

# HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES IN NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT

## Diane Zanetti, Turning Point of the Lehigh Valley Testimonial

Diane is the Executive Director of the Turning Point of the Lehigh Valley, [www.turningpointlv.org](http://www.turningpointlv.org). Turning Point of Lehigh Valley is a safe place where victims of abuse and their children can find refuge. Turning Point provides services in Lehigh and Northampton counties to more than 5,000 victims of domestic violence each year. The mission is to eliminate domestic violence in the Lehigh Valley through empowerment, education and engagement.

As Executive Director, Diane is responsible for overall fiscal management, state compliance, and strategic/program operations, under the direction of the Board of Directors. Diane's responsibilities include: grant research and writing, applying for foundation funding, forming collaborations in the community, engaging community agencies in common goals for healthy communities, meeting with program directors to strategize programmatic needs and goals, prepare annual budget and monitor financial reports, insure maintenance of properties, and marketing. The most critical issues Diane faces include maintaining top-quality operations as the agency broadens its prevention and outreach initiatives and insuring long-term fiscal stability so that growth and resources are in alignment.



### 1. How did the Strategic Perspectives in Non-Profit Management program change your view of your career?

The program strengthened my belief in nonprofits as businesses with community impact. It also affirmed my commitment to the work and especially my belief in the need for solid and strategic leadership within the nonprofit spectrum.

### 2. How are you applying what you learned?

I attended the session in 2012, and the power of the experience continues to impact how I strategize in leading the agency forward in alignment with the mission and community needs. With the Board's full support, we have re-framed the way the agency carries out its mission, while never losing sight of a concise and consistent mission goal. The agency has re-organized to better meet the goals, the Board and staff participated in an externally-facilitated strategic planning session, and my leadership role is well-grounded in a strategic model in the context of our particular agency culture.

### 3. Has your approach to leadership changed?

I put down deeper roots into an authentic and resilient leadership role. I find my leadership style is evolving as the organization does the same and as I place more focus on long-term sustainability and capacity-building. Some of this has been facilitated by a re-structuring that enabled me to shift from a managerial role to one that directs more of my skills to executive oversight. That has often been challenged by day-to-day operational needs that most social service agencies experience. But holding this stance as the goal and the task is stabilizing.

### 4. How has the program changed you?

As a long-time executive leader, the program energized and expanded my professional outlook, while affirming the significance of what is needed from nonprofit directors. My focus is on agency excellence and long-term sustainability, and I take my responsibility for that goal as something that has priority over the daily crisis-management.

### 5. What is one lesson-learned that you would like to share with other non-profit leaders in the Lehigh Valley?

The role and posture of the executive director in nonprofits is key to the organization's culture and success. The key take-away for me at the end of the week was the need to **focus on what we are charged to do, both as an agency and a leader**. That means we need to step away from expectations that all outcomes are our responsibility, and keep asking about the impact of the specifics within the context of the clients and the community served.

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

United Way of the  
Greater Lehigh Valley

[UnitedWayGLV.org](http://UnitedWayGLV.org)

