

Mergers are a team sport: How executive directors and boards must work together

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

Alan Mucatel

Since joining Rising Ground as CEO in 2009, **Alan Mucatel** has led the 188-year-old organization through a remarkable period of renewal and expansion. When he arrived at Rising Ground, Mr. Mucatel inherited a shrinking organization that was facing significant financial and programmatic challenges. Today, he is credited with transforming the organization into an innovative and effective provider of human services for children, families, and adults in the New York metropolitan area.

Since 2009, Rising Ground has undergone a tremendous transformation. It has launched more than \$45 million in new programs and services; merged with Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families; renamed and rebranded itself to be more reflective of its work; and grown its budget from \$56 million to approximately \$130 million. In reshaping the organization, Mr. Mucatel brought in new senior managers, created a bold strategic plan, developed and applied new performance metrics, and led his team to identify new opportunities for services and design pioneering programs to support individuals with complex needs. The New York Community Trust awarded Rising Ground the coveted Gold Nonprofit Excellence Award in Overall Management in recognition of many of these accomplishments, and regulators frequently use Rising Ground as a model for other nonprofit agencies to follow.

In 2018, Mr. Mucatel was named to City & State's 2018 Nonprofit Power 50. He is the Vice Chair and Founder of the Collaborative for Children and Families, a children's Health Home providing services to 25+ human services nonprofit organizations and services and Treasurer of the Interagency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies. Prior to joining Rising Ground, Mr. Mucatel was the executive director of Cerebral Palsy of North Jersey (CPNJ). He previously worked at the Coalition for the Homeless, first as its development director and then as deputy director.

Mr. Mucatel earned an MBA in Economics and an MA in Politics from New York University, and received a BA in Government from Wesleyan University.



José Martin Jara

José Martin Jara, is an attorney at the law firm of Fox Rothschild, LLP, focusing his practice on employee benefits and employment litigation. He advises fiduciaries and boards of directors on governance issues and compliance with ERISA, the federal retirement law. José also advises clients on employment law issues, including executive contracts, workplace policies, and non-competes.

He is currently Vice-President and Immediate Past President of the Board of Rising Ground. As President, he led the Board in changing the agency's name from Leake & Watts Services, Inc. to Rising Ground, and in merging with Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families, which became a subsidiary of Rising Ground. The combined multifaceted nonprofit agency impacts more than 25,000 children and adults in 50 different programs, such as family foster care; adoption; special education schools for children with emotional and learning disabilities; and unaccompanied migrant child program to name a few.

José is also currently Board President of The Center for Family Support, Inc., a nonprofit agency that provides services and programs for individuals with developmental disabilities.



Robert Schanz

Robert (Bob) Schanz is a consultant in the field of real estate and construction. He advises clients on business development, project development, cost reviews, material procurement and organizational procedures.

Bob is currently a Board Member of Rising Ground and was past President of Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families. Bob worked on the merger with Leake & Watts which is now Rising Ground. The combined organizations created a multifaceted nonprofit agency which impacts more than 25,000 children and adults in 50 different programs such as family foster care; adoption; special education in schools for children with emotional and learning disabilities; and unaccompanied migrant child program to name a few.

Bob is also currently Board President of Growth and Development Services which helps inner city youth in upper Manhattan through after school and summer programs; counseling services; training programs for aspiring mental health and youth workers; and community advocacy.

Bob is a past Board Member of Earth Day NY which dealt with environmental advocacy and sustainable environmental solutions.



Karen Dixon

Karen Dixon is the Executive Director of Harlem Dowling-West Side Center for Children and Family Services. Harlem Dowling-West Side Center for Children and Family Services was founded in 1836 as the Colored Orphan's Asylum. The agency provides Family Preservation, Family Support Services for children with development disabilities, After School programming, and Emergency Food Pantry services.

Karen holds a Bachelors of Arts from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and a Masters of Social Work from Hunter College School of Social Work. Ms. Dixon completed Columbia Business School Executive Education, Institute for Not-for-Profit Management in 1999, and is a Licensed Masters of Social Work participating in various advocacy initiatives throughout the City and State.

Since her appointment as Executive Director in 2012, Ms. Dixon's management and leadership has expanded programming and increased networking throughout the Harlem community. Advocating for children and families for adequate child care services, after school programming, and health and mental health services, are among her daily activities. In 2016, Harlem Dowling-West Side Center and The Children's Village, Inc. completed the Home for Harlem Dowling building project with 60 units of affordable housing including 12 studio units earmarked for children leaving the foster care system.

Ms. Dixon co-chairs the NYC Chapter of the Network for Social Work Management, mentors new Executive Directors and Women of Color, and serves on the board of several organizations. She works closely with the National Association of Social Workers- NYC Chapter, Columbia University Teachers College, the Human Services Council, the Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies, and Black Agency Executives. Ms. Dixon is a member of Manhattan Community Board 10, serving on the Health and Human Services and Land Use committees. She is also the Chair of the Land Use committee and is the Chair of the NYC Health & Hospital Harlem Community Advisory Board. Ms. Dixon is also the 2nd Vice Chair for NYC Health & Hospital Council of Community Advisory Boards.

Remaining steadfast in her commitment to children, she continues her efforts to ensure that they can be safe in their communities with their families. **Jean Patton**, Board Co-Chair for Harlem Dowling.



Jean Patton

Jean Patton joined the Harlem Dowling Board in 2009 and became Board Co-Chair in 2012 serving with Jaye Smith until 2019 and then Flor Saltiel from 2019 until the present. During this time the Board forged a strategic alliance with Children's Village which enabled the building of Home for Harlem Dowling, a combination of office, supportive and affordable housing in Harlem. Working with the Executive Director and an outside consultant, we conducted an organization assessment that reset the strategic focus of the agency on critical strengths. Currently, the Board's focus is on developing long term Board capacity to support Harlem Dowling's future. Ms. Patton is retired from a long career as a Leadership Development executive in the financial services industry: UBS, SIAC (New York Stock Exchange), NatWest USA. She has an undergraduate degree in Psychology from CCNY and advanced professional certificates in Organizational Development, HR Leadership and Executive Coaching.



Richard Goerg

Richard Goerg, is the CFO & Vice President for Finance and Administration at The Children's Village. Richard oversees Finance and Accounting for The Children's Village (CV), a nonprofit organization that serves over 17,000 children and families each year by providing services that help families remain together, provide residential care when children must be away from family, and work to create new family through foster and adoption. Richard manages CV's \$130 million budget and endowment, overseeing the Information Technology and Operations Departments, which control an extensive network and telephony, and over 60 buildings, with 180 acres in Dobbs Ferry and 15+ other locations across the greater New York area. He also provides all financial oversight and management of CV's affiliates Harlem Dowling and Bridge Builders. Richard has a Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Fairleigh Dickinson University, and has over 40 years of high-level experience in finance and management. He worked for several large for-profit corporations including Merck Drugs and CSX Railroad before moving into the non-profit world 23 years ago. Outside of work, he is very active working with kids, umpiring softball, and spending time with family.



Keith Little

Keith M. Little was appointed President & CEO of SCO Family of Services on January 1, 2018. In this role, he is responsible for oversight of the agency's extensive continuum of residential and community-based child welfare, early childhood, youth development, family support, special needs, and homeless services.

A hands-on leader with over 30 years of experience at state, city, and nonprofit organizations, Mr. Little brings considerable expertise in the provision of mental health, health care, child welfare, and juvenile justice programs.

He has held senior organizational and program leadership positions at the New York State Office of Mental Health. He served as Associate Commissioner and Deputy Director at OMH, where he was responsible for the oversight of State Operations.

His experience includes posts at the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services and the New York City Department of Health. Mr. Little earned an MPA from Baruch College, City University of New York, and a bachelor's degree from University of Bridgeport. He sits on the Boards of Directors of COFCCA; the Collaboration of Children and Families (CCF); the Priority and Strategy Council for the Human Services Council; Intellectual and Developmentally Disabled Child Welfare Collaboration; and the Black Agency Executives.



John MacIntosh

John is the Managing Partner of SeaChange Capital Partners spending much of his time exploring new ways that SeaChange might help nonprofits facing complex challenges. Prior to joining SeaChange in 2008, John was a partner at Warburg Pincus in that global private equity firm's New York, Tokyo, and London offices. Earlier in his career John worked as a software engineer and a management consultant. John has a BSE from Princeton University and did a mid-life MSc in Philosophy and Public Policy from the London School of Economics. In conjunction with his role at SeaChange, he serves as an observer on a number of nonprofit boards (or finance committees), is a trustee of the John Jay Foundation, the Brooklyn Heights Association, and the Putney School, and is an equity investment advisor to MicroVest Capital Management. Since 2008, SeaChange has been working to support -- through grants, referrals, and pro-bono advice -- nonprofits leaders in exploring various forms of sustained collaboration including mergers, JVs, back-office sharing, etc. In this capacity, John has been directly involved in more than 500 explorations and SeaChange has made 200+ grants.





QUESTIONS

Industry Consolidation Workgroup Members

Keith Little, CEO, SCO Family of Service

John MacIntosh, Managing Partner, Sea Change

Beth Covelli, Executive Director, New York Counseling for Change, LLC

Jeremy Klemanski, President & CEO, Helio Health

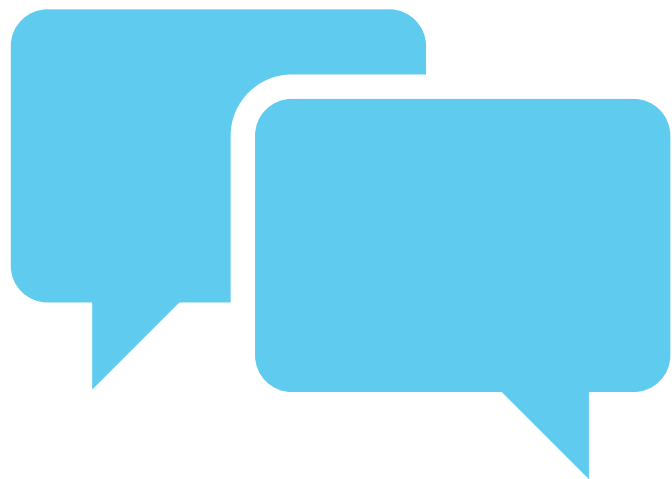
Matthew Burke Partner Cerini and Associates, CPA's, LLP

Monica Oss, CEO & Senior Associate, Open Minds

Penny Greene, Associate Executive Director, Farnham Family Services

Sherry Tucker, CEO, WellLife Network

Fern Zagor, Principal, Fern Zagor Consulting



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical Assistance

If you would like to have a private conversation about your organization, please contact Sherry, Keith, or Jeremy who can share their perspectives and experiences in mergers and consolidations.



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