

Navigating Transitions

AT A GLANCE

- Help a young non-profit navigate a major life cycle milestone.
- Set the stage for a successful leadership transition of the founders.
- Ensure long term success by conducting an executive search that included post-hire coaching and support.

THE CLIENT



Located in a scenic canyon north of Leavenworth, Washington, [Tierra Village](#) is a vibrant and thriving community that supports people with developmental disabilities. Participants in the program include residents who live on site, as well as adults from the larger community who attend recreational arts and independent life skills programs and participate in supported employment.

Tierra Village is a non-profit connecting adults with developmental disabilities with nature and community.



THE SITUATION

[Tierra Village](#) was founded to cultivate and develop an inclusive community where adults with developmental differences are intrinsically capable of meaningful contributions and get the resources and support to do so. Like many non-profits, Tierra Village had rapidly grown to the point where the Founding Board and Executive Director needed to expand resources – talent, time, and contributions – to address the emerging and increasing needs of the organization.



Tierra Village's values include self-determination, meaningful work opportunities, a celebration of diversity, the experience of lifelong learning and compassionate service.

All organizations and Boards go through stages as they mature.

The way things are done, and

the roles people have, must also change over time. Tierra Village stood at the threshold of an organizational transition from the 'Found and Frame' phase to the 'Ground and Grow' phase. This is often a pivotal moment for many nonprofit organizations.

The Board and staff were dealing with issues in a way that felt highly personalized and characterized by miscommunication, role confusion, even resentment. Their hearts were absolutely in the right place, but that alone could not ensure organizational health, success, and sustainability in the next phase. Initially, they didn't recognize that their issues were actually signals of a larger organizational change. However, they knew they were stuck, so they reached out to [Amanda Madorno](#) at [Roam Consulting LLC](#).

THE CHALLENGE

- Multiple founders active within the organization, often in conflict.
- A small founding Board stretched to fill its responsibilities, while at the same time operating under a policy governance model that kept them at arm's length and disengaged from the organization.
- Organizational churn and lack of strategic focus.
- Unrealistic expectations of what could be accomplished with current resources—both financial and non-financial.
- Over-reliance on a handful of founding donors and a lack of general fundraising or community outreach activities.

Tierra Village needed to find new ways to look at and address their growing pains and resolve internal conflict. The drive for sustainability, a key characteristic of the 'Ground and Grow' phase, meant that the founders' relationships to Tierra Village needed to change. The Board needed a plan to ensure they could carry the founders' vision into the future, and if possible, allow the founders to remain active and involved, yet freed from their original roles.

THE SOLUTION

“Amanda helped us move through an executive transition in a professional, rational way. She coached in a way that didn't destroy the organization, which could easily have happened. She listened to everyone, counseled tolerance and patience, and kept us focused on the end result.”

– Gracie Close
Founder / Board Chair

The 'Ground and Grow' phase is where deep planted seeds spark steady growth and expansion. To set the transition into motion, Amanda conducted more than 30



Tierra Village is located in Sunitsch Canyon, about seven miles from Leavenworth.

interviews with stakeholders, including Board and staff, donors and government funders, and community partners. She listened deeply for the consistent threads in everyone's feedback as well as the subtler differences in perspective on what needed fixing, what should be left as is, and the ideal direction for Tierra Village.

Amanda then outlined recommendations to help the Board realize Tierra Village's true potential. Her report included:

- **Coaching** to redefine founder roles and a process for succession planning.
- A move away from a Policy Governance model to a Best Practice model, **customized for where the Board was in its development.**
- Governance training for the current Board and a recruitment plan to expand the Board to best achieve future goals.
- **A plan to leverage the future**—including program strategy, financial goals, and a roadmap to ground Tierra Village in the larger community through outreach and fundraising.
- Essential skills and characteristics for the kind of Executive Director who could successfully lead them through the 'ground and Grow' stage.

Over a period of eighteen months, Amanda worked closely with the Board and Executive Director to implement needed changes. She **facilitated key conversations and decision making**, provided customized tools and resources to make implementation easier, and guided activities of **founder succession and executive transition.**

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION COACHING



Amanda individually **coached** the founding Board Chair and Executive Director. She encouraged them to re-examine their relationship to Tierra Village and to each other. Ultimately, this meant they both needed to pass the baton to others.

The Board Chair committed to recruiting new leadership so she could step down from the chair role and operate in an advisory capacity. The Executive Director realized that it was time for someone new to lead the agency and worked with Amanda to prepare herself and the agency for her departure.

Throughout this founder transition, Amanda supported both leaders as they stepped up to be organizational change sponsors and champions. It wasn't always easy, and there were moments of sadness and grief along the way. However, with Amanda's assistance the Board Chair and Executive Director were able to come to terms with and follow through on succession planning in a way that brought the rest of the Board, staff, and organization along with them.

BUILDING THE BOARD

“Amanda is highly focused and productive. She never seems to run out of steam. She really drives a process – weeks and months of long work to achieve well-defined goals.

She had this beautiful combination of educating us, providing a game plan that was extremely well thought out, and providing actual tools, from document drafts, to our process outlines, and preliminary schedules. Literally, she was at our side while we implemented the plan.

She's extraordinary in her knowledge of non-profits and how to best run them in ways that are professional and effective. She's respectful of the work that needs to be done and the people who are doing it. Working closely with Amanda, I felt I was watching a master-in-action.

– Sarah Westervelt
Founding Board Member

Amanda and the Board had many discussions about what the **role of the Board had been and what it would need to be** during the 'Ground and Grow' life cycle stage. The Board understood it was time to bring in Board members with a fresh perspective, and with local roots and connections in the Leavenworth and greater Wenatchee community. The Board needed to be more strategically-focused and operating within best governance practices that encouraged participation in fundraising and growing community connections. They also needed to be ready and accessible to support the strategic plan with advice, connections, and resources.

The founding Board shelved the Policy Governance Model (while keeping in place those policies beneficial to the organization) and looked at how to shape Board roles and responsibilities within a Best Practice Governance Model that was more action-oriented and more relevant for the Board's current work.

They determined a three-year retirement plan for the founding Board and launched a new Board member recruitment initiative. They began by establishing a Task Force of local community leaders. Armed with recommendations from those leaders, who had their ears-to-the-ground about great potential Board members, the founding Board Chair led the recruitment charge.

And finally, Amanda facilitated a simple, straightforward strategic planning process that produced a workable three-year plan and a road map for the new Board and Executive Director.



EXECUTIVE SEARCH

“I was set up to succeed. Amanda’s standards are the highest of the high. She was completely invested in my success, and the success of the organization, too.”

— Catherine Kilty
Executive Director



As the Board navigated through the change and transition inherent in a life cycle stage pivot, they gradually realized it was time for a new leader. With care and compassion, Amanda helped the Board successfully negotiate a departure date with the founding executive that respected the needs of both parties and provided leadership continuity. Finding a professional interim willing to spend four–six months in Leavenworth was challenging. The Board negotiated with the founding Executive Director to stay until a replacement was hired.

The **executive search** process included:

- Creating a position profile that articulated the experience, skills, and qualities of a resourceful visionary who could come in and manage the day-to-day while steadily ushering the organization into the future.
- Developing a recruitment strategy that would source candidates who not only had the needed qualifications but were also interested in a significant lifestyle change. Whoever was hired needed the ability to thrive in a rural and relatively isolated part of the state.
- Implementing an interview process that really allowed the Board and potential candidates to get to know each other and evaluate fit.

After Catherine Kilty, the new executive was hired, Amanda supported her early success with **three months of post-hire coaching**. As Catherine hit the ground running, the founding Board members found comfort and excitement in their new roles while finally letting go of the full load of responsibilities they carried from day one.

Read more about Catherine’s experience [here](#).



Tierra Village’s mission is “to provide homes and services for people with developmental disabilities in a collaborative, integrated and diverse community located in a beautiful natural setting.”

EARLY RESULTS

Every Leadership Transition is an Organizational Transition

We help leaders effectively steward the complexity of change. We bring clarity, focus and confidence to transitions with our expertise in:

- Assessing leadership and organizational capacities
- Transition readiness factors
- Opportunities / conversations uniquely triggered by an executive transition
- Common risks / pitfalls
- Long term / emergency succession plans
- Defining new leader success
- Coaching founders through transition
- Board's partnership with new executive and governance implications
- Interim leaders / internal candidates
- Successful recruiting / selection
- Appropriate staff roles
- Effective onboarding
- Stakeholder perception and engagement

Call Amanda today!



425-488-7747

Catherine has achieved many of the goals outlined in the first year of the strategic plan. Early accomplishments include:

- Plugged herself into the local business community, joining the Leavenworth Rotary and making presentations to local Rotary Clubs.
- Replaced the aging van with a brand new 15-passenger van, paid for by wrapping it with tastefully placed sponsor logos and Tierra Village branding. Everywhere the van goes, people are reminded about Tierra Village and its place in the community.
- Secured a contract for supported employment. Tierra Village is the only agency in the Upper Wenatchee Valley to offer this service which helps participants find employment in their own community at minimum wage.
- Expanded the Board by 30%, with four new members. Recruitment continues with three more community leaders interested in joining. New Board members, each with deep business, political, or educational ties to the community, bring with them potential fundraising relationships and program partnerships.



425-488-7747

www.roamconsultingllc.com

amanda@roamconsultingllc.com