to help them develop a whole new marketing plan changed, but the video still was very useful.”³

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

According to The Community Foundation serving Boulder County, the senior populace will grow six times as fast as the overall county population over the next decade.⁵ SVP is helping BCCC circumnavigate how to address this trend in the most proactive way possible.

Partner Caryn Capriccioso is helping BCCC traverse this complex future through a community needs assessment. Much of the work stems from the findings of the new Age Well Boulder County Strategic Plan, released earlier in 2015. The Age Well Plan, which comes out every several years, represents input from over 200 older adults, community members, service providers, organizations, and leaders and is intended to be a starting point for a collaborative, interactive, community-driven process.

The work with SVP includes taking a 360-degree scan of all the work BCCC is doing and seeing how it impacts the community at-large that it serves. The questions they are looking at, Rianoshek says, include: “How does our work continue to make sense in relationship to the Age Well report? What are we doing well? Let's continue to do that. What can we alter? Let's work on that. Or another angle, what can we stop doing, or maybe can we devote resources to something else?”⁴

For instance, Spear says, some longtime BCCC programs may need rethinking as part of this process. Spear offers a possible example: BCCC's longtime program Carry-Out Caravan, a popular service where volunteers grocery shop for clients has seen its competition change sharply over recent years. In the past, Carry-Out Caravan was basically an unduplicated service only BCCC offered the community. These days, says Spear, it is just one option in a panacea of choices:

Now, for a certain price, most grocery stores will also do this for you. So now, the question is, is it a good use of CareConnect's resources to continue to offer this anymore? It does help make ongoing contact with clients, so if that is the value of the program, maybe it is worth it. But perhaps now you could fulfill that need in another way? There are lots of new questions to ask. The new ED is asking these questions and SVP is helping to try and answer them.³

Another angle of the work, Rianoshek says, is seeing if there is a larger collective impact possible if BCCC takes a “wider-angle lens” with other agencies in the community to work on aging issues together. A goal is to consider perhaps even coming together to form a sort of county-wide initiative.

SVP offered this work as a slight extension, based on the difficult transitions BCCC had just emerged from. “We are so grateful for that,” says Rianoshek.⁴

ANALYSIS & REFLECTION

This partnership was wrought with more than its fair share of challenges—and gave pause for many lessons for both BCCC and SVP. One of the biggest lessons for both organizations, says Spear, was to maintain a willingness to adapt through all the ups and downs and shed expectations of what everyone anticipated in the beginning:

One of the big lessons from this partnership essentially is that things change—things that you can’t predict at the beginning. One of the messages is SVP needs to be adaptable and flexible. We can still be helpful through these challenges, but we need to be able to change over time, too.³

THE FLOOD (AND FIRE)

Probably the single-most unpredictable and arduous challenge faced during this partnership occurred just about halfway through. During an eight-day period in September 2013, a total of 17.15 inches of rainfall came down in Boulder, exceeding the yearly average in a matter of days. On one day alone, Sept. 12, a total of nine inches came down, creating dangerous flash flood conditions.⁶ The weather event would quickly be dubbed the “100-Year Flood,” causing evacuations, hundreds of millions in damages, and muddy, wet memories people in the Foothills would never forget. For BCCC, the floods hit especially close to home, too. After just eight weeks in its newly donated space within Frasier Meadows, BCCC’s Boulder office was flooded and the roof destroyed in the September 2013 floods.⁷

“SVP was one of our first responders, if you will, when that happened,” recalls Ditty. “We were able to hold steady in that moment. They helped us pivot and not lose focus of what we were trying to achieve.”²

Operating from their homes and local coffee shops, BCCC staff and volunteers used personal cell phones and laptops to keep programs running and check on the welfare of over 1,000 client households

and 750 RSVP volunteers in the days after the flood. “We were so in the moment and worried and sad, and just like, how do we make the best of this situation? How can we come out of this stronger? How do we motivate from this place? It was really stressful but also transformative,” says Ditty.²

BCCC moved into a temporary space donated by Boulder Community Health days later. But the flood wouldn’t be the only physical disaster faced that fall. Just a month later, on October 24, BCCC’s Longmont office (located within the Center for People with Disabilities) was destroyed by arson. Rehabilitating the destroyed space on Main Street took months, so BCCC moved into temporary quarters a few doors down at Martha Martin Business Services.⁷ Both disasters meant that for the entire month of November 2013, BCCC literally had lost both its Boulder and Longmont offices, operating each “on the fly” out of temporary quarters. Crisis mode was officially the mode du jour—and for a while. Recalls Spear:

It really is a credit to them that they managed to continue serving their clients [during that time]. If you look at the numbers served, no, they did not grow in terms of the number of clients and diversity of clients like we had initially hoped. That did not happen. But what did happen is that they did not decrease. To have all the changes they went through and continue to serve at the same numbers and level as effectively as before is a real positive. It is a real tribute to the organization.³

In December 2013, BCCC moved into its new Boulder home—and its current one—at 2540 Frontier Ave. The Longmont office reopened in May 2014. Still, the moves took a huge toll on the partnership, as many initially-planned projects understandably went on the backburner during late 2013 and early 2014.

CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP

The flood served not just as a material challenge but a symbolic shift—that cataclysmic moment where the partnership and the organization transformed. For some individuals involved, it was also a moment of change in their lives, too. For BCCC’s executive director at the time, longtime staffer Emily Ditty, the aftermath of the flood turned out to be a big



life turning point. “During the flood I had no idea I would be moving to Seattle,” recalls Ditty. “I think, if anything, the flood was a moment where I put even more energy into the organization—with this idea that we would come out stronger than ever before.”²

But after that intense push to stay afloat—and to use the flood as a catalyst to evolve into something even better—Ditty says she realized she needed a change, too. “I also spent a lot of that time reflecting on my life, too. My husband and I started opening up to the concept of, maybe we are not always going to live in Boulder. Once I opened to that, lots of things started happening. Everything started pointing us in a direction of change.”²

Ditty was ready to transplant. “My work had reached a point that felt good; good enough that I was able to walk away,” she says. “I thought it would be harder to disconnect from Boulder and Boulder County CareConnect, but opportunities were coming along and it felt like the right time. I felt OK going through that transition so quickly because SVP was involved.

I was not just leaving the organization, but leaving it with a trusted friend.”²

By the following May, Ditty had resigned and moved across country for a new position as Director of Development at Academy for Precision Learning in Seattle (she now works with SVP Seattle on several projects). Local trainer/consultant Barb Truan stepped in as interim director for a six-month period in 2014 while, with the help of SVP, BCCC conducted a national search for its next ED. Rianoshek, an entrepreneur and former Executive Director of Attention Homes, came on as BCCC’s newest director in December 2014.

Between the flood and fire recovery and the administrative changes, 2014 ended up being a very different year than expected for the partnership. “There were three EDs in three years and that creates challenges,” recalls Spear. “New EDs need to get up to speed and they often have different visions of where they want things to go.”³

Rianoshek recalls many of the same issues, offering that by the time he was hired on, some of the previous work SVP and BCCC had done together had gone a bit on the backburner. He credits the staff with staying afloat through it all:

I think in terms of what happened with operations, it was pretty standard. They lost their ED, there was a gap, there was an interim director coming in... In the absence of a lot of direction, people tend to do their own thing. They certainly got a lot done; what they did here in the interim—they did a fantastic job. They are why BCCC is still here.... But after I started, and as I went around and talked to and listened to each group of staff, we determined there were a lot of things that could be done better.⁴

Rianoshek says he was very proud of the staff—and thankful that SVP was able to help resurrect some of what had lain dormant during the transitions. “I think the best part of SVP being there was that they had laid out a foundation for the organization from a number of best practices that were still there,” he says.⁴

PERSONAL GROWTH

One of the hallmarks of successful SVP partnerships is growth and evolution not only for the organizations involved, but also for the individuals. As executive director, Ditty says working with Spear and SVP Executive Director Jennie Arbogash was extremely rewarding not only for the organization but also for her personally. “I think being an ED can be incredibly lonely,” she says. “The demands are really high and there is almost no support. I felt like SVP was willing to make an investment in me. I felt like with Peter I had someone I could talk openly with... They were great at helping me create attainable goals.”²

For Lead Partner Spear, it was a chance to get involved in the community and learn about issues he really hadn’t had a chance to engage in much in the past. As an academic who spent most of his career at the University of Wisconsin, Spear also spent a stint as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at CU-Boulder before retiring several years ago. He says his time working with SVP—and in particular, this partnership with BCCC—helped him feel the pulse of the Boulder volunteer community that he

never noticed when putting in long hours at the university.

“What you learn is there are a heck of a lot of people out there who want to help,” says Spear. “I worked in Boulder for five years at the university and I learned more about Boulder and what is going on in the community in my first year here as a retired person working with SVP than I did in my entire time working at CU.”³

Ditty says one of the other unique aspects of SVP partnerships is how they connect people that might not have crossed paths otherwise—people who actually often have a lot to offer each other. “If I had met Peter outside of the context of SVP, I would have thought, this guy is such a brilliant mind. There is no way he’d be interested in our little organization,” she laughs. “So this process, it really brings a forum of all different types of people together. Social Venture Partners helped break down that barrier. It helped me realize you have to extend yourself—and not get in the way of yourself.”²

THE FUTURE

With crisis mode placed firmly in its past, BCCC’s future looks bright. The organization has reincorporated the best practices SVP helped implement in year one of the partnership, as well as added some best practices from Rianoshek’s own career and life journey as a teacher, entrepreneur and previous nonprofit executive director. These include incorporating sound business strategies, accountability for identifying unique and fundable services, and continuing to streamline day-to-day operations. Today’s team, describes Rianoshek, is built upon past teams’ successes, fits and starts.

While she has moved on in her career, Ditty is happy to see the organization on solid footing again, which she really views as a testament to both BCCC and SVP: “It was a deeply satisfying time period in my life. As a person who is as result and goal oriented as I am, I couldn’t have asked for a better organization to work for. I found an original document from our early visioning session—and everything we dreamed big about had happened.”²

Of particular excitement now as the partnership winds down is seeing what BCCC can do with

the community needs assessment. Leaders hope BCCC can assert itself at the center of an initiative that poises Boulder County to be a solid leader in addressing its growing senior segment. New communications, marketing and advertising efforts are also ongoing and intend to elevate BCCC awareness and showcase the significance of what the organization provides in the community. The Board currently possesses strong leadership; with the help of SVP it has secured new members who look poised to represent the organization well.

The partnership between BCCC and SVP took on some very different challenges than originally envisioned. There is no doubt that with all the adversity it faced, SVP's presence helped BCCC

evolve through some very complex times. Says Rianoshek:

We're picking up on what was left off before the flood and all the leadership changes—we were really torn asunder after the flood. We endured that and now there is a new beginning; BCCC life cycle number seven, if you will. The trend is positive and the organization is looking at now as an opportunity to say, where are we going to take it next?⁴

SOURCES CITED

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BOULDER COUNTY**

Social Venture Partners Boulder County
(EIN 46-1384125) believes strong
nonprofits deliver better results. Working
side by side with nonprofits, givers, and
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