

Samaritan House Enjoys Paperless Environment, Accelerated Approvals and Real-time Reporting in the Cloud

Founded in 1974, Samaritan House is a nonprofit social services agency in San Mateo County, California, providing multiple services and programs for individuals and families in the community. The nonprofit serves approximately 12,000 people per year and manages all financial aid requests, validation and disbursements across eight agencies in the county. With highly specialized accounting and reporting needs, they needed to replace QuickBooks with a more flexible and efficient solution.

The Battle of the Nonprofit Workarounds

Like many nonprofit organizations, the Samaritan House finance team spent years trying to make their accounting software work with a very unique financial structure. Managing finances across several programs, as well as managing all financial assistance funding for eight agencies in San Mateo County, was made even more challenging by a QuickBooks system that just didn't fit.

According to Jolie Bou, CFO of Samaritan House, reporting was one of their major problems. "Nothing came out of QuickBooks the way we needed. Everything had to be done in Excel, including multiple versions of



our monthly financials. Our year-end financials would take weeks to create and put into a big, elaborate spreadsheet. It was very time consuming and difficult to get everyone the information they needed in a timely manner."

Another issue was a manual, paper-based approval process and workflow that caused critical delays. Emergency funding must be out the door within 48 hours so trying to track down the necessary people for approvals and signatures was frustrating. Other concerns were lack of effective grant tracking in QuickBooks and the risk of losing items like papers and files.

Finding the Right Implementation Partner

Jolie spent a year evaluating numerous financial management solutions, including Blackbaud, Serenic Navigator, FUND E-Z and Intacct. After conversations, demos and references from other nonprofits, Samaritan House purchased Intacct directly from the vendor, but Jolie knew the most critical step was hiring the right implementation partner.

Through interviews with Intacct partners, JMT stood out because they truly understood what Samaritan House was trying to accomplish. A fellow agency also had a great experience with them and, after proposals from 3 partners, she chose JMT for a few reasons—nonprofit expertise, attentive staff and a realistic fee that included all of

“We are very happy we chose JMT as our implementation partner. Not only is their nonprofit expertise invaluable, they are honest, personable and understand what we deal with on the ground level. The implementation and transition to new software would not have gone as smooth without their guidance and support.”

Jolie Bou, CFO



their requirements. Other partners included only the basics, and she knew costs would escalate based on the help they would ultimately need.

Jolie believes the on-site discovery meetings were the key to a successful implementation. “It was awesome. Our consultant spent three days getting a deep understanding of how we work and walked us through everything, explaining pros and cons, limitations, setting expectations and providing recommendations.”

JMT also guided the finance team through migrating two years of data from QuickBooks

into Intacct. “We never felt stressed or overwhelmed. That, to me, was invaluable,” says Jolie, who was also impressed by the training they received. “Other implementers didn’t include training and I knew we would need it. JMT was very hands-on so we could be self sufficient.”

Go live went smoothly and the best part was it happened on time and within budget. “I didn’t think that was going to happen because of some internal staffing changes,” Jolie said. “We were continuously reassured by our consultant and if things fell behind, he got everything on track.”



Benefits of an Efficient, Paperless Nonprofit

Samaritan House is very pleased with their Intacct implementation experience and Jolie reports several benefits to date:

Electronic approvals and paperless transactions: "I don't waste time looking for documents anymore. This is a big time saver for management. Check approval, signing and writing is all electronic now and we can do it from anywhere, any device. It's been great."

Simplified, streamlined reporting: "The ability to create reports has been amazing. Management can see only the line items they are responsible for and drill down into differences and calculations. We closed year end and got FASB financial statements straight out of the box. No more huge Excel spreadsheets!"

Real-time information and access: "Managers can monitor everything more closely and get what they need on their own. We also setup a custom dashboard to help manage the financial assistance program across the eight agencies in the county. It's saved our accounting staff a lot of time answering questions and creating reports."

Ongoing personal support: "One of things I like best about JMT is the personal connection. When we call support, we are talking with real people who know me, I know them. It's not a big help line where you're a number. They take time to walk me through things."

To learn more about Samaritan House:
samaritanhousesanmateo.org

