



# CURRENTS

PROVIDING EXCELLENCE IN RECRUITING NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

To Our Clients and Friends,

With this newsletter and those to follow, we hope to bring you snapshots of general interest searches we have tackled and completed; leaders we have recently recruited and their thoughts on the organizations they are taking on; the state of the nonprofit sector; and various assignments taken on by some of our team in the nonprofit sector but outside of our search work.

Like all of you, we are monitoring closely the economic turmoil to determine the repercussions for the nonprofit sector. Our focus will be on helping nonprofits to chart a path toward assessing and attracting the best and most appropriate talent for their organizations during this difficult time. And we will be charting a path for Phillips Oppenheim as well.

## Recent Searches

When two of the world's most noteworthy art institutions, **The Metropolitan Museum of Art** and the **Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation** needed new leaders, Phillips Oppenheim was selected to undertake challenging global searches to identify them. Recent news articles highlighted the appointment of **Thomas Campbell** at the Met and **Richard Armstrong** at the Guggenheim. Though concurrent, the two searches proceeded very differently, reflecting the distinctiveness of the two museums. Phillips Oppenheim was cited by the search committees for its depth in understanding the candidate pool; its approach and style were also mentioned as factors that have put the firm at the forefront of museum recruiting.

**SARAH JAMES**, who developed the firm's visual arts practice, was the lead principal on both assignments. She was singled out by trustees for her straightforward honesty and collaborative partnership with the museums' boards in helping them define their needs. Candidates were equally appreciative of the level of candor and care with which they were treated. Both the boards and candidates agreed that they were dealing with an exceptional partner in Phillips Oppenheim, saying: "With Sarah you always feel like you're getting the straight stuff."

*Sarah James and Becky Klein are currently working on the following visual arts searches:*

Association of Art Museum Directors – Executive Director  
Carnegie Museum of Art – Director  
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston - Director  
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden - Director  
Nasher Sculpture Center – Director  
Seattle Art Museum – Director

## Around Phillips Oppenheim

**JANE PHILLIPS DONALDSON** has recently joined the board of **StoryCorps**, the acclaimed national oral history project. Created by MacArthur Fellow Davy Isay, StoryCorps is the largest oral history project ever undertaken; its major partners are the Library of Congress and NPR. One of the fastest-growing nonprofits in the country, StoryCorps is rapidly gaining a reputation for its pioneering work in documenting and defining our national

character by recording stories of everyday people living in communities across the United States. StoryCorps was honored last year with an Institutional Peabody Award, an honor given only once or twice in a decade.

Special initiatives launched by StoryCorps include the Griot Project, the largest African-American oral history project undertaken since the WPA Slave Narratives of the 1930s; a project commemorating the families and survivors of the September 11th tragedy; and the Memory Loss Initiative, which brings StoryCorps to individuals, families, and caregivers confronting early memory loss or a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.

**SUSAN MEADE** was named the Co-Chair of the Board's Communications Committee at the **Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR)** in Washington, DC. The **IWPR** conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women, promote public dialogue, and strengthen families, communities and societies. In partnership with **The New York Women's Foundation**, it recently released a new report on *The Economic Status of Women in New York State*.

**PAUL SPIVEY** led a panel sponsored by the **Support Center for Nonprofit Management**, where he serves on the Advisory Board. The panel, *Meet the Grantmakers of New Jersey*, was designed to foster communication between funders and nonprofits across the state. Paul also spoke before alumni of the **Robert Wagner School of Public Service**. His theme: *Strategies on How to Break into the Senior Ranks of Philanthropic Institutions*.

Our interest in the arts extends well beyond recruiting leaders for some of America's most celebrated institutions. For example, **MARK TARNACKI**, a member of the **New York Choral Society**, will participate in performances celebrating the Choral Society's 50th Anniversary. The Anniversary season will end in the spring with a program at Carnegie Hall that will feature Vaughn Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, and a work commissioned from celebrated composer Stephen Paulus. The Choral Society, a 180-voice group of professional-caliber volunteer singers, will also present **A Holiday Celebration** at Carnegie Hall in December.

## Rodger DeRose

President and Chief Executive Officer of the Kessler Foundation, the nation's largest nonprofit dedicated to supporting people with disabilities.

Recruited to the Kessler Foundation this year by Phillips Oppenheim, DeRose brings experience in the private sector to his new position, having served as Partner and COO for Arthur Andersen's technology software division and in leadership roles with SC Johnson in its consumer, professional, and healthcare groups. Prior to joining Kessler, DeRose served as President of the Van Wezel Foundation in Sarasota, Florida and, from 2002 to 2005, as President of the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America.



### Talk about your strategy for approaching your new position at Kessler.

Our vision is simple: to provide a future that improves the lives of people with physical disabilities. Our strategy, mission, and values supporting that vision are strong. I've been spending a great deal of time getting to know people — meeting the Foundation's leadership and board members, and also meeting with individuals below the manager level through focus groups that I am personally conducting in order to find out which areas are working and which may need improvement. What's been most rewarding? Seeing the passion that our people have and their commitment to helping patients rebuild their lives through rehabilitation research and employment programming.

### What changes are you initiating?

Most recently, I've been focusing on how we can set appropriate goals in key areas, with special emphasis on the following: **High-impact research:** We need to invest in programs that will have a lasting impact on spinal cord injury; traumatic brain injury, which is the signature war injury for our vets returning from the Iraq war, stroke recovery, and multiple sclerosis. **Employment:** We are focusing on employment programming through investments

in job placement, training & development, and new business development. **Awareness:** We are building awareness of our mission and accomplishments through publicity, rebranding, and by creating a government relations program. **Growing and diversifying our donor base:** While we are funded through a large endowment that the Kessler Foundation received when it sold the Kessler Institute of Rehabilitation, we are evaluating strategies to increase revenues through donor outreach to individuals, government agencies, other foundations, and corporations. **Forming alliances:** We are exploring possible collaborations with other disability focused organizations in the areas of research and employment programs for people with disabilities.

### Describe Phillips Oppenheim's approach to your search process.

Phillips Oppenheim brought a lot of insight to the search. Its professionals walk that very fine line between acting on behalf of the client organizations they represent and offering guidance to candidates on how they can focus their backgrounds and convey their potential impact to those organizations.

I really valued Phillips Oppenheim's investment in me in terms of the depth and quality of the questions it was asking. The firm conducted a very disciplined leadership assessment to make sure that the individual selected was the right fit over the long term.

I saw that as a unique plus. Phillips Oppenheim may not be as large as other firms, but its approach was a significant point of difference: the way it managed the needs of both client and candidate with an eye toward a long-term fit. I also know the firm generated real depth and breadth in the pool of candidates it developed for Kessler.

As a candidate, you want to feel that you're being guided effectively. Phillips Oppenheim gave me all the information I needed so that I was well prepared in making my business case and knew the challenges I'd be facing if I was chosen. This kind of support is something you can't minimize when you are talking about making a major career change and relocating 1200 miles for the position.

To find out more about the work of the Kessler Foundation, visit its Web site at [www.hhkfdn.org](http://www.hhkfdn.org).



PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

New York | Washington DC

Phillips Oppenheim provides excellence in recruiting nonprofit leadership, enabling nonprofits and their boards to attract leaders from across diverse nonprofit, public and business sectors.

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