

Member Spotlight

Sustainability is essential when considering the effectiveness and long-term strength of a nonprofit. Particularly in today's technology-driven world, the demands of staying savvy and well informed are quite high to remain both competitive and relevant. When grantmakers improve the internal skills of their grantees, especially by sharing knowledge of current trends, they ensure that their grantees remain on the cutting edge and are better equipped to face future challenges.

The Placer Community Foundation saw the need strengthen the internal technological capacity of their grantees, as more and more ways to connect through video became available. "Videos have become a powerful way to engage people around a cause via on-line social media such as blogs, Twitter and Facebook," stated Jessica Hubbard, Philanthropic Services Manager for the Placer Community Foundation. "This was one of a series of grants made by the Community Foundation to provide the nonprofit sector with technical assistance aimed to create and share their stories with the public."

Understanding the technology, connecting with others and effectively employing storytelling techniques are all benefits the foundation hoped to instill in their grantees. Video presented the opportunity to teach these principles, while also allowing the Placer Community Foundation to collaborate with local foundations to make it happen. The Documentary Foundation of Sacramento helped design a program that builds a nonprofit's capacity to tell their story through short, concise videos. Throughout the course, select staff members from each nonprofit learned the fundamentals of filmmaking. In addition to the classroom lecture, participants chose a story related to their organization, filmed it and then edited the footage into a 3 to 5 minute film. A screening of the films will take place on July 19, showcasing the new projects and talents of the organizations.

This type of capacity building not only prepares and educates grantees, but it also goes beyond the grant itself to make the organization more effective. The videos will be influential communications tools for the grantees and will allow them to spread their word and, eventually, gain more recognition. This additional support gives the organization a final product that they can continue to use, while also giving them experience and confidence with this technology. The technology learned through the capacity building grant can be repurposed, as grantees' staff explores other modes of technology, whether through videos or other Web 2.0 platforms.

One grantee, Placer Land Trust, said the grant gave them the "information and tools needed to capture the cooperative spirit of land conservation – and display it in a format that is accessible and appealing in this age of digital social media." The response Placer Land Trust has received has been very encouraging and recognize Placer Community Foundation for helping increase their internal effectiveness.

For more information on the program and the videos, please visit the community foundation's [Web site](#).