



COMMUNICATION MARK

Examples of How to Use Interviews to Enhance Grant Proposals

Below and on the pages that follow are examples taken from successful grant proposals and case statements written by Communication Mark / Mark Goldstein, CFRE. Names of organizations, clients and locations have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

Townville School is distinguished by its community values and its small, supportive community. Students at Townville School agree to uphold a four-point Honor Code. The code is consistently enforced and is geared toward helping students gain a better understanding of the importance of honor and integrity in life. According to one student whose family immigrated to the United States from Kenya and who, along with her twin sister, receives financial aid, “the experience here is not the same as other boarding schools . . . I actually love coming back here. Every time I get back on the plane to come here I think—I’m getting to come back to a really great school [and by going here] I will become someone someday.” This student also explained that, unlike at the 15 other boarding schools she and her sister visited, the students at Townville School did not place a high value on wealth or materialism. According to her, “I wouldn’t be as good a leader if I had gone to another school. Material things are really important at those other schools. I wouldn’t have been as loved there . . . and I wouldn’t have as many friends . . . because I don’t have that kind of money to spend.”

Since there currently is no effective treatment for ALS, patients generally do not receive all of their long-term care in a hospital. Hospices provide some financial support for home care as patients enter the final stages of the disease, but families usually must share a significant amount of the cost. Most patients die within two years of their ALS diagnosis, but others live with the disease for several years or more. Therefore, most ALS patients require round-the-clock home care for at least a year.

Ironically, there is little funding for home health assistance even though it is much cheaper than having a medical facility care for a patient. Maria Sanchez of Lee County discovered this after she had her husband, Vincent, released from a hospital stay. “Upon release, the insurance company, even though it was saving them \$3,000 a day [to keep Vincent out of the hospital], would not give me a CNA or anything,” Ms. Sanchez recalls. Similarly, the insurance company would pay for a home care hoist to lift her husband out of the bed, but not for a wheelchair to put him in after leaving the bed. “My husband was 6’ 2” —I’m 5’ 2” ...but I was going to lift him out of his bed—to where?” she asks. “They would not allow for me to have an electric wheelchair [for Vincent]. He couldn’t sit up in a wheelchair and see his children—or go outside.”

The increasing number of children with behavior and emotional issues are a grave concern in Elm County. Child care facilities and schools report that this problem has steadily worsened, and PMRC staff report that after the first eight months of this fiscal year they have already received more referrals (40) than last year (36).

True Stories Illustrating Local Needs and How PMRC Addresses Them

Christa Thompson and her son, Jake, were referred to PMRC by *Safe Place*, a domestic violence shelter where they stayed for five months after leaving an abusive relationship. “I really just wanted to call and find out what kind of programs they offered for a single mother,” Christa recalls. “I think it was being a parent—pretty much all over again—of a little one after almost 16 years, and then also the fact that I had been established with a home and everything, and that I ended up losing that.”

She had few connections, since she had moved with her new husband from her home in New York. PMRC helped her locate child care, connected her with a grocery job at Healthy Market and helped her out of crisis with funds for utility bills. Next, the **Parent Support Center** program taught her new lessons and gave her a circle of friendly encouragement. “I think that’s the best part of it,” she says, referring to her new peers, including members of the Latino community. “Socializing, and just the support of the parents, that “You can do it!... We laugh over the same things, and we hug each other. I don’t know why, but I think it’s really a good thing to be exposed to different cultures.”

Christa’s experience at PMRC motivated her to return to school to pursue a bachelor’s degree in Special Education, a goal that PMRC is helping to fund through its **Women Seeking Support** program. “I’ve had a lot of people in my life who have been very negative, or ‘you can’t do that’ or ‘it’s too late to go back to school’ and I’ve just had only positive from the people [at PMRC] I’ve been around.... They’ll say ‘you’re doing a great job being a mom...’ it’s always nice to hear those things and to know that people mean it, too.... It’s not like it’s like “hi, do you have an appointment.” It’s like “Hi, good to see you!”

Silvia Nava, a graduate of the **Teenage Parenting Project**, found out about PMRC from the school nurse during her junior year at East Elm High School. When she entered the program, she admits, “At first, I thought, ‘Oh, I think this is gonna be boring, I don’t think I’m gonna like it, I don’t think I’m gonna go.’ But she did go, and she found it so helpful that she stayed.

Before TPP, she says, “I definitely thought of dropping out.... [laughs] Yeah, I’m positive, I honestly can say I could have.” She remembers the initial awkwardness of her situation. “All my other friends in school, they don’t have a child. They don’t know that I’m bathing him, changing his diaper, feeding him.... Friends just go home and watch TV or go shopping while I’m at home with my baby.”

But she stuck with the program, graduated and made a conscious decision to put off having another child. Now, her son *Julio Santana* is 18 months old and she lives with his father, *Juan Santana*. PMRC helped her get a job at K-Mart and taught her how to budget her earnings, rather than spend them immediately as she had done previously. “If I wouldn’t have gone to the program, I wouldn’t have learned the things I have. Like, as he grows—what things can he do, and things that he needs, and at what stage can he do certain things. And then for me.... I would never be going to Elm Ridge (Community College) and asking about their programs.” Sylvia

aspires to be a nurse, and with help from PMRC, she now has a job at the Health Department working as a translator.

She is now in the **Parent Support Center** program. “You really do learn a lot,” she reflects. “Things that you wouldn’t learn just by sitting here...or doing it by yourself. It’s more interesting whenever you get with other people and share things and tell each other what to expect.”

Agnes Wilson’s son Carson Stewart was 8 months old when their family moved back to Elm County. “I didn’t have any kind of programs for him, and he didn’t have anybody to play with, and I was kind of lost in what I was doing as a parent,” Agnes explains. “I knew I wanted to get him involved with other children, because he really hadn’t been around a lot of children. So I wanted to get him involved in something.”

PMRC staff member Susie Miller visits Agnes and Carson regularly. “She brings age appropriate things ...and she explains to me basically what’s going on with him.... She shows me things that I can do to help his development and his learning.... I like to know what I need to do month-to-month. Because, well, I work two jobs, so... my time with my son is really valuable, because I don’t have as much time as, maybe stay-at-home moms do. And I was a stay-at-home mom for about 8 months of his life, and that’s why I felt very fortunate to have this program, because when we are together, I know exactly the right things to do or say to help him along and give him that little push to learn.”

Susie is accessible to Agnes by phone when she has questions, and Susie even connected her with a reputable car dealer when Agnes’s vehicle began to fail. “She’s the reason I have my car,” Agnes claims. “Now I have a car that runs great, it’s safe for me and my son, and it’s ...more within my budget.... I really think it [PMRC] helps to make *Sam* a better daddy, and me a better mommy, because I really understand what he’s (Carson’s) going through. Otherwise, I wouldn’t.”

Melanie Tudor started watching neighbors’ children in 1997. “I just came from a factory job for 19 1/2 years [GM] that closed down,” she says. “So I was not a homebody.” Soon she decided to open her own child care center, one that would stay open late to serve parents who worked night shifts.

“When I began, I was pretty much a babysitter,” she tells PMRC. But she took classes and learned a lot, so that she soon decided to license her home child care service. A friend at her church recommended PMRC, so she contacted the agency. “It was a lot of information to absorb at first, but once they got in there and got to helping me with it everything was pretty clear.”

Melanie got her license (1 star) in January, 2001, and her business now has a 4-star rating. “They also helped me with that,” she says. “I had no clue what an Environmental Rating Scale was.” PMRC told Melanie exactly what to expect during the inspector’s visit, and how long it would take.

PMRC is now helping compensate a substitute teacher so that she can pursue her associate’s degree in Early Childhood at Elm Ridge Community College. “Before I went to them, it was a struggle for me to pay a substitute while I went to school. And because I offer care on two shifts, whether I took day classes or night classes, I would have to hire a reputable substitute that met

the criteria for the state.” Now, she says, “I can continue my education. That’s been a big plus for me.” It will also be a big plus for area residents, as her center improves and expands.

Sacha Moore was frustrated when his job was unexpectedly discontinued. “I was trying to get custody of my daughter, and she had started living with me.” He turned to PMRC for answers and child care subsidies.

“Once I did hook up with [the Department of] Social Services, it was like it opened up a lot of opportunities for me at the same time. Because it was very hard....now I’m currently going to Elm Ridge Community College.... He said that his life changes “gave me a focus.”

Sacha says he knows what he wants for himself and his five-year-old daughter, *Natalya*, and that his team at PMRC has given him the resources and the support to be successful. “Even though it’s already in me, that [support] helps you want to do, so you can be noticed in a positive way.... It keeps me to strive.... They like you to make a goal and achieve it...they help you out with anything. It’s just you’ve got to be wanting it. If you do the program right, it helps you out in many ways. A lot of blessings come from it. It’s not forever. But if you’re in the point to where you need to get on your feet and you’re ready to do what you need to do, then it’s a wonderful thing. They can really give you a boost, starting, learning and set you on the right track.”

Nearly all of the people who work in the GVS Production Facility have disabilities or other severe obstacles to employment. Here are a few examples of the many people who are currently benefiting — both personally and financially — from their employment in the GVS Production Facility.

Elaine Rosewood

Elaine, who has a developmental disability, started receiving assistance from GVS about four years ago when her father retired in our area. She is currently in the ADVP and CBS programs, receiving one-on-one help as she starts to explore volunteer opportunities in the community.

Elaine had attended a vocational program where she used to live, in Rhode Island. *“I worked at McDonald’s cleaning the bathrooms, washing off the tables, mopping the floors, taking out the garbage,”* she recalls. This was an especially bad placement for her, as she detests cleaning, so she did not last two weeks on the job.

Elaine now works at GVS. *“I like the Painter’s Rags because they pay more money,”* she says. *“I also like to do them with the other people. I package them in boxes. We have to do a certain amount of rags in the box. I try to make sure there is the right amount.”*

She has also made great strides in her personal life. She gets a paycheck every two weeks for the first time in her life, and she has lost 70 pounds. In addition, she has started to explore volunteer opportunities in the community two afternoons a week. *“To see what I like and what I don’t like,”* Elaine says, *“So maybe I can get an outside job someday. I volunteered at the Thrift Shop doing clothes and hanging stuff,”* she explains. *I liked that. I tried St. Christopher’s Hospital washing dishes and didn’t like that too much. I am going to New Pine (nursing home) to see what I can do there. I might be reading for a lady there.”*

Heather Long, a GVS staff member, says, *“I think Elaine has really blossomed as a person.”* *She has emerged from a cocoon. I’ve seen that Elaine has an incredible sense of humor, enjoys having fun with people.... She is very reliable and has perfect attendance... Elaine is really building skills working toward community employment.”*

Lena Davis

Lena was diagnosed with a mental illness 30 years ago, and before coming to GVS she could find few jobs. When she did find employment, she could not keep jobs for long, often because her illness often interferes with her sleep and makes it difficult for her to stay alert at work.

“When I first got to GVS [about a year ago] they did some testing and interviewed me,” Lena remembers. *“We talked about what I would be good at.... After only about 4 months a job counselor helped me find a job working at Timber Woods [Assisted Living Center] serving food. They were going to train with me, but I was doing so good I didn’t need training. I got a bone spur and could no longer serve food because there is a lot of walking. I went back to GVS and am now working part-time [as a direct support professional—helping others with disabilities].”*

“GVS gives me a lot of confidence and purpose,” Lena says. *“I have a reason to get up in the morning. I love the people there, I love working there!”*

Ida Mathis

Ida, an African-American woman who receives independent living help from GVS, came to the agency because she needed to earn money to keep her housing. When asked why she works at GVS instead of somewhere else, she replies *“I can do well, I can do a regular job here.... I am here to see if I can communicate with people.... People are nice. They show me how to be on time and how to be nice to the supervisor and the other workers. If they make me mad I bite my tongue.”*

Since coming to GVS, Ida has learned to change behaviors that are inappropriate in a work setting. *“I don’t sass back and don’t give the staff a hard time and get along with the other workers. One of my goals is not to sass people. Because if I go out on a job I’ll get fired just like that if I sass. That’s why I want to get along with the staff and clients. One of my other goals is to be on time – don’t be late.”*

Ida works 7 hours a day at GVS. She also has an outside job in the early mornings assisting the school bus driver in rural Jackson County. Ida helps fasten the kids into their seatbelts and walks with them into their classroom. Ida’s goal is to get another job working in the community. *“I want to let them help me write out how to save my money and pay my bills. I let people take advantage of me. I am working to not do that,”* she offers.

Heather says that *“to provide services in some of the [independent living] programs, we need a case manager to apply to get services.* With increased funding, she notes, it will be possible for Ida *“to get a one-on-one worker so Ida can have the same opportunity as Elaine to get out in the community to work toward job placement.”*