

## Imagining Possible Futures 2030 When Driving Forces Interact



# SCENARIO D STORY CONTRIBUTION BY CONVERSATION 2012 PARTICIPANT



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# THE SUMMIT OF THE SIX

*Shari Lynn Scales, CFRE*

# Gary Hubbell Consulting *Conversation* 2012



## PARTICIPANT BIO

### **Shari Lynn Scales, CFRE**

Inspiration Architect, Providence Cancer Center

Had scenario-based planning been the tool of choice over Meyers-Briggs in 1992, not even Shari would have guessed that two decades later would find in her an impassioned development catalyst raising principle gifts for mission-centered work.

A stable career that spans 14 years with Legacy Health System, three with the Oregon Province Jesuits, 9 with Providence Health & Services, and 3 in higher education, have found Shari firmly replanted with the organization whose “moment” she attributes as one of the greatest and most impactful of her career – completing the campaign that led to the opening of the nation’s first Gold LEED certified hospital – Providence Newberg Medical Center. In January 2012, Shari returned to Providence to serve in an instrumental role she fondly and appropriately calls Inspiration Architect for the Providence Cancer Center. Working alongside accomplished and world-renowned researchers Walter Urba, M.D., Ph.D., Bernard Fox, Ph.D. and others positions Shari in a cataclysmic role to invite change-agents to be part of the next steps in revolutionary cancer research that focuses on one’s own immune system to fight the deadly disease. Shari’s brief break into higher education leadership roles at George Fox University (Newberg, Oregon) and Concordia University-Portland (Oregon) crystalized her true philanthropic passion—serving the poor and vulnerable as they navigate health crises and helping to provide hope and courage to beat the disease through clinical trials and integrative medical approaches.

Shari remains indebted to early mentors in her development career -- chief among them, Gary Hubbell, with whom she is honored to once again be seated at the Conversation table. She continues to weave, balance and integrate her family into her profession and is proud to have watched her sons D.L. (9) and Diego (4) experience joy in serving others and along with her husband of 13 years, Dwayne, work together as a family to leave the world a much better place.

*“This is the true joy in life -- being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one... I am of the opinion that my whole life belongs to the community and as I live, it is my privilege, to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I love.”*

*“I rejoice in life for its own sake, life is no brief candle to me, it is a sort of splendid torch which I’ve got a hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.”*

—George Bernard Shaw

This is Shari’s fourth *GHC Conversation*.

# The Summit of the Six

## A scenario exploring North American philanthropy in 2030

Shari Lynn Scales, CFRE

### *The players...*

- The Senator
- The Scientist
- The Survivor
- The “Sibling”
- The Strategist
- The Seer

### *The Scene...*

It's 4 am. The Senator rises from a disjointed night's sleep, pausing with hand on chin to reflect on the day's coming agenda. Having edged a win in the last election, his second term has not been an easy one. The Medicare refueling and enhancement legislation he fought hard to pass last term, along with his party constituents and the President, failed miserably. The son of a medical doctor, and having lost Amy, his wife and the mother of his then two young children to a rare form of breast cancer, the health care agenda weighs heavy on his mind and heart.

It was never about the politics, never about the spotlight. It was for Amy, Brendon and Holly. It was for the sake of their brighter future.

Remembering the eagerness with which he took the Scientist's call, his thoughts returned to the agenda of the day. Finally, the two would meet and via multi-live Skype, join in conversation with the Survivor, the head of The Siblings, and two business leaders, The Strategist and The Seer, about the latest medical breakthrough.

### *The Setting...*

Tighter restrictions on lobbying and the continued silos in which corporations, schools, non-profit organizations and the government operate have made it increasingly challenging to have strategic conversations and this was no exception. But the issue at hand could no longer be ignored. Today could mark the long-awaited turning point for the Senator and his committee to push through vital health care reform that would reallocate much needed funding from regulatory bodies to health care treatments and cures.

The Scientist and his team of researchers and medical doctors have operated their labs and clinical trials on the wings and prayers of time-delimited grants for decades – some more generous than others dependent on investor reactions to the roller coaster market that has

not let up since the early 2000's. Despite unpredictable funding, results of the latest clinical trials continue to be astonishing. Large tumors once dominating entire regions of the skull are disappearing, never to return. Enlarged, cancer-filled lymph nodes are shrinking back to their normal cancer-free selves...for good. The works of protein distillation and antibody markers begun two decades earlier have made significant impact on a select, and unprecedented, population of cancer patients: those diagnosed between the ages of 29 and 40.

It is the year 2030, and cancer remains the second most common cause of death in the United States, exceeded only, still, by heart disease. As well, the global burden of cancer has continued to increase largely because of the aging and growth of the world population alongside an increasing adoption of cancer-causing behaviors, particularly smoking, in economically developing countries. Breast cancer continues to be the most frequently diagnosed cancer and the leading cause of cancer death among females. Lung cancer remains the leading cancer site in males.<sup>6</sup>

Through the collective group's research and experience, everyone who will soon be arriving to the Summit's virtual table knows that cancer survival depends upon a combination of early versus later stage diagnosis as well as access to timely treatment. They also embrace the notion that a substantial proportion of the worldwide burden of cancer could be prevented through the application of existing cancer control knowledge and by early detection and treatment, as well as through public health campaigns promoting physical activity and a healthier dietary intake. In earlier virtual conversations, the Senator and the Scientist have agreed on the idea that clinicians, public health professionals, and policy makers should join forces to play an active role in accelerating the application of such interventions, and now, cures.

Because of the continued divisive way in which the government is run (party lines remain drawn and clear) and because of continued tight economic times, philanthropy occurs and has grown through increasingly non-traditional means. Economic constraints have pushed strategic and educated leaders into positions of responding to and taking action on societal issues like homelessness and health care, on their own. The number of private investment and giving circles has continued to grow, harnessing the minds, hearts and resources of people of influence and affluence in a collegial fashion, mainly through mobile cam web groups, to respond to and support basic needs that government alone cannot: hunger, health care and primary education to name a few.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: *CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*; Volume 61, Issue 2, Article first published online: 4 FEB 2011; American Cancer Society, Inc.

In 2012, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation paired with the Canadian government to develop a real-life “tricorder,” the hand-held medical device that “Star Trek” doctors used for diagnosing.<sup>7</sup> The nearly \$32 million in grants made to 22 researchers around the world paid off and now, new patients from around the globe are quickly diagnosed and can participate in these clinical trials. But only with a significant boost in private funding.

### *The Leading Role...*

One of the key groups in today’s Summit, and the events leading up to it, are The Siblings – a group of clinical trial “alumni” who share the common bond of survivor. Now in their late 30’s to early 50’s, these once “millennials” are at the peaks of their familial and professional lives. The busy-ness of parenthood and workplace ministry has not slowed. There remains a struggling middle class sandwiched between the poor among us and the “have’s,” and this generation works hard to close the gaps but can’t amidst the silos and political rhetoric. Yet this generation has emerged with the strongest voice, continuing to lead virtual societies through instant communication vehicles like social media and the “Me” – a recent technological invention that has replaced the world of cell phones, iPads and PC’s into a be-all, do-all device. Although predominantly stuck in this middle class, The Siblings recognize the power of their connectivity and voice as a pivotal gateway to responding to and making impact on pressing needs, such as an increase in the numbers of cancers caught and cured. And two basic human premises have continued to dominate amidst the long, drawn-out recession: altruism, and the willingness to survive.

### *Lights, Camera, Action!...*

It’s muggy, hot and noon in Washington, D.C. The Senator races up the steps of Conversation Hall in the Senate building toward a slightly-built, slightly graying man whom he recognizes, from previous video-conferencing, to be The Scientist. The two greet each other with a handshake and after engaging in the pleasantries of small talk, finish with a unified “Let’s do this.” Conversation Hall is dauntingly cool, embellishing a large wooden table shiny enough to check your reflection in. The TA must have readied the equipment well as the familiar beeps from satellite connections start to fill the room. Soon, everyone is “seated.”

The agenda began with two testimonies, one from The Senator about raising a son and daughter in his widowhood, and the other from The Survivor, who also happened to be an

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<sup>7</sup> Source: <http://blog.seattlepi.com/thebigblog/2011/12/16/gates-foundation-wants-a-real-life-star-trek-tricorder>

accomplished fundraising professional. Through her networks, she managed to garner the participation of The Strategist – CEO of a company that provides green energy resources to public and private sector organizations (schools, mass transit centers, libraries) and The Seer – a young executive director of a nonprofit agency that has proven that putting into practice cutting-edge communications can align like-minded institutions across the U.S. for combined success. A representative from The Siblings (the cancer survivor alumni group) also joined the summit, and conversation ensued, filling the room with stories of hope and survival, gratitude and sadness, excitement and determination.

The Strategist shared that among corporate counterparts, and through his own experience as CEO, he has seen corporate donations increase only when initiatives would both bring together then benefit business, nonprofits, and government collectively. He shared the example of Cradle to Career (C2C), an innovative, Cincinnati-based effort that spread to 23 U.S. cities plus Calgary and Toronto. Part of the Portland, Oregon effort in its early stages, The Strategist explained that C2C harnesses the power of business, nonprofits, schools, government and faith communities to boost dismal high school graduation rates.<sup>8</sup> Kids, he said, were prepared for school, supported while in school, and then supported after school in preparation for college. Why, he asked, couldn't this same model be applied to patients, pre-, peri- and post-cancer affectedness? Insurance companies, not unlike Medicare, were continuing to run their operations in a "do more with less" approach, passing along unfunded expenses to large and mid-size corporations. Small companies were no longer able to provide insurance coverage to their employees. In fact, smaller companies banded together, much like giving and investment circles, pooling their resources to support one another's start-up and growth goals, supply purchases, etc. Efforts by business leaders, like The Strategist, and their business alliance groups to share with large insurers innovative and streamlined methods with which to run their companies were met with firmly planted heels. Efforts by some to lobby the government for cost-capping regulation for insurers were routinely met with more closed than open doors.

Certainly, a significant outcome from today's Summit would be arming The Senator with new data that proves this clinical and translational research not only saves lives, but reduces the duration of the illness, thereby passing along significant cost savings to insurance companies, Medicare and to employers alike.

But the greater desired outcome, and sincere wish of The Scientist, would be identification of new pockets of philanthropic sources that would propel this research

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<sup>8</sup> Source: *Portland Business Journal*, "Corporate Donations Propel Cradle to Career Initiative," Oct., 21, 2011, pg. 5.

toward the next steps of regulatory body (FDA) approval, thereby generating greater access by patients and providers to this cutting-edge treatment.

Next on the agenda, The Seer shared his experience in the animal welfare world with business models being widely shared among fellow organizations. He talked about Best Friends, an organization in Utah that provides a permanent sanctuary for unadoptable pets. Individuals and families plan week-long vacations that involve stays in an adjacent hotel and volunteering their time to care for these institutionalized animals. The Best Friends model was so successful that the organization raised more than enough money for its own program and began board, staff and resource sharing with like institutions across the country. Why, this young leader asked, couldn't this approach be used in today's cancer research agenda? Millennials and the new millennials in particular, he said, still desire hands-on involvement in the causes they support.

After the testimonials and stories, the archaeology of discovering new sources of support began. The Survivor, a veteran fundraising professional, briefed the group on the current philanthropic climate surrounding individuals and families. The last 15 years, she said, had brought an unprecedented shift in the way major gifts, in particular, are cultivated and received. Because of the continued time constraints on millennial and gen-Y and gen-X families, the immediacy and urgency with which information is distilled then shared had become key to the gift decision process. Significant gifts were no longer taking an average of 18 months to close. Six- and seven-figure gift decisions were being made in short bursts based on family conversations, friend networks, virtual board meetings and the continual flow of information that paints pictures of need, success, outcome, more need, etc. Multi-year pledges had become a rarity among the upper middle class and the ultra wealthy as their routine shifted from planning around long-term investment and giving goals, to not being able to count on their returns to fuel needs and promises over lengthy periods of time.

With the Summit table set, the six began brainstorming, and individual names began to surface and cover the virtual whiteboard. Names jotted would instantly reveal links to contact information and on-line profiles. App touches revealed up-to-the-minute values of asset holdings when available.

### *A Happy Ending...*

By the end of the Summit, the team had already made 27 on-line introductions to various people of philanthropic means and/or in cancer interest groups and a half million in very early funding commitments were made, including the offer of a 2:1 match.

What became glaringly apparent to The Senator was the power of relationships and communication, the former resting on histories of altruism and survival since the beginning of humankind, and the latter, transforming with such rapidity to an ever-growing technological world that its human counterparts are continually in learning mode. Communication continuity – frequent updates, up-to-the-minute data, daily stories of trials and triumphs frees individuals to consider and make faster, yet still strategic decisions in a world that won't wait.

The summit having concluded with marching orders and next steps in hand, the six bade farewell until the next virtual gathering, and The Senator and The Scientist rose from their seats in Conversation Hall. As they descended the steps of the Senate building, The Senator enjoyed a moment of renewed confidence. How refreshing it was to spend three short hours in a room without political agendas – where every sector in the room truly cared and stood to benefit from The Scientist's remarkable work. Amy would be proud, he thought.

### *Some Parting Words...*

It was my hope that the scenario above made clear that whether despite of, or because of, the silo effect, individuals and institutions within those silos will turn to altruism and survival instincts to think and behave outside their respective walls. I've embraced this essay work in future-casting as an exercise that, like walking and sit-ups, we all must do regularly. Our ability as nonprofit executives to continue harvesting the spirits and resources of altruistic people for greater human good depends on it.