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SPEAKERS

Monique Curry-Mims, Valerie Johnson

Valerie Johnson 00:01
Hello, and welcome back to beyond philanthropy. I am Valerie. I'm here today with Monique, of course, and we are going to be talking about stakeholder engagement. I know in our last episode, we mentioned bringing Erin back and continuing our conversation. And that did not work out for this month, but we will make it happen. So today, it's just us, your lovely co hosts. And we're talking stakeholder engagement. And we kind of want to look at it from a community centered perspective, and what that looks like, compared to kind of the more traditional version of stakeholder engagement. So, Monique, hi.

Monique Curry-Mims 00:38
Hi. Yeah, I'm really, you know, it's like a last minute change. But I'm really excited about this topic. Because, you know, stakeholder engagement is something that I really push with all of my clients, because I feel like, if you are really trying to serve the community and be about the community, then the voice of those people internally and externally, really need to be included in what you're doing and how you're setting your programming, how you're trying to meet your mission, and just really how you're trying to uplift that community. So I think that it is very important. And I think that it goes beyond evaluating or speaking to them at the end of the program and being like, how much did you like it on a scale of one to five, like likerts are awesome. But if you're really involving them, and really having their voice at the table, they're actually informing what you're doing. Right? It goes back to an earlier conversation that we had around lived experience, and that expertise, and really making sure that you're looking at all of your stakeholders, as experts understanding that there, there are some biases in what they're saying, but really trying to understand what is valuable, and how you can actually grow your program and organization. But I want to back up, I want to ask you to talk about traditional stakeholder engagement, right? Lets like set the table first.

Valerie Johnson 02:00
Yeah. So traditionally, stakeholders, I think, have minimal engagement in philanthropy, in general and in nonprofit organizations in general. I mean, I think if you think back to the history of nonprofits, and how nonprofits got started, and were created and why they were created, it was some very well meaning

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wealthy folks who thought they knew best what a community needed, and decided to start a charity to provide those things. And it never was built on a theory of Let's ask the people what they need, it was, you know, back after, you know, the stock market crash during the Great Depression, when there were a lot of hungry people out in the world, and there were, you know, people who weren't hungry, who said, Oh, I have food I can share. And I'll do that. And that was an easier version of nonprofits than we have now. But because that's kind of how nonprofits were built. That's how we've evolved as well. And we've always, you know, traditionally been a kind of organization that has a mission and does what we think is needed to achieve that mission with very little input from the people who are receiving services from us as an industry, not just, you know, my organization or any of the organizations I've worked with, I think it's industry wide. Yeah, traditionally, it's it's just not a lot of input. And there's no mechanism to force us to do so until recently. So no funders ever made that a requirement. No donors ever wanted to see that as part of the program design. It was it really, the whole entire system was built upon this, you know, we're going to come in, and we're going to tell you what's good for you. And we're going to do it and here you go, you can have it.

Monique Curry-Mims 03:51
So the first thing that came to my mind was reactive instead of proactive, right? Like they're not upfront engaged. And like I said, They're typically on the back end, like, did we help you? Did you like the program? You know, what was missing? But, you know, I've literally been in conversations where someone who was receiving services gave their opinion. And they'd be like, yeah, they don't know what they need. And I'm like, do they not though? Right, like, you're just going to discredit, like everything I just said about what they needed, because you professionally academically, whatever, like don't agree with it, but it's like, they're in the situation, right? Like, they might not know how to go about getting it, but like, they know what they need, or at least the inkling of it, right, like, you know, they don't need a million dollars. No one needs a million dollars, like right now. But like it'd be helpful in a lot of instances, right? money would be needed right now, especially right now with the eviction crisis. On the uprise that we're having right now, you know, and a lot of things like we're gonna go off topic, right? Because it reminds you of a conversation and we were talking about The eviction crisis, as well as the joblessness and you know, the fact that there's all these jobs that are open, but we have this like unemployment crisis where everybody's going on unemployment. And I'm like, so you know, it's one of two things that are happening like one, we've realized that we can be productive at home. And my life is a lot more easier with kids working at home, like I work for myself. But you know, if I didn't like, going into the office would be like, I've got a commute, if I do all these things I've got to juggle. So people don't want to go back into the office, because their life is I can still make money, I can still be productive at home. And then the other side of it is, if I'm making more money on unemployment, than I am with a job, then we really need to sit down as a country and talk about livable wage and the minimum wage, because that's what the problem is. It's not that people are lazy. It's that you're asking me to take a pay cut.

Valerie Johnson 04:19
I've actually heard that too. Yeah

Monique Curry-Mims 05:04
and it shouldn't be it shouldn't be that way. But again, right, that goes back to stakeholder engagement. It's like, No, you need to go back to work, get off unemployment, but it's like going on unemployment is

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going to actually make me poor to go off it and go back to work. So I need more money. So instead of just saying come back to work, how about you give me more money? I mean, that's the whole corporate america thing.

Valerie Johnson 06:15
yeah, but it plays into nonprofits too. two things came to mind. One is there was there have been a couple of studies where organizations have given people experiencing homelessness money, just straight up, given the money to see what would happen. And the vast majority of the people who received money, used it to secure an apartment and then to secure a job and then remain housed. And I think there was a lot of surprised with that. Results.

Monique Curry-Mims 06:48
Why?

Valerie Johnson 06:49
Because because there's a lot of assumption

Monique Curry-Mims 06:51
that they're going to just use it on alcohol and drugs

Valerie Johnson 06:53
exactly

Monique Curry-Mims 06:54
Wow

Valerie Johnson 06:55
exactly. I think there were a lot of people who think that people who are experiencing homelessness are experiencing homelessness by choice, because they're choosing to take what resources they have and put it into nefarious things, whether it be drugs or you know, alcohol, or whatever the case may be. And that is largely not the case like it a lot of times it is people who just needed help and didn't have the Safety Network that maybe you or I have. And if you ask them what they need, they say money. And if you actually follow through and give them money, they, for the most part, put it towards things that you or I would put the money towards.

Monique Curry-Mims 07:36
Yeah, again, I think that goes back to stakeholder engagement, and really understanding what the problem is because I've actually had experiences where, you know, I used to work at 22nd market, and I used to go to Coventry deli for lunch. And it was always as the same homeless gentleman that was sitting right outside. He had this little catchy little song little phrase, he would say, and everybody knew it. And I would get one day I gave him money, I will always like give them something I gave him money later on that day, how to run an errand, and I saw him walking into a liquor store. And I was like, Okay, you know what, I'm gonna give him food, and stop giving him money. So I started giving him food, and he literally threw the food in my face, right? So I think because the homeless people that we interact

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with, are more of that. And no one's actually considering the people who are in shelters or the people who are actually in programs actually getting the help. And understanding what those differences of those type of people are. And they just always go with what they interact with, and not having a full understanding of what is actually happening with the homeless issue in our city or in our head.

Valerie Johnson 08:40
And for that gentleman in particular, like he did have a job. His job was he sat on that corner every day. And he earned as much as he needed to go get his, you know, bottle of whatever he wanted. And that was the kind of life he wanted to lead. And we work with some similar folks in my organization. And I think at the end of the day, my thing is, they still deserve a place to live, like, yeah, still deserve to have running water and access to like a toilet and a shower. And if he chooses to, you know, go panhandle for a few hours every day so that he can support his, you know, alcohol, then that's his choice, but I still would hope that he has a place to go home and sleep at night. And then one of the other things that came to mind is I just saw a video the other day. And it really irritated me because it definitely had white savior vibes. It was it was a they all do. But it was a white guy who was filming a black man who was experiencing homelessness, and he was saying he did ask what the guy needed. Which is like, like we said, not usual that someone would actually ask them when experiencing homelessness, what they need, but he asked the guy he said what do you need, like what do you need to get out of this situation and the guy said, Listen, I go interview for jobs, but I have no place to take a shower. So nobody wants to grant me an interview because I don't smell good. I don't look good. I don't have nice clean clothes on. They asked me to fill out a resume, I don't have an address to put on the employment application, there is nowhere for them to background check me because I don't have contact information, like I don't have a phone number. So there's no way for them to call me back and tell me whether I got the job or not. And he said there's no way for me to get out of this cycle until I get a job. But the barriers to getting a job for me are huge, because of my situation. And that's all I really need. Like I need somebody to take a chance on me, I need somebody to you know, just let me let me have a job. He's like, I don't even want you to give me the apartment first. I'll work for the apartment. But I can't even get that. So while I applaud the man who was filming him for actually asking what he needs, and then hopefully supplying it

Monique Curry-Mims 10:56
Right

Valerie Johnson 11:00
At the same time, like this man shouldn't have to, like, sell his soul on a video that goes viral in order to get what he needs to just have his basic needs met. And honestly, I don't know what city it was filmed in, but like why aren't there resources for people like him in his city that he can take advantage of? And if there are, are they not providing what he needs? Like Are they not engaging with the stakeholders and really understanding what their needs are? It just brought up a lot of questions for me.

Monique Curry-Mims 11:30
You know, I am a little removed from social services on a government level. You know, I do have some some city clients, but I actually wonder, especially because it's taxpayer dollars, right? Like how much actual community involvement is there? And not performative, right? Because everybody sat through,

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you know, budget conversations, and the budget still ended up being what the budget was, regardless of people's input. But when we're actually looking at the social services that are being handed out and understanding that, yes, they're most likely federal dollars, and they come with stipulations. But are we actually providing services the way that they need to be provided because I've actually heard like that story, but on a level of, but there's a there's a local kind of like social service, like job job placement, right. And in order for them to get the job they need a GED is but it's like, okay, so help me get a GED like, No, you go figure that out on your own, and then come back when you get the GED. And it's like, if you're really here to actually help me and you know that GED's are required or a high school equivalency. And you know, a lot of these people don't have that, then why is there not help for that, right? Or at least Why is there not a partnership with an organization that offers this like, okay, go through this program first. And once you complete and get that, then we'll be right here, or your case manager will be working with you the whole entire way, just kicking them out and hoping they come back once they get done. I think that's just a vicious cycle that hinders a lot of people. And then people wonder why, you know, the gun violence is crazy here its because people are trying to eat and they're being hindered. And because you kick them back out into the street and tell them to come back when they are acceptable. They're like, Okay, well, I'm gonna do what I need to do, either while I'm getting there, or like, I don't have time to go to school and get a GED. So I'm just going to be out here hustling and grinding.

Valerie Johnson 13:41
it's a it is a very vicious cycle. And I think it really, I mean, we've talked about this before, but it's it's so many things, right? It's not just one thing that feeds into putting people in this situation. It's so many factors. And one of the factors here with the government funded, you know, organizations or social services is that there's incredibly strict stipulations on what those funds can and cannot go towards. So, in the example you just provided, my guess is that they are funded for the job training program and not the GED program. Now, should they be partnered with an organization that provides GEDs and help to smooth the transition from one to the other? 100%

Monique Curry-Mims 14:28
Absolutely.

Valerie Johnson 14:30
But at the end of the day, somebody does need to pay for that extension of the case management services. And if the GED organization getting the GED money, doesn't want to do it or doesn't have enough private philanthropy to cover it. And the job training program is in the same boat where they're only getting as much money as they're giving through government contracting, they don't have private philanthropy to cover any extras, then we're going to continue to be stuck in this vicious cycle where each organization is going to do the piece that they're contracted to do so there are some more organizations that are kind of breaking out of that, but it is very dependent, I think on private philanthropy because you really have to be able to supplement what you're receiving from the government in order to actually do what you want to do as an organization and not just do the bare minimum. And that comes with privilege, too, right? Because the smaller organizations aren't going to have as robust of a private philanthropy model or, you know, strategy in place, that's really going to get them what they need. So they're always going to be at a disadvantage. So even if they are doing

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everything, right, and they're listening to their community, and they're providing the right resources, they probably don't fit a government contract. So then they're really scraping for the money to actually be able to do what they know their community needs. It's an incredibly vicious cycle.

Monique Curry-Mims 15:48
You know, and the first thing that comes to mind with this part of the conversation is the desperate need for advocacy. And especially on the nonprofit side, right, because the federal government is not going to take the time to engage community members in individual cities, right. So really having the ability of a nonprofit to understand what their community needs, in take that need to their Rep. So that the rep who is part of the federal government has that understanding. So when they're making laws - Case in point, I was on a call, couple weeks ago with the city regarding a grant that they're coming out with, and, you know, everyone's like, you know, it's a government, it's a city grant, you guys have asked for reimbursable is, and we're all grassroots organizations, and the person was like, yeah, you know, the government, like, you know, this is what they do, like, they're gonna make it hard. And I'm like, You're, you're the government, like, you're really sitting here as like, I don't want to give too much away and get myself in trouble. But like, you're you're literally the government. And you're sitting here telling the people that, you know, the government, and this is the way the government is, if you know that and you're part of leading the government, why are you not changing that, right? Like, why continue to do these tried and not true practices, where you're not actually listening to what needs to happen in the communities to get the money to the ground to not have stipulations on where it can or can't be spent or really to broaden where it can be spent. So I think that internally within our organizations, we really need to look at our policies and procedures. And this is on the, you know, on the foundation level, on a nonprofit level, and definitely on the government level, because all three of these, all three of these stakeholder types, even though they might not blatantly, or intentionally, like work together, they are all in this together and helping the community

Valerie Johnson 17:51
or hindering

Monique Curry-Mims 17:53
or hindering, and a lot of these people so you know, I'm gearing up for my leading philanthropy presentation. And really looking at some some reports that came out there really talked about the increase of I think it was between 2018 and 2020. And the amount of BIPOC people that work in nonprofits, and that it increased from I think, like 37 to 45% of philanthropic staff are now bipoc, which is which is amazing, right? Because, again, like they are most likely they're representing the communities that are being funded. And if you're not actually including the voice of those people, even on a organizational level, and then again, you get caught up almost in that savior complex. Because as much as we talk about external stakeholder engagement, that is a lot of work as well, right? There's a lot of work that goes into hosting focus groups and putting out surveys and make sure people attend and communicate and answer calls and text messages. I mean, that's the whole like, staff department unto itself. So if you're not able to actually include the voice in your development along the way, you're either really not going to do it, because you don't have the time and the resources to do it. I think that if we're really allowing people to one be of service in that capacity, and really be part of those organizations, and having them in there with voice and not just being there, like we've now had our

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diversity numbers, or, you know, we were of the community This is how many people in the community work in organization. Great, but how are they actually impacting the programs and services that you're offering? How are they actually impacting the organization? I think internally that has to be a real big part of your stakeholder engagement, making sure your board and your staff are representative of who you're serving. And not just like, Oh, yeah, we've got a black guy. Yeah, but that black guy lives over there and he's a millionaire and he doesn't he's so far removed from the program over there that he doesn't really understand. Right? So that's definitely Something that, in my opinion, professionally and personally, that I think that, you know, we need to focus on.

Valerie Johnson 20:07
Yeah, for sure. I it's so it's so interesting to me that there are so many nonprofits that are not representative of the communities that they serve. Because I don't know, I come from a social services background. So all of this comes with social services hat on. But we serve a pretty diverse population of people just based on doing social services, and all of the, you know, systemic issues that lead to people of color and non white people, you know, needing more social services than white people. And it's hard to serve a population that doesn't look like you and be able to build the kind of trust that you need in order to provide those social services. So I find it really interesting, when like an organization that is 90-95%, white folks, goes out and tries to do like, homeless outreach. And, you know, they're not, you know, they're, they're working with, you know, 80, 75% black people, and they're mostly white people. And they're coming in and saying, like, Hey, I got you, I got a house for you. Come on. Yeah. Come on, get in the van. Come on, we'll take you and like, how are you not skeptical of that? I'm sorry.

Monique Curry-Mims 21:27
you know, I have been. So that has been something that has been on my mind. And part of me felt like a jerk for thinking it. Because part of me was like, why, like, why is this what you want to do? Yeah, all the things in the world that you can do as a career, all the communities that you can help, because there are a lot of non people of color who are lacking education and are underserved. Like that is literally what drove the last election right? Or election before, right? Like that, that does exist. Right.

Valerie Johnson 22:01
Right.

Monique Curry-Mims 22:02
So but you chose to work in North Philadelphia?

Valerie Johnson 22:04
Mm hmm. Yeah.

Monique Curry-Mims 22:06
where it's going to be harder for those people to trust you and really show up. But you decided to and I'm like, you know, and even just just this conversation, I'm like, having, having flashbacks. I'm having, like, thoughts of like, elementary education, and learning about like the crusades, and just colonialism, right? It's just, it just felt it just feels real awkward to me, where I'm always thinking like, and I feel like a

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jerk for thinking that way. Because if you're a good person you want to help like you should want to help. But also, at the same time, I have like this, like dueling, dueling questioning in my head.

Valerie Johnson 22:47
I do, too. I am a well meaning white lady, who is asking myself the same questions. I'm like, why are you really here? Why do you care so much about this? And like, you know, what draws you to like, do what you do? Like why do you get up at 530 in the morning and run with people who don't look like you? And why are you you know, pursuing a foster parenting license, and most likely going to have kids that don't look like you? And what does that mean? Like? Are you that person?

Monique Curry-Mims 23:14
let's not go into the conversation of the opposite race adoption. I've always wondered about that about that, too.

Valerie Johnson 23:20
It's, there's, there's just so many things. And I think, you know, the fact that I'm even questioning my motives and trying to make sure that I'm doing this for pure intentions, I hope makes me slightly less wrong. But at the same time, like,

Monique Curry-Mims 23:37
nobody might be wrong, right? Like you, like I said, like, I felt like a jerk for thinking this way. Because if you're a good person, and you're intentionally wanting to help, by all means, like, there's enough need of help to go around. But you know, there are some people who are not intentional with what they do. And it creates a level of distrust, especially when they're not engaging their stakeholders, and they're just more so dictating, you know, how they're going to go about it, and how they're going to impact and raise, I mean, you know, what, and that goes for it. And that goes for actually like anybody, right? That even goes for a lot of these, like smaller nonprofits and grassroots organizations, right? They're really trying to help, and a lot of them are grounded in the community, right? Because they're of that community and want to help, but when they start doing programming, sometimes you really have to sit back and say, What is the need in this community for their programming, right? Like, if you're wanting to do art, or you're wanting to do I don't know, whatever you want to do, right? Like, what is the need? And how is that actually helping this community? Because you might be in a community of people don't like art. Right? So if you don't if they don't like art, and now the people that you're serving aren't even of that community. Or it's like, oh, you're doing art projects I want to be I want to do an art project. Right? But you don't. But that's all you want to do, right? Like I like or I don't want to learn about my inner feelings. I don't want to, I don't want to see the world through art, but like, you know, I want to be part of this cool project, or I want to go swimming. But I don't see the correlation between swimming and staying off the streets because I'm going to swim for an hour, and then we'll go back and hit the block when I'm done. So you really have to be cognizant of you know, what you're trying to do and making sure that it is. The need is there for it.

Valerie Johnson 25:27
This reminds me of the movie late night. Did you see the movie late night?

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Monique Curry-Mims 25:32
Yes

Valerie Johnson 25:34
Remember when they were doing those on the street skits. And they had some late night is a movie about a white female, late night host

Monique Curry-Mims 25:43
with Mindy Kaling, who I love

Valerie Johnson 25:47
Yes! They're trying to make the host more relevant. So they want her to get out and do like Billy on the street style skits. So they decided to have her use her white privilege to help people on the street. So she, you know, walks up to two black men and says, Hey, what do you have trouble doing? Like, what can you not do because of the color of your skin. And one of the guys says, You know, I really have a hard time hailing taxis like they never stopped for me. And she said, Oh, I can

Monique Curry-Mims 26:13
Let me call your taxi

Valerie Johnson 26:14
And she hails the taxi. And the guy said, I don't have anywhere to go right now. And she said, That's not the point white saviorism at its best, and just like shoved them into the cab and they leave. And it's so like, first of all, I really enjoyed that the whole movie, but also that scene like I was cracking up because it's so representative of a lot of what nonprofits do. Like we don't, we think we know what they need. And we pretend to ask, I mean, like she did ask what he needs in a general sense. And then she took it incredibly literally, and made it happen right away in a way that wasn't helpful to him.

Monique Curry-Mims 26:53
Do you watch New Amsterdam, have we talked about New Amsterdam.

Valerie Johnson 26:55
No

Monique Curry-Mims 26:56
Oh my gosh. So you know, so I Love New Amsterdam. So New Amsterdam is actually based on the former director of Bellevue Hospital. So the first year was kind of like, almost historic, like he wrote a book like he was going through cancer and all these things like that. So the first year is like loosely based on his life, and the second year, which is this past year. I'm not sure it's probably removed and had a lot to do with COVID. But it also did a lot had a lot to do with social injustice of what was going on. So there's this like, really like, well to do white director who wants to change the world through his hospital. And there were just so many speeches, right about, like, how we're going to change and how I'm going to do this, how I'm going to do that. And then a lot of people were like, Okay, so what are we doing? So one, one instance, right? So they were trying to do telehealth, right, and he got this whole big

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approval and all these things like that. And they were like, Oh, well, people don't have access to computers. That's why, you know, telehealth isn't working. So he went to his one of his board members who runs a tech company says, I need you to donate, you know, how 1000 laptops tablets, done, did it. They hand them out? And they're like, we don't have internet, how are we supposed to get on here? Like, now you want me to do it? And it was just so like, he was just so quick to act like, oh, here's the problem, I've got a solution. And they're like, No, that wasn't the problem. Like, okay, that was part of the problem. But the real problem was, I don't have Wi Fi, like, I could have gone to the library, there's a there's a internet thing, whatever the case may be right. And it was a lot of that or, you know, they started talking about diversity of leadership. And he basically wanted to, like, resign and make, I think she was like the head of like immunology or something that, like the new director, and he was like, I'm quitting, you're now the new director. She's like, but I don't want to be. And he was like, but no, like, you have to be like, we need to, we need to be at the forefront of this. And we need a black woman at the helm. And she's like, but that's not like, here you go asking a black woman to save everything again, like, I don't want that that is not the solution. Right. But they're just, you know, so quick to act without actually thinking without actually consulting the communities or, or the people that they're intending to help. I mean, it was really, you know, it was it was it was, I'm sorry, I can go on and on about it. There was one other scene where like he was, he wanted all of that he realized that there was a pay gap, right. So he pulled all of the like, you know, white heads of departments, everybody and pull them into it was really like a closet and ask them all to take a pay cut so that they can bump up the other people's salaries and in walks one of the like, nurses and he was like, Oh, so you guys really do host secret white meetings? Wow. I know. And they all looked at each other like, Oh shit, and then everybody just like dispersed, after that. He was like, I didn't think it was true, but like you guys really do host secret white. Not what it was, but like, you know, that's what it was.

Valerie Johnson 30:03
First of all, I have to watch this show, I knew you were gonna say Wi Fi because that happens a lot like we were, we were more ahead of the curve than they were like we did make a push for telehealth access. And we did include Wi Fi, for telehealth access, but only because we heard over and over and over from our program participants that Wi Fi is the problem. Like it's not necessarily the technology, it is the technology. But even if you have the technology, if you don't have Wi Fi, the technology is useless.

Monique Curry-Mims 30:31
Right! I'm playing solitaire.

Valerie Johnson 30:33
exactly our CEO calls on wireless internet, the new redlining because internet access is really important in determining whether you have access to resources or not. So I will not take credit for coining that term. But she has said it a couple of times. And it really resonates because I think about the last time my electric went out for 24 hours, and I just about lost my mind, I couldn't do anything, my doorbell didn't work. My music didn't work, my TV didn't work, my lights didn't work, because I usually tell Alexa to turn my lights on and off. And I couldn't do that. And I just like the amount of things that I rely on for Wi Fi. I can't imagine not having it, not having it for 24 hours, like ruined me for a couple of days. And

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there are people who are living without it every single day and you're trying to help those people, you really just have to be aware of how that affects their ability to do everything else.

Monique Curry-Mims 31:32
Exactly. But it all starts with engaging your stakeholders and engaging your community. I mean, we I mean, we talk a lot about or we've been talking a lot about the community. You know, we mentioned a little bit about staff. And I think that the other key thing is your board and also your donors, right. You know, we talked a lot about changing the narrative with the donors to have them understand more about what the needs of the community are. And I think it's the same for the board as well, like really, really having the board understand that, you know, we're a nonprofit, and we're here to really serve these people. And you either really need to educate yourself and really get that I mean, I don't know how many board members actually go into the communities, like how many board members actually provide services, right, like, you know, they might provide tutoring, you know, once in a while, but how many of them are actually in those communities really understanding what's going on, while they're supposed to have responsibility over an organization? You know, that might be something that is, should be a requirement, right? We shouldn't you know, that's something that if you're going to really be a part of an organization, you really have to understand all the way around, like what it is that organization has to do, because how do you make decisions in the void?

Valerie Johnson 32:55
People do it. They shouldn't be doing it. There are quite a lot of nonprofit organizations out there that are that, you know, the boards are making decisions without understanding of the community that they're serving, which is scary, and unsettling. And as we're talking about stakeholders, I think it's also important to point out that there are a lot of stakeholders that maybe aren't the first ones that come to mind, but still need to be included in some way. So a specific example would be for the organization I work for now, pathways to housing PA, we have 550 apartments, scattered site apartments across the city, they're all market rate apartments. So our folks aren't all living in one building, they're living in just, you know, a regular apartment. And that means we have landlords, lots and lots of landlords that we work with, very regularly to maintain and rent those 550 apartments. So they're a huge part of our stakeholder journey, because a lot of what we do relies on their cooperation, their, you know, inclusion. So that's something and then, you know, we have primary care services on site. So we've developed a really strong partnership with a local pharmacy. And they really, in some ways are a stakeholder as well, because they're a community pharmacy. They are, you know, serving our community where our office is located. And they are very instrumental in helping us to, you know, move some of what we're trying to move forward forward. Like we're providing medication for opioid use disorder, which is incredibly difficult to get filled as a prescription or get a prescription for period. And having stakeholders like our pharmacy is key in our ability to provide that service and that service has been requested over and over again by the folks that we serve. So really thinking through not just the people that you're serving, not just the people that are staffing it or overseeing it on the board, but all of the other staples. leaders that are involved in the cycle of what your nonprofit does, right? Your nonprofit partners, could be vendors, like, there's so many different voices that kind of have to come to the table to make sure that you're doing everything as efficiently as you can, I guess. And at the end of the day, though, it all comes back to the people that you would not exist as a nonprofit if there was a need for your service. And if you're doing it right, you want to make sure that you're actually providing you're not just calling a

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cab for no reason you are calling a cab when a cab is needed. So I think we've talked a little bit about community centric fundraising on the podcast before and we plan to talk about it again, because of course we do. But I think that's one of the key tenants of community centric fundraising is that your fundraising should be informed by those that you're serving and the community that you're operating in, in the same way that your program should be. So that's something that we will continue to explore, I think on our podcast.

Monique Curry-Mims 36:07
definitely, definitely. I mean, this has been, I mean, I hope I hope we talked about the topic.

Valerie Johnson 36:16
We said the word stakeholder a lot. So I feel like we're good here.

Monique Curry-Mims 36:19
Sorry, guys. We had a whole different topic planned for today. This is the last minute but we hope that you guys are able to really gain something out of this crazy conversation of ours. And we hope that you join us again for our next episode, which will be on DEI, diversity, equity inclusion, but we hope you can join us again next month. This has been beyond philanthropy.

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