

The Post and Courier

Founded in 1803

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Moving on

Most leaders in the non-profit sector concur that succession of founders of organizations is critically important. But with that idea comes great anxiety. Why is it so important for founders to take flight? Three reasons:

1) If a founder stays too long, it can set the organization up to fail if the proverbial "run over by a bus" scenario happens. Organizations need to be viewed as strong on their own.

2) Empowering the younger generation of leadership will serve the organization and community well. A founder staying too long can block professional development.

3) With so many "baby boomer" founders, it could be damaging to communities if all of them move on at the same time.

So why don't we see founders handing over the reins to the younger generation? Fear.

Seven months ago, I took flight from WINGS for Kids, an organization I founded in 1997. Our succession planning took three years, and the careful planning and implementation paid off.

Since my leaving, WINGS was chosen to be the subject

in a four-year, \$2.8 million grant aimed at scientifically measuring its impact and effectiveness.

It earned top honors in the national Social Impact Business Plan Competition.

It was the only South Carolina organization selected to receive money through the AmeriCorps national competitive funding program.

No question, WINGS has proven to be strong on its own under the leadership of Bridget Laird.

I would be lying to say there was no fear of flying on my part but seven months later any fear has been replaced by the excitement of seeing Bridget and WINGS soar.

GINNY DEERIN

Founder

WINGS for Kids

Atlantic Avenue

Sullivan's Island