

Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth

OUTLINE FOR EXCELLENCE

Prepared by Richard R. Nedelkoff, CEO



December 2011



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INTRODUCTION

Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth (SAFY) has a rich tradition of providing loving homes for children in need. With *innovative* programs designed to help those unable to stay with their biological families, children are *supported through a system of care* that meets their needs and empowers them to feel valued and secure. SAFY's *community based treatment options* improve lives, producing *quality outcomes* that contribute to the organization's *sound business practices* and *demonstrate leadership* throughout the child welfare community. SAFY values and *understands the needs of our customers and stakeholders*.

In 2011, SAFY began a new chapter in its history. Setting on a deliberate course to grow and expand its scope of service, the Board of Directors named Richard R. Nedelkoff its third Chief Executive Officer, strengthening the organization's commitment to providing *leadership* and *sound business practices* throughout the child welfare industry as well as the SAFY organization. For 30 years, Mr. Nedelkoff has dedicated his career to helping others, beginning his professional life as a foster care coordinator, child protective services caseworker, guardian ad litem and in other roles that served high risk children and families. Every role he has held has led him to this pivotal moment at SAFY. During his tenure as CEO, SAFY will focus on building and strengthening the organization's mission and services. Guided by the Board, Mr. Nedelkoff will oversee the growth of SAFY's long-term vision and strategy, looking forward to the day when every child is part of a loving family and is able to reach his or her greatest potential.

The Outline for Excellence is SAFY's roadmap for growth. It clearly defines the organization's principles, plans and priorities, and provides direction toward the future. In the upcoming months, the outline will continue to progress, building the capacity and leadership that will define SAFY's future.

MISSION

Fostering an environment that positively impacts the lives of youth and their families...whether they are with us for an hour or a lifetime.

VISION

SAFY envisions the day when...every child is part of a loving family and is able to reach his or her greatest potential.

CORE VALUES

SAFY values providing a quality experience for youth and their families that can lead to quality life given their unique circumstances;

SAFY values diversity and collaborative efforts while recognizing all individuals' rights to human dignity and self-determination;

SAFY values advocating for strong families and *community based treatment options* which enhance the quality of all human life;

SAFY believes every child has the capacity for positive change;

SAFY believes no child should be denied the opportunity to receive help;

SAFY *supports a system of care* which not only serves those in need, but empowers those served;

SAFY develops and retains the highest quality, motivated and committed treatment foster parents;

SAFY makes the best-matched placement of youth in treatment homes that can address their unique needs;

SAFY values *understanding the needs of our customers and stakeholders*;

SAFY believes in preparing staff and foster parents to address the various special needs of the children we serve;

SAFY values *innovation*, compassion, professionalism, *quality outcomes* and accreditation throughout our organization;

SAFY recognizes our employees and foster parents as our most important resources and essential to our future success;

SAFY values *sound business practices* that enable us to operate a successful company

SAFY *demonstrates leadership* in the field of child welfare.

SAFY'S TOP STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

By Richard R. Nedelkoff, CEO

Specialized Alternatives for Family and Youth (SAFY) of America is comprised of many highly dedicated, caring staff that are mission-driven with a passion for helping kids and families. The employees are anxious, but appear ready and willing to go to the next level of performance and growth.

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) appears to have solid credentials and abilities, and is willing to follow strong leadership and direction. They seem agreeable to enter into uncharted territory. SAFY possesses a good depth of experience at the ELT and state director levels. Their tenure and depth of experience at SAFY is impressive.

SAFY does lack some of the systems, processes, procedures, reporting formats, software solutions, etc. that can increase efficiency and create a more coordinated and organized agency. The ELT has responded positively to protocols, processes and reporting formats that make their job easier. It will require time and money to fully implement improvements to these systems.

Both the ELT and state directors will benefit from leadership in the area of growth and transformation as well as the development of program models that meet the needs of our clients. SAFY's growth has been mostly organic, so it is imperative that we build the capacity internally to be able to execute larger projects and/or mergers if and when they occur.

The foundation to launch this organization to a new level of visibility, performance and functioning appears solid.

Below is the outline of strategic initiatives that will begin to guide SAFY as it enters the next chapter of its rich legacy.

I. ENHANCING COMMUNICATION

1. *Internal Communication*

- Initiate monthly CEO dashboard or document to the board that organizes and presents information in a way that is easy to read, summarizes past month's performance, directs attention to trends of note and explains newly added measures. Dashboard could include financial performance, quality of care, customer service, operating margin and human resources indicators, among others.
- Utilize teleconferencing for quarterly all-staff meetings.
- Create a variety of highly readable reports and documents to be distributed to staff and board members that include:
 - Top strategic initiatives for 2012
 - Outline for Excellence document
 - Strategic growth and transformation plan
 - Communications plan
 - Analysis of executive office location
 - Development plan

- Progress report of milestones or achievements.
- Improve communication with foster parents providing them greater accessibility to information.

2. *External Communication*

- Develop a quarterly stakeholder newsletter that highlights noteworthy organizational achievements.
- Foster interaction with national stakeholders in child welfare and juvenile justice by attending and presenting at national conferences.
- Establish a Twitter page for the CEO to communicate in a timely manner to key stakeholders regarding SAFY activities.
- Create a Continuum of Care document for foster youth that outlines the 28 child welfare and youth service programs SAFY currently operates nationwide.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that creates a vibrant national brand and dramatically increases SAFY's visibility.
- Create collateral marketing materials such as brochures, for juvenile justice and child welfare stakeholders.
- Create a custom on-line database where SAFY can share and capture our customer's experiences, testimonials and success stories.
- Evolve the SAFY brand to include our unique treatment philosophy and approach to care.

II. **BUDGET AND FISCAL STABILITY**

- Standardize the budget presentation process in 2012.
 - Conduct budget workshops and staff trainings prior to the annual meeting to enhance associate's level of understanding of how to read and create financial reports.
- Reduce administrative overhead to 12 percent within five years.
- Construct a plan to maintain a net margin of three percent or more across the agency.
- Effectively integrate technological upgrades with our financial systems
 - Integration should allow us to determine cost-benefit and return on investment (ROI).
- Develop a comprehensive risk management plan

- The risk management process will identify potential risk sources; assess individual risks and impacts on performance, cost, and schedule; evaluate alternative approaches to mitigate high and moderate risks; and develop action plans to handle risks.
- Complete the Medicaid Compliance Plan which addresses potential payback issues.
- Generate and distribute financial statements to internal staff and board members that are easy-to-read and interpret.

III. MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE

- Identify and measure key performance indicators in order to:
 - Learn and improve
 - Report externally and demonstrate compliance
 - Hold managers and staff accountable
 - Equip employees with the information they need to make better informed decisions and challenge strategic assumptions that lead to continuous improvements.
- Devise and implement a balanced scorecard (a strategic planning and management system used to align business activities with the vision and mission of SAFY) for both Board and management in order to:
 - Improve processes
 - Motivate and educate employees
 - Enhance information systems
 - Monitor progress
 - Generate greater customer satisfaction.
- Examine feasibility of investing in performance measurement software to assist in creating, tracking and reporting all performance measures.
 - Explore more advanced modules to conduct predictive analysis versus hiring a statistician.
- Develop annual state goals and objectives that tie to organizational strategy including budget, programmatic and growth goals.
 - Develop annual divisional goals with specific measurable objectives.
 - Establish individual staff goals based upon state/division goals and objectives to ensure staff are invested and accountable.
- Re-evaluate Kaleidacare child welfare information management system.
 - Consider other alternative information systems.
- Establish proven, evidence-based programs for SAFY's in-home, child welfare and juvenile justice services.
- Develop a monthly agency "watch list" to track critical agency issues and potential risk areas.
 - Standing agenda item for the weekly ELT meetings.

- Consider mandatory annual risk-management training for staff such as health and safety, defensive driving, Medicaid compliance, court process and appearance, among others.
- Institute a program of staff recognition for exceptional performance and quality improvement.

IV. TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Conduct a review and analysis of the ideal location for SAFY's executive offices.
- Implement best practices for targeted recruitment and filling experience gaps within the organization, developing strategies to attract, hire and retain diverse candidates.
- Consider hiring a full or part time medical director.
 - Enables SAFY to qualify for additional licensure
 - Enhances contract eligibility
 - Allows us to expand special medical needs placements
 - Impacts nursing staff needs.
- Address issues of education and employment for SAFY youth aging out of the system.
 - Collaborate with employers, schools and community based agencies
 - Grow independent living skills and transitional services for foster youth
 - Recruit staff with strong background in education or employment services and/or housing.
- Finalize and implement new performance evaluation process.
- Develop a succession plan for agency leadership.
 - Key managers will identify high performers to serve as management trainees
 - Managers will then develop succession plans.
- Provide ongoing leadership and management training to current and prospective managers to ensure they have the tools needed to perform their jobs optimally.
- Establish an effective tool to assess leadership qualities and styles in an effort to:
 - Better match people/skills with positions
 - Reduce turnover/absenteeism
 - Minimize disruptions
 - Improve workforce productivity
 - Grow the organization.
- Bolster foster care recruitment efforts by expanding our outreach, marketing and training efforts.
- Ensure each member of the "extended" management team, including state directors, has a personal career development plan by the end of 2012.
- Enhance our diversity workplace strategy to attract, retain and develop diverse talent.

- Strive to create a work environment that provides all employees equal access to information, development and opportunity. Build a workforce that is rich in diverse people, talent and ideas.

V. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Develop a building capacity database to consolidate all important information regarding growth and development.
- Create an aggressive development plan to include the potential creation of a foundation to support SAFY operations.
- Restructure SAFY's Request for Proposal process by developing screening tools and a bid/no-bid worksheet to identify potential partners and develop "winning" themes for each proposal.
- Pursue a merger and acquisition strategy targeting smaller non-profit organizations.
- GROW. Target new states for potential growth including Florida, North Carolina, West Virginia, Mississippi and California.
- Identify and execute one development project in each state in which the CEO will assist state leadership in growing its revenue.
- Build effective partnerships.
 - Increase opportunities to subcontract with lead agencies.
 - Become a lead agency with partners.
- Develop a managed care competency.
 - Become a lead agency or a major subcontractor by 2012.
- Adopt a formal due diligence process in order to:
 - Increase speed of the due diligence process
 - Save time
 - Reduce costs
 - Gain access to a wider audience of prospective buyers/sellers
 - Streamline process.
- Renovate facilities to present a more professional image.

VI. DEVELOPMENT/EXTERNAL RELATIONS

- Reach out to 10 corporate entities for potential fund development opportunities.
- Approach four national philanthropic foundations for potential giving opportunities including the Annie Casey Foundation, McArthur Foundation, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and the Kellogg Foundation.
- Collaborate with institutions of higher learning.
 - SAFY currently partners with the University of Kentucky for outcomes activities
 - Approach additional colleges and universities in current SAFY states
 - Enhances SAFY's status as a professional organization.
 - Examine federal grant opportunities otherwise not available to SAFY; facilitate adoption of best practice models; and pave the way for future research-oriented activities.
- Establish one annual SAFY special event fundraiser by 2013.
- Connect with five different sports/entertainment figures for possible giving and support opportunities.
- Increase our visibility by evolving our marketing and communication strategies.
- Foster and encourage the continued development of local advisory boards to support SAFY fundraising efforts.