

Bridging the Information Gap:

How One Organization Is Trying to Take on Minnesota's Chronic Obstacles

By Alex Kelley

Class begins early on a Friday morning as I join a company of senior students in a local Tai Chi studio. These students follow their master with ease through a series of complicated movements and controlled shifts in posture without letting their advanced ages impair them in the slightest. Every pose slowly and effortlessly bleeds into the next, no obvious punctuation between them present. Tai Chi cultivates strong bodies, mindfulness, and balance in all of its practitioners, resulting in healthier and safer lives.

Such preventative practices are especially important for the elderly, who are now experiencing a greater need to take control of their own healthcare. As the baby boomer population continues to age beyond 65, the disparity between the elderly in need of geriatric technicians and the doctors available to fill those roles is growing perilously wide. This disparity is especially significant in our nation's rural areas, where new doctors are at an all-time low. Organizations such as the Center for Rural Policy Development (CRPD) have directed our attention to this threat, but more work needs to be done.

The CRPD, originally founded to provide legislators with information about issues in Greater Minnesota, is a nonprofit organization focused solely on the cultivation of hard data into attainable, non-biased information. The CRPD has since grown from its humble beginnings to become an informative powerhouse that not only continues its duties as a legislative liaison but also works to provide comprehensive, well written insights to the public.

As a student of the English 310 course Writing for Nonprofits, I have teamed up with the organization's key staff members with the hopes of assisting them in getting their message out.

While the CRPD produces steady work on a number of pressing issues, the available workforce is lacking. As it rides on the back of one researcher, there is simply not enough time to research and discuss all of the issues the organization are trying to address. To alleviate some of this strain, my big project for the semester is to write a grant requesting an award that would allow the organization to hire an additional researcher.

It is through Writing for Nonprofits that I am given the chance to bridge the gap between writing theory and writing application. Having the opportunity to engage with a real life organization such as this has empowered me and given me confidence in my writing abilities. No longer am I working to see a good letter grade, but I am working to make a difference, and I am thankful to have been given this introduction to the nonprofits sector .