

Member Spotlight:

Santa Maria Community Services
H.A. Musser, Jr.
President & CEO



Tell me a little about your agency, yourself, your career, and your current position.



H.A. Musser, Jr.

Santa Maria Community Services recently celebrated our 123rd year of helping families help themselves. We were founded downtown to work with Italian immigrants to our region and moved to the Price Hill area in 1966. We are now a multi-service agency focused on helping families achieve their educational, financial and health goals while also strengthening the Price Hill community.

Growing up as the oldest of five children first in rural WV and later in Brazil where my parents served as missionaries in the 1970s, and really maturing in my Christian faith through high school and college, I knew I wanted to serve people in some capacity. I came to Santa Maria in 1984, right out of grad school, and worked for five years as a community organizer in Lower Price Hill before being named CEO in 1989. I love Santa Maria's community-based work and the people we work with.

How long have you been a LC member and what prompted you to join?

I first joined what was then known as the Council of Agency Executives in about 1990, within a year of being named CEO at Santa Maria. I was encouraged to get involved by some senior CEO mentors at "sister" agencies who were actively involved in CAE: Ken Davidson from Victory Neighborhood Services in Walnut Hills and Bob Brewster at Brighton Center. I quickly joined a committee and a couple years later joined the board. I served three different stints on the board culminating in serving as president in 1994 and 2004.

How has membership in Leadership Council been of value to you?

Since the beginning, one of the best benefits has always been the camaraderie developed with other CEOs. It's so great to be part of a cohort of nonprofit human services leaders in Greater Cincinnati – to get acquainted with them and be able call on them for advice as needed. As a new young CEO, it helped immensely to learn from others, and the Leaders Circles have extended those mutual learning and sharing opportunities in recent years.

What is the best leadership advice you have received or given?

As a Christian, the Bible is my primary source of guidance and advice. By God's grace, and for His glory, I'm learning to live out the second greatest commandment, "love your neighbor as yourself," which Jesus summarized this way in Luke 6:31: "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you." I've found that to be a solid principle to live by, but I'm only able to do so because of my dependence on Jesus Christ.

Has your agency developed any notable partnerships, initiatives, and/or collaborations with other organizations (for profit or not for profit) to further your agencies work?

Santa Maria is fortunate to work with dozens of other organizations in the human services sector. Because our programs range from early childhood to workforce to immigrant services to wellness and high school equivalency, we have a broad range of partnerships that genuinely increase the impact we have with families. Two of our closest partners are Price Hill Will, our local nonprofit community development corporation, and Community Matters. We are also pleased to serve as a lead agency for Price Hill Place Matters.

Please feel free to share any additional information, announcements, or news with the Leadership Council community.

Santa Maria pivoted significantly and successfully this past year during the pandemic. We were able to form new partnerships and strengthen existing ones resulting in distribution of huge amounts of boxed food, soup, power packs, cleaning supplies, paper products, diapers, masks of all kinds and hand sanitizer. In addition, we coordinated major events for COVID testing and completion of the 2020 Census.