

Managing Public Orgs | Final Paper

Title: Comprehensive Analysis of WITH Grace Initiative: Structure, Culture, Leadership, and Management Practices | **WITH Grace Initiative**

Prepared for: Lois M. Warner, PhD

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Submitted by: Aubrey Reichard-Eline

Introduction

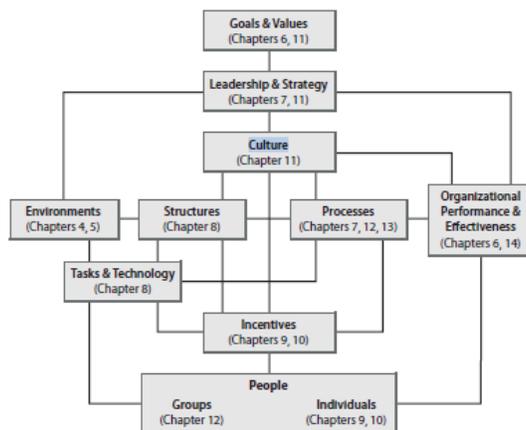
WITH Grace Initiative is a New Jersey-based nonprofit dedicated to supporting children with cancer and their families. This analysis explores the organization's structure, leadership, culture, and management practices to provide insights and recommendations for enhancing its effectiveness.

When examining the goals, stakeholders, and operating environment of a childhood cancer charity, like WITH Grace Initiative, it is important to recognize the multifaceted dynamics of this type of organization. Charities like this are driven by the specific mission, involve various stakeholders, and operate in a complex environment that includes the influence of social, economic, and regulatory factors.

It is “useful to clarify the meaning of basic concepts about organizations and to develop a framework to guide the sustained analysis this book will provide. Figure 1.1 presents a framework for this purpose”. (Rainey, p.11) This Figure 1.1 presents the concept of a structure for understanding public organizations. This figure is offered as a comprehensive guide for analyzing various organizational dimensions, including environmental influences, internal dynamics, leadership, and performance outcomes.

When applying this framework to a childhood cancer nonprofit organization, like WITH Grace Initiative, we may gain a better understanding of how external and internal factors shape the organization's functioning and effectiveness. Again, below is Figure 1.1 (Rainey, p.11), which is used as a guide, along with the rubric from this assignment, for this analysis of WITH Grace Initiative.

FIGURE 1.1. A FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS



We review Figure 1.1 and apply it to an evaluation of this organization, to offer a brief review of each component and how it applies to the organization's situation and operations:

Goals & Values: According to Rainey, goals and values are central to the identity and purpose of an organization. They provide direction and serve as a benchmark for measuring success. This relates to this organization as our goals include increasing funding for childhood cancer research, expanding patient support programs, and raising public awareness about childhood cancer. Values like compassion, integrity, and commitment to excellence are fundamental to the organization. These values guide interactions with stakeholders and inform the development of services and programs.

Leadership & Strategy: These are the guiding principles for the entire organization both internally and externally. Decision making processes and actions by the organization all are governed by the mission and goals of this organization. Leadership and strategy also abide by this as determinants for decisions and behaviors. Leaders in this organization exhibit transformational leadership qualities, such as inspiring and motivating volunteers, fostering a vision for the future, producing the strategy to achieve it and encouraging innovation and collaboration.

Culture: The culture in the organization is characterized by a deep sense of empathy, a commitment to service, and a collaborative spirit. This culture fosters an environment where volunteers are motivated to provide exceptional support to families and work tirelessly towards finding a cure.

Environments: This nonprofit operates in a complex external environment influenced by hospital regulations, philanthropy trends, and awareness in society about childhood cancer. This organization must navigate relationships with external groups to implement programs and projects and understanding this environment helps align its strategies with external opportunities and to navigate challenges.

Organizational Structure: This analysis will work to demonstrate how this organization has a structured hierarchy that includes a board, an executive director, program managers, and support volunteers. This structure facilitates clear communication and accountability as well as features specialized teams focused on different areas, such as fundraising, patient support, and public awareness campaigns.

Process: This organizations process and practices include strategic visioning, motivational leadership, and effective communication that impacts the ability to drive change and achieve its mission.

Performance Outcomes: WITH Grace Initiative measures its success through various outcomes, which include the number of children supported, states reached, funds raised for research, and community awareness initiatives.

Using these components of Figure 1.1 from Rainey's framework in conjunction with our assignment rubric, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of how external and internal factors influence this organizations operations and effectiveness. This approach provides a structured way to analyze and present the organization's context, strategies, and outcomes in a detailed and organized manner. The below recap and analysis are

built around these key elements, to provide a clear, organized, and insightful analysis of the WITH Grace Initiative, highlighting strengths and areas for potential growth. By applying this we can systematically explore each aspect of the organization, and work to provide a clear and holistic view of its functioning and impact.

Overview of the Organization

Mission and Goals

“WITH Grace was created to make an impact by supporting pediatric cancer research initiatives and families when they need it most. Wanting no one to feel alone, we connect and support pediatric cancer warriors. We collect supplies and gifts to give to less fortunate cancer families so they can focus on the fight. We gather funds to support pediatric cancer research initiatives and provide cancer family support as well as actively participate in driving awareness for the need for pediatric cancer funding so no one else has to feel the pain of this disease. We inspire acts of kindness towards others WITH Grace.” (WITH Grace Initiative, 2024)

WITH Grace Initiative aims to improve the quality of life for children battling cancer through emotional, financial, and educational support. The organization focuses on:

- Providing care packages.
- Offering financial assistance.
- Raising awareness about childhood cancer.

- Supporting research for better treatment options.

The vision of WITH Grace Initiative is to support as many as they can that are affected by childhood cancer. They are focused on using events to foster community, build awareness and funding for their mission. We work to spread good vibes and kindness, so the childhood cancer community knows they are not alone as they work for a cure for all kids.

WITH Grace Initiative's mission drives all activities and each program implemented aligns with its goals and values. To emphasize this, we will review two programs run by this organization, 'Warriors of Wellness' and Care bags.

Their connecting group, for those in treatment and beyond, is 'Warriors of Wellness'.

This program was created when the founder, Grace, realized that living with childhood cancer and its aftermath is not easy and can be very isolating. This is a monthly, virtual meeting run by two survivors and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and therapist. The goal is to bring this unique group together to foster discussion, build connections and unite to find comfort and understanding with those that are experiencing similar situations. This group "gets it".

The program "Warriors of Wellness" has a profound impact on individuals undergoing treatment for childhood cancer and those who have survived it. Providing a vital support network for individuals affected by childhood cancer, offering emotional support, connection, validation, education, and empowerment. This community is underserved in resources to facilitate the emotions of a childhood cancer diagnosis. This program has

brought together individuals from six different states to connect and directly is executing the direct care portion of our mission.

The 'Care Bags' are the second example of fulfilling their mission. They know how nice it is to feel that someone is thinking of you, especially when you are in treatment day after day. They created the care bags for those in treatment, to have a few items to make you smile as well as get you through the hospital days. These are filled with things that they found useful when Grace was in treatment as well as gift cards to get something you may need during treatment. They get requests every day for more care bags for those in need that are affected by childhood cancer.

The Care Bags program has a tangible and meaningful impact on individuals and families affected by childhood cancer by providing emotional support, practical assistance, financial relief, and a sense of community during a challenging time. They have delivered over five thousand care bags to hospitals and individuals in twenty-two states. They continue to receive requests each day for more families and will continue to provide for them until there is a cure for all children.

These programs demonstrate this organizations commitment to the goals and mission by providing direct care and support to those affected by childhood cancer.

Stakeholders

WITH Grace Initiative engages with a diverse group of stakeholders, each playing a critical role in achieving the charity's mission. The primary stakeholders include:

- Children with cancer and their families: Primary beneficiaries, children with cancer and their families are the main recipients of the charity's services and support.
- Donors and sponsors: Funding providers, individuals, corporations, and foundations that provide financial support and resources necessary for the charity's operations.
- Healthcare providers: Medical professionals, doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers involved in the diagnosis, treatment, and care of children with cancer.
- Hospitals and Clinics: Facilities that provide treatment and care for childhood cancer patients.
- Volunteers and volunteer leaders: Support Workforce: Individuals who donate their time and skills to assist in the charity's programs, events, and administrative functions.
- Research Partners: Institutions and individuals conducting research on childhood cancer, working towards finding better treatments and cures.
- Partner organizations: Other organizations play a critical role in enhancing the impact and reach of our mission. These collaborations provide access to additional resources, expertise, and networks, enabling us to better serve children and families affected by cancer.

- **Government and Policymakers:** These regulatory bodies, government agencies and officials who influence healthcare policies, research funding, and support services related to childhood cancer.
- **Community and Advocacy Groups:** Aligned organizations, other nonprofits, advocacy groups, and community organizations that collaborate on awareness campaigns, support services, and policy advocacy.
- **Patients and Survivors Networks:** Support networks and groups that provide peer support, share experiences, and advocate for the needs and rights of childhood cancer patients and survivors.

Engaging key stakeholders which includes volunteers, donors, other organizations, as well as the community they serve, it is essential in the development of their strategic plan as well as to ensure the continued success of the organization. This facilitates that our organizations decisions and plans include and reflect multiple perspectives, diverse ideas, and the needs of the community that we serve. The key stakeholders play a critical role in the success and direction of their projects, organization, and initiatives. Their involvement and influence significantly impact decision-making processes, resource allocation, and overall outcomes. WITH Grace Initiative values and leverages the expertise, influence, and resources of their key stakeholders to achieve successful outcomes and sustainable growth for their nonprofit organization.

A specific example of their board impact and leadership decision making is in the 'dashboard'. One of their strategic leaders and board members developed a dashboard

to evaluate incoming funding, sources of the funding, success of events, output from the programs and other financial key performance indicators. The organization is now using this to determine strategy for the year as well as the year over year longer term planning.

Operating Environment

WITH Grace Initiative operates in a highly competitive nonprofit sector, relying on donations, grants, community support and volunteer efforts to succeed at the mission. Every day the organization navigates a challenging landscape marked by fluctuating funding and a high demand for their services. The operating environment is shaped by various external and internal factors that influence its activities and effectiveness:

Economic Factors and Funding Availability: Economic conditions impact the ability of donors and sponsors to provide financial support. This is a constant factor for this organization.

Charity Regulations: Laws governing nonprofit organizations, including tax exemptions, reporting requirements, and operational transparency. This organization works to stay up to date on this to optimize its operations in alignment with the requirements.

Social and Cultural Factors and Public Awareness: The level of public understanding and awareness about childhood cancer influences support and funding. This is one of the pillars of this organization, awareness. The organization is also aware, and works to efficiently address, social and cultural factors.

Cultural Attitudes: Societal attitudes towards charity, in general, and healthcare can affect the willingness to donate and volunteer. Also, an area that the organization pays attention to for factoring in for decision making and planning.

Technological Advancements: Advances in medical technology and treatment options impact the care provided to children with cancer as well as advancements and shifts in communications. Through strategic relationships, this organization stays very relevant in this area.

Communication Tools: The use of digital platforms for fundraising, awareness campaigns, and community engagement. As stated above, this organization works hard to stay relevant and reach their constituents and donors.

Competitive Landscape: Other charities and the presence of other nonprofits working on similar causes may impact donor preferences and resource allocation. As with funding, this is a highly visible topic to watch for this organization.

Research Competition: Competition for research funding and partnerships with academic and medical institutions. This is also something that WITH Grace Initiative keeps as applicable in topics to watch.

Political Climate: Policy priorities and the government focus on healthcare and research funding can affect the availability of grants and support for childhood cancer initiatives as well as affect the organizations advocacy efforts therefore staying up to date on this is important for them.

Advocacy Influence: The effectiveness of advocacy efforts in shaping policies related to childhood cancer, which is also referenced above, is an area of interest for this organization.

Demographic Trends: Population shifts, and other factors, can influence the prevalence of childhood cancer, the demand for services as well as the donor base and trends.

Therefore, this is an area to watch as well.

Health Trends: Trends in health and disease prevalence, including emerging health issues that may impact the focus and strategy of the charity and advocacy work.

By understanding these elements, this charity can effectively strategize and operate to fulfill its mission of supporting children with cancer and their families. WITH Grace Initiative is built to take all of this into account while allowing all of their members, from board through leadership and volunteers, to have a voice of input in facilitating thorough evaluation of decisions to be made as well as innovative solutions to be presented.

They operate in an empowering environment so all voices count and this is reinforced in all team meetings, behaviors and all aspects of their activities and events.

Organizational Structure

Structure Chart

- **Board of Directors**
 - Sets strategic direction and oversees financial management.

The board is made up of multiple sections which include the founding members, an Executive Board, an Advisory Board and a Medical Advisory Board. The founding members are made up of eight individuals including the original founder. The Executive Board, which includes different expertise, is made up of five members whereas the Advisory and Medical Advisory Boards include two each. This is a total of seventeen members that weigh in to the direction, strategy, decision making and execution of the organization.

- **Executive Director**

- Manages day-to-day operations and reports to the Board.

The Executive Director of WITH Grace Initiative is a non-board member who is a compassionate, experienced leader who drives the organization's mission forward. This leader manages and navigates the day-to-day activities of the organization and takes the lead on all events and volunteer coordination. Alongside this role is the Executive Director of the Kids Committee, with the same as the above just focused on the leadership and outputs from the youth volunteers and groups.

Program Managers

- Oversee specific initiatives such as care packages and financial aid.

The organization also has a Director of Operations who serves as the oversight and manager on all financial bookkeeping, approvals, and disbursement as well as coordinates across the committees and the board for optimization of activities for mission execution.

- **Volunteers**

- Support various programs and fundraising activities.

This is an all-volunteer run organization therefore the volunteers are critical to keeping the organization moving forward and executing our mission. They have volunteers that are working on every event and other volunteers that are focused on select ones. They believe in the power of service and with the organization being on the smaller side everyone can take a leadership role and make an impact if they want to.



Lines of Authority and Decision-Making

WITH Grace Initiative follows a hierarchical structure with a clear chain of command from the Board of Directors to the Executive Director and Program Managers.

Decision-making is centralized, with strategic decisions made at the top and operational decisions delegated to program managers and team leaders.

As stated earlier, when we reviewed stakeholders, this organization operates by listening to suggestions and input from all members. They do this through meetings, communication forums, surveys and conversations. This facilitates that all areas and viewpoints are considered for successful decision making and empowering leadership in all roles and levels.

Leadership Models and Styles

In Hal G. Rainey's "Understanding and Managing Public Organizations," various leadership models and styles are discussed that can be applied to different organizational contexts, including childhood cancer nonprofits. This organization's leadership aligns with transformational and servant leadership models, emphasizing mission-driven goals, empathy, and the development of followers. The Executive Director utilizes a participative style, which includes encouraging input from other leadership members and volunteers to encourage engagement, ownership, and accountability. Transformational leadership is a significant concept that is discussed in Rainey's book and in relation to how leaders can influence and inspire their organizations and directly relates to WITH Grace Initiative. "Transformational leaders have the capacity to communicate a compelling vision that not only motivates employees but also aligns them with the broader goals of the organization." (Rainey, p. 348) "Effective transformational leaders are change agents who actively seek to transform their organizations by challenging the status quo and introducing new ideas and approaches." (Rainey, p. 358)

Organizational Culture and Values

WITH Grace Initiative's culture is characterized by compassion, community engagement, and a very strong commitment to making a difference in the lives of children with cancer. The core values include:

- Empathy and care.
- Integrity and transparency.
- Collaboration and teamwork.

This culture fosters a positive work environment, motivating members and volunteers to contribute meaningfully. As it relates to the text reading for this course, Rainey's insights into organizational culture and values provide a solid framework for understanding how a childhood cancer focused charity, like WITH Grace Initiative, can build a caring, effective, and mission-driven organization.

Rainey defines organizational culture as the shared values, beliefs, and norms that influence how employees think, feel, and behave within an organization. For WITH Grace Initiative, this culture is pivotal in driving a mission-centered approach, fostering compassion, and ensuring a deep commitment to the cause. Also, according to Rainey, values in public and nonprofit organizations often emphasize service, altruism, and social responsibility. WITH Grace Initiative exemplifies this through the core values that include empathy, dedication to patient and family support, integrity, and a relentless pursuit of improved outcomes for children with cancer. In the text, the impact on the

effectiveness of the organization includes a cohesive culture aligned with the organization's mission that can enhance performance and success. This also comes through in this organizations leaders who demonstrate understanding, transparency, and an approach that is always in service to the childhood cancer community which helps to inspire similar behaviors throughout the organization. (Rainey, Chapter Six and Thirteen)

The need for organizations to adapt their culture in response to changing environments, is also part of the readings for this course. For WITH Grace Initiative, this might involve adopting new technologies to become more efficient in process, shifting fundraising strategies, or responding to emerging health care trends to stay relevant and effective. This also applies to "leadership style and culture at higher levels tend to pervade the organization, shaping levels of trust and teamwork throughout". (Rainey, p. 426) All of these are important for the true efficacy of an organization. Rainey's text for this course also stresses the importance of continuous learning and improvement. For WITH Grace Initiative, cultivating a culture that encourages feedback, innovation, and best practices in the management of the organization can lead to sustained success and improvement. By focusing on strong values, ethics in leadership and behaviors, and a commitment to continuous improvement for the good of the team and the community we serve, we can create a positive impact on the lives of children and families affected by cancer.

Evaluation of Performance and Volunteer Behavior

The organization's values drive high levels of commitment and job satisfaction among volunteer leaders and volunteers. Performance is measured by the impact of programs and services, with a focus on feedback from families and community partners.

Performance is also measured by the growth of our volunteers that serve and that commit to orchestrate additional activities and events to better serve the childhood cancer community. When we have volunteers that continue to comeback and take an interest in leading or participating in more ways, this is a key indicator of success for us.

We also evaluate the reach and depth of our program execution and compare to our dashboard below year over year.



Leadership, Communication, and Teamwork

Leadership Strategies

Leadership at WITH Grace Initiative is focused on empowering volunteer leaders and volunteers, promoting innovation, and maintaining a clear vision for the organization.

The Executive Director plays a pivotal role in setting the tone for collaborative and

inclusive leadership and sustained contribution from volunteers to execute our mission. All of this with alignment to the strategic process, goals and directives from the Board.

Communication Approaches

The organization uses a variety of communication channels, including regular meetings, newsletters, and social media, to keep stakeholders informed and engaged. Open and transparent communication is a cornerstone of the organization's success. We also use community events as ways to perpetuate and populate our mission to key stakeholders.

Teamwork and Conflict Resolution

WITH Grace Initiative promotes teamwork through collaborative projects and team-building activities. Conflict is addressed through open dialogue, review, and discussion to understand all sides and come to a communal agreement for resolution to executing the goal, ensuring that issues are resolved constructively and in a timely manner.

Key Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Key challenges include:

- Ensuring sustainable funding in a competitive nonprofit landscape.
- Expanding reach and impact while maintaining quality.
- Navigating internal dynamics and potential volunteer burnout.

Funding is typically always an issue to focus on and worry about in most nonprofit organizations. Securing consistent and reliable funding remains a significant challenge as there are numerous other causes for limited resources not just in the childhood cancer area of focus. This requires continuous engagement with donors, grantors, and community partners to ensure the financial stability necessary for ongoing and future projects, however they are currently all volunteer run so navigating the “staffing” for this is a challenge as well.

They are always looking to extend our services to more children and families affected by childhood cancer, as the need is sadly ever growing, this presents the challenge of scaling operations without compromising the quality and personal touch that are central to their founding mission. Balancing growth with maintaining high standards of care and support is essential for this organization.

As stated before, WITH Grace Initiative relies heavily on volunteers, who are at risk of burnout due to the emotional and physical demands of supporting families battling childhood cancer and running a nonprofit. Managing internal team dynamics and ensuring the well-being of volunteers is critical to maintaining a dedicated and effective workforce to keep everything going as well as making sure the volunteers are liking what they are doing to encourage their consistency and dedication.

Areas for improvement:

- Enhancing fundraising strategies.
- Strengthening volunteer training and support.

- Improving data management and impact measurement.

To address the challenge of sustainable funding, WITH Grace Initiative can absolutely benefit from diversifying its fundraising approaches. This could include exploring new digital fundraising platforms, developing corporate partnerships, and hosting innovative events that engage a broader donor base.

As volunteers are critical to our progress, improving the training and support provided to them can help mitigate burnout and enhance their ability to contribute effectively. This includes offering training sessions, growth plans, and always fostering a sense of community and recognition among volunteers to keep them engaged, satisfied, and dedicated.

Improving their data systems and the management of them to attract funding, the organization could focus on enhancing these systems. Implementing better methods for tracking and measuring the impact of programs will allow for more informed decision-making and strategizing with the added benefit of the ability to showcase tangible results to stakeholders and potential donors.

By addressing these key challenges and focusing on these areas for improvement, WITH Grace Initiative can strengthen its foundation and continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and families affected by childhood cancer.

Recommendations for Change Initiatives

Restructuring

WITH Grace Initiative could consider implementing a more decentralized structure to enhance flexibility and responsiveness at the program level. Consideration to add paid staff, once fundraising is at a consistent and stable level, to ensure consistency is a long term goal they should be and are working towards.

Cultural Shifts

WITH Grace Initiative could encourage a culture of continuous learning and innovation to adapt to changing needs and environments. Being fluid, adaptable and flexible is so important to stay effective in executing the mission in changing environments.

Leadership Development

Invest in leadership training programs to build capacity and foster future leaders within the organization would be another area of opportunity for this organization. This is so critical as not all of the volunteer leaders have significant leadership experience, the organization would like to provide this to them not only for the benefit of this organization but also for their own personal growth and plans.

Process Improvements

Streamline administrative processes and enhance data management systems and customer service platforms to improve efficiency and decision-making is also all ways to optimize and could be implemented here. Constantly evaluating current systems and being open to change and evolution is critical for a smaller organization like this to keep functioning.

Conclusion

WITH Grace Initiative is a vital organization making a significant impact on the lives of children with cancer. By addressing the identified challenges and implementing the recommended changes, the organization can further enhance its effectiveness and sustainability to continue to serve for many years to come. All of these suggestions would also encourage great growth so that this organization can continue their good work for the community.

References

- Rainey, H. G. (2014). Understanding and Managing Public Organizations. Jossey-Bass.
 - WITH Grace Initiative, 2024, WITHGraceInitiative.org
-